



The Borgia Chronicles: 1414-1572

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A sumptuously illustrated history of one of Renaissance Italy's bloodiest families, complemented by extensive quotations from original sources and accompanied by a wealth of stunning images from the period.

The Borgia Chronicles: 1414-1572 Details

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From Reader Review The Borgia Chronicles: 1414-1572 for online ebook

Sara says

I'm DNF-ing this. I'm about halfway through and this book is quite boring. I wanted to learn more about the Borgia family, but all I can focus on are the gramatical mistakes.

Msimone says

The corruption of the Catholic church by the Borgia and other wealthy Renaissance nobles during the Renaissance défies imagination. Popes amasses fortunes by receiving bénéfices such as jewels and réal estate from sycophants. Popes amasses estates and political power for their families by awarding holy offices to their own illegitimate children who would become high ranking clergy within the Papal cabinet. Powerful families such as the Aragon, De Medici, and Borgia whose family included legitimate and illegitimate children of popes intermarried. The counter-reformation was a sécular response against papal abuse of power for personal gain. Did the Catholic Church require celibate priests because high ranking clergy historically built their own empires by using their illegitimate children to build family empires? The abuse of papal dispensation for divorce of the rulers of city states and countries in exchange for costly bénéfices was common among the Borgias who not only turned a blind eye to pecuniary benefices, sexual debauchery , and wanton guttony in their own families but in the Papal court.

No noble family was more egregious than the Borgia of Spain. Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), the second Borgia pope, granted positions such as cardinals to family members, to assure the élection of their own popes. They awarded their illegitimate children the red hat of cardinal (Juan Borgia) or married them to the Dukes of powerful city-states (Lucrezia Borgia and Alfonso Aragon). The popes had armies who waged war to increase the political power over the territory of their papal states, including Naples. Illegitimate son, Cesare Borgia, received monies from the Papal treasury from his father, the pope. Pope Alexander VI would replenish military coffers with ducats from dead cardinals who left wills intended for their own families, but which the Pope assumed for himself and his own family.

The book provides an history collection of events whereby ruling families of Northern Italy held on to power through the Roman Catholic church. The events show how the catholic popes built political power by amassing wealth by stealing, killing from their enemies, and through intermarriage of their legitimate and illegitimate children with the Dukes and Kings of Europe.

The history of political intrigue and abuse of power by the Borgia popes from 1414 to 1520 is the most egregious of corruption within the Renaissance church. The book cites historical writings from Johannes Burchard whose historical descriptions in Chapter Six of the débauchery of the Borgia would stupefy anyone with even the lowest threshold for amorality.

John Newcomb says

Those Borgias certainly got up to high jinks.

Sarah u says

I am throwing in the towel with this book at chapter seven. I own the Quercus paperback edition of the book.

The information in this book is quite good. The reader is taught a lot about practices within the church, the college of cardinals, the election of a new pope, political alliances within the Italian city states and improvement of the city of Rome during this time. I cannot fault Hollingsworth's knowledge of the facts.

While the information within this book is alright, the execution and discussion of the facts is very poor. The book is written in very strict chronological order, with many sentences starting *on such and such a date this happened*, making the reading experience rigid and dull (I never thought I'd use the word dull to describe late 15C Rome!). We are told what happens day to day but nothing is explored or analysed in any depth, we move from one fact to the next as if reading our shopping list with absolutely no discussion of events or sources. This book is essentially a list of facts- good for reference I guess, but so boring for general reading. On several occasions the sentencing is clumsy, words are repeated or missing, and names are mentioned so often it's like being clubbed over the head. Also due to the strict chronology of the book sentences are repeated: every sub-chapter is headed by the year being written about, and almost every summer the plague breaks out, to name one example. The book feels less like a discussion of history and more like notes or a timeline- it really is the bare bones of the period, with no meat on them at all.

I am very interested in the Italian Renaissance, the Borgia family and the political activity in 15-16 century Italy, so every summer I like to read a book about this period. Looks like I'll have to try something else this year!

Stephanie Matthews says

Quite basic introduction to the family - not a lot of detail about the social and cultural history but a fascinating read. Reminded me a lot of my 16th Century History A Level, which I'd never previously thought was a good thing.

Shyam says

A very dry, annalistic account of this period.

I much preferred Meyer's account: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1...>

Brittney Andrews (beabookworm) says

I've always been fascinated with Italy's Renaissance period (1320–1520) - especially the notorious Borgia

family - the fabrications, scandals, ruthless killing sprees, and the corrupted politics upon many other things, have all have left a horrible stain on the Catholic church.

It was really interesting to learn how this family climbed their way up that social ladder, only to tumble all the way back down.

Let's talk about martial affairs though. Marriage is a definitive dogma in the Catholic faith, so I never understood why a priest would be an exception to this because there is no dogma that says a priest cannot marry. I understand that being a person with such power in the church, it's evident that they would be more inclined to play favoritism with their own children - I think that's just human nature, however. What scandalized the church was the fact that Rodrigo Borgia unethically maneuvered his way to the top *and* shamelessly used his children as political pawns.

Look, there are horrible people in this world regardless of their religion or lack thereof. This doesn't mean that I don't believe that our church needs to modernize. I love my faith but have certain people in power been following their own will or His will? I just can't imagine a god condemning anyone for being true to themselves -- after all, he "created" us in *His* image. I will say this though: you don't need to believe in Catholicism in order to agree that the 10 Commandments would truly make the world a better place.

I understand why this book has such a low rating; however, I found this to be decently informative, even though it only skimmed the surface of their history. It did feel a bit tedious picking this up at times because the information isn't conveyed in an outgoing manner, so if you're looking for an enthralling read, you won't find it here. That being said, I liked the format of this book - it was very quick to the point. My only qualm was that sentences throughout this book were a bit choppy at times.

So if you are looking to brush up on your history, then go in God's speed and pick up a copy of this book. I got mine from my local library =).

Emily Ross says

This was literally the only book about the Borgias I could find in Birmingham Community Libraries, and actually take home with me.

I found this book really disappointing. I find the Borgias really interesting, but this book was so dull. The pace of the book felt really rushed, and quite odd. A lot of it was dedicated to the build up of Pope Alexander VI, and to the descendants of the Borgias that the average person would know, ie, Rodrigo, Cesare and Lucrezia. It tended to jump about and I found myself so confused trying to figure out who the author was talking about and what was actually happening.

Not only was the pacing completely screwy, but there were so many spelling and grammar errors. For example, Pope is often misspelt as Popo. Many sentences tended to carry on and the whole thing felt never ending.

But what I found most egregious was the fact that historical facts were wrong. For example, in the last sentence, "Mary of Modena, a descendant via the Este line, married James II in 1673; neither of them had any children." So the entire existence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had any purpose behind it, and James Francis Edward was never born? Yeah, right, okay. James II and Mary of Modena had twelve

pregnancies, of which two survived until adulthood.

I learnt more about the Borgias from the Horrible Histories song about them than I did from this book.

Harper Kingsley says

I love this book. I got it in hardback and it's going on my reference shelf. The pictures were stunning, the writing was engaging and interesting, and I honestly feel as though I've learned a lot. Plus it's given me a lot of inspiration for my next series.

Though I bought it at discount from Barnes & Noble, it would be worth the cover price.

Samantha Morris says

Read this a while back. A good reference guide which I'll use now if I need to quickly find a date/name/event that I've forgotten about.

Daniel Swanger says

At a time of the Roman Empire's inter-regnum of the ancient Supreme Pontificate of Constantine and Helena's Edict of Toleration of the Empire of the West in Byzantium-Constantinople, Arabian Sultanate since 1453 to our times since 1919, with Papacy and Kings claiming ancient Rome but no emperor of the western world at that time per se, this tells of the Borgia dynasty's contemporaneous work and government. Only an ordinary sensible contemporary non-Italian could have written this book of colorful history! Pageantry and intrigue of the period abound in this excellently researched yet gossipy history. It appears the Reformation might not have occurred without the Borgias--but don't forget there is a saint in the Borgia family (St. Francis Borgia, the saintly Duke)! Leonardo began his career as military engineer to Cesare Borgia, one of many insightful details in this tome. This colorful family biography mostly covers 1414 to 1572 yet the family continues to the present day in the Barons de Chalus and the Counts of Bussett, probably from Bossuet--the clerical tutor to the Dauphin and Bishop of Meaux where I get my cooking mustard and author of the eulogy *Oraison Funèbre du Prince de Condé* (I've been to the Condé Museum of Chateau Chantilly 1971) of immortal French literature with shield motto saying here that glory is nothing without piety--Borgia faith supplanting virtue (motto of the Barons Thyssen-Bornemiszas also of Madrid, also the focus of faith at that time as in the mistresses given the converting Conquistador soldiers by the over-friendly Imperial Mexicans of Montezuma--there are now according to *Almanach de Gotha* and sources three imperial lines there, the empire on hold there till now and since Juarez and President Lincoln's ultimatum to French peace-keepers as troops to leave there during the US Civil War to not possibly help the South, as Borgias are in the works of the Holy See and of their own kingship as nobles or sovereigns of their own Queen Bee order of nature of courtiers and workers producing their honey--as once love or money or is it now culture?

Karen says

I love what this book is trying to do - set the most (in)famous members of the Borgias in context and break down their history into a year-by-year account - but there is not quite enough meat on the bones for me.

A good work of reference although the edition I have is full of typos which was somewhat annoying. Any Jacobites out there will also be surprised to learn that Mary of Modena had no children. I think the author meant none who were successful in obtaining the English/Scottish throne.

Genevieve says

Finally got the chance to finish this on a snow day when the internet was down and I couldn't get in to work. Great read though it is a historical account and not a work of historical fiction. There are lots of dates and happenings that can get a bit confusing but it's not too hard to follow.

I would have loved to see more about Juan, Lucrezia and Cesare Borgia in here but it was very informative and detailed. A good read for any history buff.

Matthew says

This is the weakest volume in the "Chronicles" series that I've read so far. The chronological analysis format that served the other volumes well doesn't work for the Borgias. This may be because they are too spread out geographically and there are too many of them alive at the same time. However, there are other problems with the book. This volume makes very little attempt to discuss culture and how people lived when compared to other books in the series. It is also very repetitive with historical quotes in the margins being included in the text also. Despite quoting a lot of original sources the book also fails to fully explain why the Borgias were so hated by those around them and ignores or doesn't examine the reports of atrocities leveled against the Borgias. It may mention accusations or an actual event but with very little other information provided.

leo michael meir wright says

Fascinating Read

Very interesting and in-depth. Learnt quite a lot. Like what we're proven facts and what was myth. I also liked the fact that it didn't mention about the incest as it was rumoured but never proven. A very good read for those who like myself find the Borgias intriguing.
