



# The Borgias

*Marion Johnson*

Download now

Read Online ➔

# The Borgias

*Marion Johnson*

## **The Borgias** Marion Johnson

The name Borgia is synonymous with the political corruption, greed, incest, and murder that was rife in Renaissance Italy. Rodrigo Borgia-Pope Alexander VI-the first man to have clearly bought himself the papacy, and two of his infamous illegitimate children-Cesare and Lucrezia-were the three central figures of the Borgia dynasty, notorious for seizing power, wealth, land, and titles through bribery, marriage, and murder. Marion Johnson plots the dynasty's dramatic rise from its beginnings in Spain to its occupation of the highest position in Renaissance society, examining how far the myth of the Borgias is borne out by historical facts. Behind the gaudy horrors, she concludes, lie people of great talent and achievement, possessors, even, of moderate virtues.

## **The Borgias Details**

Date : Published March 26th 2002 by Penguin Books (first published 1955)

ISBN : 9780141390758

Author : Marion Johnson

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : History, Cultural, Italy, Nonfiction, Biography, Biography Memoir



[Download The Borgias ...pdf](#)



[Read Online The Borgias ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Borgias Marion Johnson**

---

# From Reader Review The Borgias for online ebook

## Gauchoholandes says

Read it because of the eponymous tv series. The book describes a great feat of upward social mobility in the late Middle Ages, which then completely derails into crimes and schemes because of unfettered family love, but not that much out the ordinary in those times.

---

## Gavin says

The Borgias, much maligned as poisoners , philanderers, charlatans, cads and any other derogatory characteristic that can be put on people are here coldly assessed. The author cuts through the legends to the real people, and what fascinating people the Borgias were. Eminently readable and enlightening, recommended very highly to anyone interested in this despicable (sic.) family.

---

## Aquarius says

Extremely comprehensive and well-informed, but couldn't the author have indulged my taste for scandal just a *little*? It's the Borgias, for Pete's sake!

---

## Shawna says

Gave more insight to the personal workings of the Borgia clan. Much more insight to their dealings and arranged marriages, etc.

---

## Redsteve says

A fairly general overview of the family, but balanced overall.

---

## Antonio Nunez says

As Harry Lime (Orson Wells) remarked in "The Third Man" "in Italy for 30 years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love - they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock. So long Holly". In the period between 1455 (when Calixtus III was elected Pope) to 1519 (when Lucrezia Borgia died as a respected and beloved Duchess of Ferrara) the Borgias were at the forefront of Renaissance politics, arts and warfare. They met and impressed Machiavelli. They had Savonarola burned to death. They met Raphael, Michelangelo, Pinturicchio, Leonardo da Vinci (he

was an employee) and Titian among many others. They even produced a saint, who was the illegitimate great-grandson of a Pope and a King (Saint Francis Borgia, third general of the Jesuits). They have been featured in movies, comics and TV series (often of a quasi-pornographic nature) into our days. They probably hastened the Protestant Reformation, although in all fairness what they did was different from what their predecessors and successors did only in that it was done on a greater scale and with more success. Alexander VI had illegitimate children, as did Innocent VIII, Julius II and Paul III (the latter even married them into the French royal house) among others. Most popes, possibly even Saint Peter (who after all is rumored to have had a daughter who was a saint, Petronilla) were nepotistic, and nepotism would survive well into the XVIII century. I am told that relations of John XXIII and Paul VI were managers at business concerns in which the Vatican had an interest.

So what is so appealing about the Borgias, other than they were good-looking (granted, the Pope was fat, but both Cesare, Lucrezia and her siblings were remarked by their contemporaries to have been extremely handsome), sexy, violent, living in the capital of the ancient world, ushering in a new era (the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern age) and portrayed in great artwork that still exists?

Of course they were unworthy. Alexander VI was guilty of virtually every sin other than lack of good humor (he appears to have been generally good natured, unlike his bestial successor Julius II). Caesar Borgia was a syphilitic who murdered both his brother and his brother in law (besides many others) and slept with his sister in law. Lucrezia has had worse reputation than she deserves. It is unlikely she slept with her father or brother. It is unlikely she ever poisoned everyone (although Alexander and Caesar probably did so). She bore crushing disappointments (like her forced divorces, the murder of her husband, father and brothers, the death of many of her children who were stillborn) with grace. She was a great patron of the arts and a gracious hostess. Her husband, the Duke of Ferrara Alfonso D'Este was forced to marry her against his will and yet came to love and trust her and suffered greatly when she died. This book by Hibbert is excellent. It doesn't do innuendo but quotes extensively from contemporary sources. He doesn't moralize, but trusts the readers to judge these appalling, appealing people. The story moves at a quick clip and even though there are many characters they are all well identified so that the story is easy to follow. In short, a very good read, where one unites the useful (learning about history of the renaissance) to the delightful (any story that involves story-telling dwarves, costumed dances and carnivals, bullfights in Saint Peter's square and copulating livestock can never be boring). Highly recommended.

---

## **Aaron says**

Having read lots about the renaissance but mostly about the Medici in Florence this was a nice rounding up of the era from the Rome's and the Papacy point of view, and mentioning of the rest of the Kingdoms such as Isabela La Catolica with Fernando of Spain, the French monarchy, etc.

This reading was also perfect just before I start watching the 3rd season of the Borgia's from Showtime with Jeremy Irons. I can appreciate much better the details of the well made series and understand some of the history re-write in order to paint a better picture.

This book is by no means a novel but rather a history telling of the Borgia's, Papacy, Renaissance story.

Machiavelli is well centered observing and taking notes to later write his masterpiece "The Prince" based on Cesare Borgia.

Definitely my kind of reading.

---

### **John Abele says**

to the point,excellent

---

### **Sharon says**

I wanted to get some background info on the Borgias before it was on cable. I found the book to be written more like a textbook and not very easy reading.

---

### **Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says**

Nice bunch!

---

### **Laura says**

This was a matter of fact book, very little speculation about whether or not certain historical rumors were true. If you are looking for a straight recounting of the deeds of the Borgia family, this book will suit you. If you are looking for a shocking and sensational story about the infamous Borgias, wait for HBO to come out with a Borgia series.

---

### **Sandy says**

I wanted to learn more about the Borgias before the Showtime series begins in April however this book was fairly disappointing. It was rather dry and academic. Interesting pictures.

---

### **Monica Marie says**

The book's description is somewhat misleading. The author focused on the criminal and amoral activities of Rodrigo (Pope Alexander VI), Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia, highlighting the equally shameful behavior of other infamous families, such as the Sforza, Orsini and della Rovere. She spent quite a few pages setting the background with the life and activities of Alfons de Borja (Pope Callixtus III), but only a few pages on St Francis Borgia. Johnson had no problem mentioning that St Francis Borgia was at one point morbidly obese, but failed to mention his conversion upon hearing a sermon by St John of God nor his significant friendship with St Teresa of Avila. While interesting, the book is not balanced and leaves many unanswered questions provoked by random comments. A more appropriate title for the book would be "Crimes and misdemeanors

of the Renaissance Borgias".

---

### **Chuck says**

This book is a good overview of a very infamous family. The author does a good job of explaining how the Borgias rose from humble beginnings in Spain to be one of the most influential and powerful families of Renaissance Italy. After all, two Borgia men did become pope.

Since I have taught *The Prince* by Machiavelli for years now, I wanted to know more about Borgia family, since Machiavelli makes them the ideal of how to keep and retain power. Thus, this book does an excellent job of showing how Roderigo Borgia (Pope Alexander VI) uses his power, influence, and money to obtain a kingdom for his literal and metaphorical bastard son Cesare. This book also shows how Roderigo used his illegitimate daughter Lucrezia as a political pawn. She was married off to and divorced from different Italian princes according to the alliances her father wanted to form.

Johnson certainly exposes the deceit, violence, and debauchery that the Borgias were infamous for. However, she also shows that they were just products of their time and that many other princes of the church were lechers and political schemers as well. Then again, she just barely scratches the surface when explaining that many of the shocking stories about this family (such as Roderigo and Lucrezia were lovers) were probably untrue and just exaggerations or inventions by their political enemies.

This book is very readable and a good overview of the history of the family and clearly shows their place in a very contentious and amoral time in European history. Still, I wished that the author would have gone into more details about why they were hated so much and given more details about the shocking things that this scheming family actually did.

---

### **Dolly says**

The Borgia family was certainly an interesting family and the author of this book did a good job in the telling of their story.

---