Prisoner of the Vatican: The Popes, the Kings, and Garibaldi's Rebels in the Struggle to Rule Modern Italy

David I. Kertzer

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David Kertzer's absorbing history presents an astonishing account of the birth of modern Italy and the clandestine politics behind the Vatican's last stand in the battle between church and the newly created Italian state. Drawing on a wealth of secret documents long buried in the Vatican archives, Kertzer reveals a fascinating story of outrageous accusations, mutual denunciations, raucous demonstrations, and secret dealings.

When Italy's armies seized the Holy City and claimed it for the Italian capital, Pope Pius IX, outraged, retreated to the Vatican and declared himself a prisoner, calling on foreign powers to force the Italians out of Rome. The action set in motion decades of political intrigues that hinged on such fascinating characters as Garibaldi, King Viktor Emmanuel, Napoleon III, and Chancellor Bismarck. No one who reads this eye-opening book will ever think of Italy, or the Vatican, in quite the same way again.

"A gripping account of this little-known story." -- Washington Post

"A suspenseful and even captivating read . . . Kertzer illuminates one of history's darker corners." --Providence Journal

"Extraordinary . . . Kertzer describes intrigue, spying, disinformation, and public relations campaigns worthy of any contemporary spy novel." -- Seattle Times

David I. Kertzer is author of several illuminating works of history, including The Popes Against the Jews and The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara, a National Book Award finalist. A professor of anthropology and Italian studies at Brown University, he lives in Providence, Rhode Island.



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