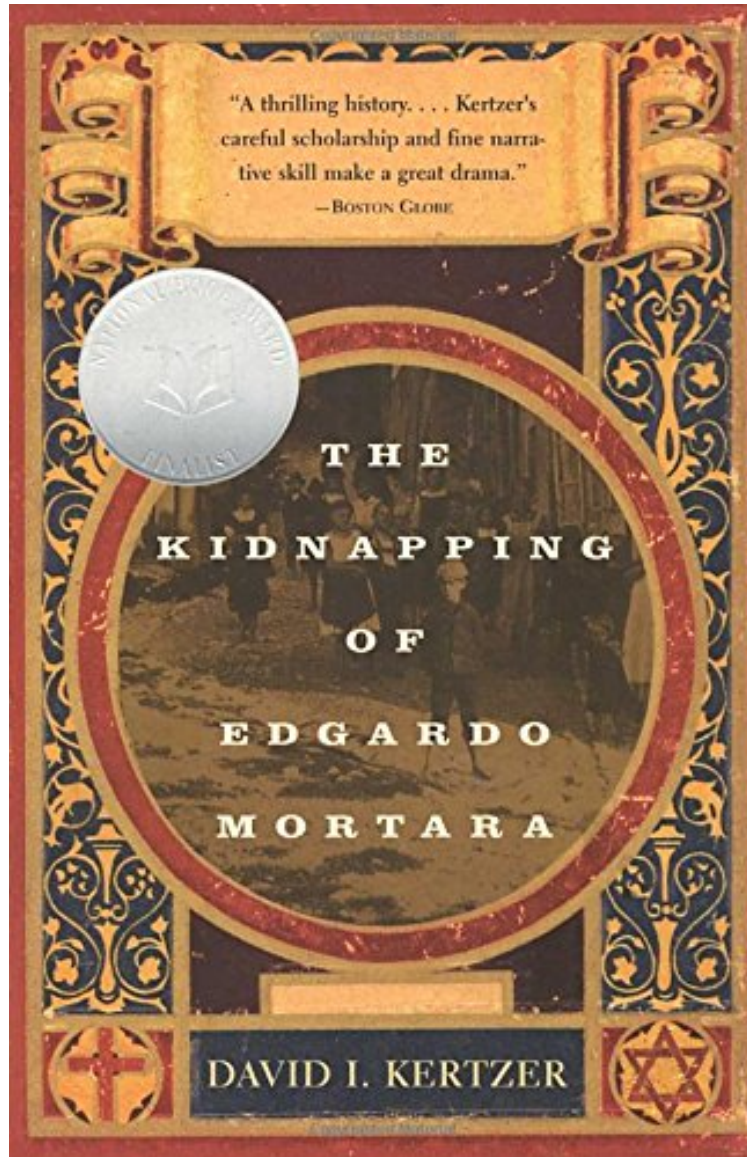


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The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara

David I. Kertzer

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#291760 in Books 1998-06-30 1998-06-30 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .90 x 5.10l, .70 #File Name: 0679768173368 pages | File size: 31.Mb

David I. Kertzer : The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Education and Psychological struggle By Farina King My father was sent by his parents to boarding school when he was five. He is Navajo and had to go to an Indian boarding school. My cousins went on the Mormon Placement program for American Indians. I am a historian of American Indian history

and education and I found this study very enlightening for my work. I not only learned of Italy, Catholic, and Jewish histories in this book. I began to consider new questions concerning the role of education and upbringing in the acculturation and identity of youth. What are the possibilities of conversion and transformation in relation to the "thickness of cultures"? This read is fascinating and helpful.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent summary of events.

By L. Oter

An excellent presentation of real events in 19th century Italy. Mr. Kertzer had done a lot of research and deserves much credit for summarising the events. Well written and grips your attention. You will not want to put the book down.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Kidnapping is a Crime

By Phillip Lund

I was not aware of this action by the Catholic Church. Pope Pius IX had a harsh and vindictive contempt for the Jewish people and their families. A 14 year babysitter "baptized" a one year old Jewish baby. When the church learned of this, this immediately seized the seven year old boy, and kept in isolation. Pius was involved in this kidnapping and made sure this child was raised as a Catholic. The Papal States was directly governed by the Vatican. Their abuses of these states were great enough to lead to a revolt and takeover by the Italian Government. I was deeply angered by this kidnapping and its long term consequences.

Soon to be a major motion picture from Steven Spielberg. A National Book Award Finalist

The extraordinary story of how the vatican's imprisonment of a six-year-old Jewish boy in 1858 helped to bring about the collapse of the popes' worldly power in Italy.

Bologna: nightfall, June 1858. A knock sounds at the door of the Jewish merchant Momolo Mortara. Two officers of the Inquisition bust inside and seize Mortara's six-year-old son, Edgardo. As the boy is wrenched from his father's arms, his mother collapses. The reason for his abduction: the boy had been secretly "baptized" by a family servant. According to papal law, the child is therefore a Catholic who can be taken from his family and delivered to a special monastery where his conversion will be completed. With this terrifying scene, prize-winning historian David I. Kertzer begins the true story of how one boy's kidnapping became a pivotal event in the collapse of the Vatican as a secular power. The book evokes the anguish of a modest merchant's family, the rhythms of daily life in a Jewish ghetto, and also explores, through the revolutionary campaigns of Mazzini and Garibaldi and such personages as Napoleon III, the emergence of Italy as a modern national state. Moving and informative, the *Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* reads as both a historical thriller and an authoritative analysis of how a single human tragedy changed the course of history.

.com

Out of seemingly small events are sometimes born great historical moments. The case of young Edgardo Mortara is one. In 1858 the 6-year-old Jewish boy was taken from his parents' home in Bologna, Italy, by agents of the Papal inquisition. The year before, seriously ill, Edgardo had been secretly baptized, by the Mortaras' Catholic servant (or so she claimed); it was against the law for baptized Christians to be raised by Jews, and so, in the eyes of the Church, the kidnapping was only just. Secular Italians did not agree, and thus was set in motion a series of reforms that ended the Church's temporal power in Italy and forged the creation of a liberal, near-democratic state. For his part, young Edgardo became a priest and lived in a Belgian abbey until 1940--just before the invading Germans began to deport and execute all those tainted with Jewish blood. David Kertzer has shaped a remarkable narrative from almost forgotten events.

From Library Journal

Kertzer (*Sacrificed for Honor*, Beacon, 1993) has uncovered fascinating new information about the unification of Italy. He recounts here the kidnapping of a six-year-old Jewish boy from Bologna who was then raised as a Catholic under the supervision of Pius IX. The incident altered both Italian and church history. What Cavour, Garibaldi, and Victor Emmanuel II could not accomplish in the halls of Versailles and London, and even on the battlefield, the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara did by arousing antichurch feeling in the cause of national unification. This case is an example of the Catholic Church's institutionalized suppression of the Jews. Kertzer weaves the story into a vivid tapestry that will be appreciated by historians and Italian specialists. Recommended for academic and public libraries with 19th-century revolutionary European or Jewish studies collections.

?Harry V. Willems, Southeast Kansas Lib. System, Iola

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From Booklist

In June 1858, police in Bologna, Italy, "kidnapped" a six-year-old Jewish boy, tearing him away from his distraught parents. Edgardo Mortara had been secretly baptized by a Gentile servant girl years before, according to the police. In accordance with the law forbidding "Christian" children from being raised by Jews, Edgardo was removed and began his strange odyssey that led from the struggles for Italian unification to the eve of the Holocaust. Although this is a work of nonfiction, Kertzer's chronicle has the sheer power, lyrical prose, and delicious sense of irony one expects in a great epic novel. As Edgardo's fate unfolds, we witness the long struggle between liberalism and conservatism and between secular and religious authority. Edgardo, his family, his patron and surrogate father Pius IX, and such notables as Napoleon III and Moses Montefiore move in and out of the narrative like gifted actors in a grand saga. Of course, the story is real, and it is a compelling one that merges the bizarre and tragic fate of one family with the evolution of modern European society. Jay Freeman