

«**STORIA IN RETE**»

Catalogue of Documentaries

2010

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1) *The Deaths of Mozart* (2005)

A recent hypothesis tends to exclude the great musician's death simply through illness. It's thought he may have died prematurely due to the violent blows he suffered as a betrayed husband. The Court of Vienna and his wife Costanza may have tried to cover this up yet even the day after Mozart's death a series of inconsistencies led to suspicions and doubts.

Duration: approximately 30'

2) *Balvano 1944: the silence surrounding a massacre* (2005)

In March 1944, during the Anglo-American occupation of Italy, one of the biggest train accidents of all time took place. Even today very little is known about it. An extremely overcrowded train had to stop because of excess weight in an uphill tunnel in the mountains of Irpinia. Over 600 people suffocated to death and immediately afterwards the work of covering up the accident began...

Duration: approx. 24'

3) *The King's Diaries* (2006)

The complicated and unresolved series of events which accompanied the writing and subsequent disappearance of Vittorio Emanuele III of Savoy's memoirs immediately after the sovereign's death in 1947. Why has his son, Umberto II, gone to such pains to conceal this, his father's auto defence ?

Duration: approx. 35'

4) *The Secret Risorgimento* (2006)

Spies, intrigues, plotting, diplomatic secrecy and corruption serve as a backdrop to the Italian Risorgimento (1859-1861). We revisit this national epic event through three key moments and as many decisive characters (alongside men like Costantino Nigra and Admiral Persano): the Countess of Castiglione, the woman who thanks to her graces brought Napoleon III over to the side of Italy; General Govone who created the military espionage on the eve of the Second War of Independence; Giuseppe La Farina, the man who Cavour trusted, in vain, with taking away the Garibaldi's leadership of the Thousand men...

Duration: approx. 37'

5) *The Secrets of Jules Verne* (2005)

A great enigma of literature and science called Jules Verne! How is it possible that a nineteenth century man could imagine and know so many things which came true decades, if not a century after his death? Could it possibly be that, beyond his boundless imagination, the author of “Around the World in 80 Days” and “Voyage to the Centre of the Earth” had some way of seeing further than other people? And could this special gift have something to do with the secret sect that Verne was apparently a member of? Why was it when he tried to cut off from the sect that he was the victim of a mysterious attempt on his life which almost brought him to death’s door?

Duration: approx. 26’

6) *Girolamo Segato, the man who turned bodies to stone* (2005)

In Tuscany in the first half of the 19th century a strange character, Girolamo Segato, was at large. Having wandered through many countries including Egypt he started experimenting a way of preserving human bodies. It was not just a simple embalming technique but a real “petrification” which fixed the colouring, materials, dimensions and features of the corpse for ever. He was on the point of perfection just before his own death but Segato refused to reveal the secrets of his discoveries. These secrets remain today as modern science has been as yet unable to decipher his methods.

Duration: approx. 25’

7) *Rewriting Mussolini’s Death* (2006)

Rewriting Mussolini’s death: the most recent forensic medicine and digital technology lead to very different conclusions with respect to the official version of the circumstances of Mussolini’s death. Today, thanks to a wealth of innovative analysis on the photos and films shot in April 1945 in Piazzale Loreto and at the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Milan, we can conclude that the dictator was killed then dressed once again, according to formality and probably at a different moment from Claretta Petacci. What was the reason behind this staging?

Duration: approx. 56’

8) *The Ghosts of Parma* (2005)

Is there a place in Italy where ghost stories are more prevalent than others? The answer could be yes. In the region around Parma there's an extraordinary and unique tradition concerning tales about ghosts in the many beautiful castles scattered around the countryside. This tradition doesn't even spare the Grand Duchess Maria Luigia (Napoleon's second wife) and her lover Neipperg, united in life and maybe also in death... Then there's the undeniable fact that often these "legends" are accompanied by inexplicable phenomena (strange noises, unexplained appearances, premonitions) without mentioning some surprising photographs...

Duration: approx. 25'

9) *Ludwig II, an eternal enigma* (2006)

Even today he's still the best loved Bavarian king despite the fact his reign conjures up more about his doubts and contradictions than his self confidence and political achievements. Ludwig II of Wittelsbach is remembered for his –presumed– madness, his –authentic– uncontrolled spending, necessary to construct the castles that still attract millions of tourists and for his mysterious death that took place on the banks of Lake Starnberg on the evening of June 13th 1886 just two days after his deposition. Ludwig's death was immediately archived as suicide which could have been connected to the fact that the person who loved him most had planned unsuccessfully to run away with him. That person was no other than his cousin Elisabeth, better known as Sissy Empress of Austria. At the hour of his death she was in her castle on the other side of the lake...

Duration: approx. 38'

10) *The Queen is Nude* (2007)

In 1862 papal Rome was reeling from the shock of an unprecedented scandal: the Queen of Naples, Maria Sofia Wittelsbach, (Sissy's younger sister), newly left by the Piedmonts following the assault on Gaeta and finding refuge in Rome with her husband, was apparently photographed nude. These photographs were put in circulation, so it seems, by liberal, pro-Piedmont agents. All this is true apart from one detail: the photograph of the "Queen in the nude" was in fact a photo-montage, maybe the very first in the history of photography. The pontifical police got to the bottom of the plot thanks to the cooperation of an uninhibited "penitent" Costanza Vaccari Diotallevi, who with her "revelations" accepted to serve the internal battle within the pontifical government between the head of the police, De Merode and the Cardinal Secretary of State, Antonelli. In the meanwhile Queen Maria Sofia was undisturbed by this gossip and had fled far away from her husband to Bavaria to give birth to her baby by a pontifical official.

Duration: approx. 38'

11) *Mysterious Dante* (2007)

He's one of the most famous Italians of all time and his Divine Comedy certainly one of the most quoted pieces of literature ever. And yet it seems that many surprises are hiding between the rhyming tercets: for example the poet's frequentation of sects and groups of various kinds such as "The Faithful of Love". In this way not only do we discover traces that link Dante to the Knights Templar but also how the structure of the Divine Comedy recalls a certain Arabic work which Dante probably knew of in an indirect way.

Duration: approx. 36'

12) *Young, pretty and merciless: The Female Brigands* (2007)

Women toting guns : they were to be the foremothers of the female terrorists in 1970's Italy. With pretty names like Michelina, Filomena, Maria, Marianna... they were known as the "Female Brigands". They were young, pitiless and held vague political convictions. After 1860, in a newly united Italy, they chose to don a rifle and join up with the bands of brigands with whom they fought to gain control of the region of the ex-Kingdom of the Two Sicily's from the Italian army. Their stories, which almost always ended dramatically, can now be recounted thanks to the reconstruction of the events of the lives of the most famous of the female brigands: Marianna Oliviero, Filomena Pennacchio, Michelina De Cesare, Maria Capitano.

Duration: approx. 52'

13) *Desperately Seeking Giulia - Stories and Mysteries of Giulia Farnese* (2007)

Giulia Farnese (1474-1524) was one of the most beautiful – and at times one of the most powerful - women of her times. Entering into the graces of Pope Borgia she helped the ascension of her older brother Alessandro (who become Paolo III) within the bosom of the Church. Giulia became the Pope's mistress and his sister Lucrezia Borgia's friend, all the while getting involved in many picturesque adventures which continued even after the Pontificate's demise. Always between lovers and intrigues she continued to carry her "weight" in Rome even during successive pontificates. But yet she didn't live to see her brother on the throne because she died ten years before Paolo III's election. Any questions remain about her life (why her will and testament wasn't carried out, where she was buried...). One of the most interesting is the one concerning her portrait: many are thought to be of her but nobody seems completely certain. Today experts and researchers are still torturing themselves over whether the forms of a certain statue in Saint Peters might be hers. Or in a fresco that was once in the Vatican. Or maybe in a painting by Raphael. Also in a church shrine near her castle in Vasanello. Or even in a mosaic inside an ancient Roman church...

Duration: approx. 54'

14) *Mussolini's Diaries* (2007)

From time to time the burning subject of Mussolini's diaries, which disappeared in the those turbulent months from spring to summer 1945, flares up once more. From the 1950s onwards a real legend has formed around the dictator's agendas fuelled by secret negotiations, real and presumed fakes, ex-Italian partisans, English businessmen, Swiss banks and notaries and even Japanese diplomats. And yet one thing is certain : those papers really existed. But if many questions remain concerning their contents the same can't be said of the chase to find the dictator's private papers. Wheeler dealers, the secret services, historians and editors have been searching consistently since April 1945.

Duration: approx. 34'

15) *Murder at Court- in the house of de'Medici* (2007)

A team of experts has been able to prove that the Grand Duke of Tuscany Francesco I and his second wife Bianca Cappello (who was a source of heated gossip) were both poisoned, probably the work of the brother and successor of Francesco, Ferdinando de'Medici. The investigation, using evidence from 16th century sources, archaeological and paleo pathology, has been able to demonstrate that the two could really have been poisoned as has always been suspected. To carry out this exhaustive inquiry we've visited the places where the murder was carried out (between Florence, the Villa di Poggio at Caiano and a little church just outside Florence where the proof of the poisoning can be found).

Duration: approx. 40'

16) *A Spy named Claretta* (2008)

Claretta Petacci has gone down in history as the woman who faced death in order to stay close to the man she loved, Benito Mussolini. A character with a certain dignity then in an dramatic period in the history of Italy. But even Claretta's reputation was impaired during these dark times. Her actions, full of ambiguities, didn't escape the attention of the security services of the Republic of Salò or even Mussolini himself who, in October 1944, ordered that Claretta's home on the Garda Lake should be searched for her private letters and documents. It emerged from these papers that Claretta had been passing on information to the Germans. But in a period where double crossing was a frequent occurrence it was thought that as her brother Marcello had some strange dealings Claretta may also have gathered information from English and American agents. At least this is what Mussolini's wife, Donna Rachele, claimed. She confronted Petacci in a dramatic face to face a few months before the end of war. But nothing could stop Claretta from playing the part of an "informing pawn"- whether she was aware of it or not- at Mussolini's side until the dramatic end when they were both shot in Giulino di Mezzegra.

Duration: approx. 52'

17) *Sissy – the Real Story* (2008)

The nickname which made the tortured empress of Austria and Hungary so famous was coined as the result of a spelling blunder : an intricate signature where an “L” was mistaken for an “S”. Therefore “Lisi” – Elizabeth’s family nickname – became Sisy and later Sissy. This is one of the many details that have been omitted from the myth created by the cinema: the story we tell is of an insecure, fragile and betrayed woman, obsessed by the beauty of her hair, her weight, her personal hygiene. She was always travelling, followed by misfortune and bereavements until the death of her only male child, Rudolf, who died at Mayerling. And even her own death seemed to hide a tragic coincidence: indeed the young Italian anarchist who killed her had actually meant to hit another target that day...

Duration: approx. 50’

18) *The Real Story of Paolo and Francesca* (2008)

1289: Conflicts and political alliances between the Lords of Ravenna and Rimini are behind one of the most tragic love stories ever recounted, immortalized in Dante’s poetry and many other works of art. Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Polenta really existed, were indeed lovers (she was Paolo’s brother Gianciotto’s- known as Crippled John’s- wife) and, being caught red handed inside the Castle of Gradara were murdered by Francesca’s betrayed husband. But neither of them was innocent nor young considering the standards of the time: she was 29 and had been married for 14 years and he was 43 with a wife and children. Notwithstanding the brutality of the murder, the political balance of that era had to guarantee the alliance between the house of Ravenna and Rimini therefore the event was conveniently swept under the carpet. And so, a short time after the incident, the two families celebrated another arranged wedding with financial interests at its heart...

Duration: approx 40’

19) *Who Killed the Pope’s Son?* (2007)

During the Renaissance the Papal court was shocked by a series of three similar dramatic events which happened in the space of fifty years. The Pontiff’s favourite son was assassinated throwing his father into despair. A thread of blood was therefore to link these three Pontiffs each one very different from the others: in 1497 it was Alessandro VI, Pope Borgia, who mourned the sudden death of his first son Juan (the older brother of Cesare and Lucrezia); in 1537 it was Alessandro de’Medici, the illegitimate son of Clemente VII, who fell victim to his cousin Lorenzino; and finally in 1547 Paolo III Farnese (the Pope who opened the council of Trent) saw his first son Pier Luigi assassinated.

Duration: approx. 54’

20) *The Prince of San Severo* (2008)

18th century Naples: at the height of the Enlightenment the city was one of the finest cultural capitols in Europe. One figure shines out in this context: Prince Raimondo di Sangro (1710-1771). He was a highly educated man, passionate about art and science. He seemed indeed to incarnate all the ideals of the Enlightened intellectual. However there seemed to be a darker side: he was known to practise a series of strange activities inside his palace laboratory in Piazza S. Domenico. Popular opinion believed he experimented in all kinds of witchcraft and alchemy. But in fact the prince realized some mechanical and war inventions which hugely impressed his contemporaries. He was also an expert in anatomy and also participated in secret sects. The work for which he is most famous, the “San Severo Chapel”, contains some statues of exquisite beauty. Their execution was much talked about at the time (especially the “Veiled Christ”). But it’s the series of allegories inside the chapel which fed the fame of the enigma of San Severo: is it really a collection of references to Masonic, alchemy and knights of the Templar knowledge? And could our mysterious nobleman, as some have suggested , really have been one of Cagliostro’s masters?

Duration: approx. 55’

21) *The Secret of Federico II of Montefeltro* (2008)

Apart from being one of the major political and political figures of mid 15th century Italy Federico was also a great patron of the arts. One of his most important commissions was Piero della Francesca’s “Flagellation” which has been the source of debate for decades. Experts have been arguing about what exactly the artist wanted to represent: the assassination of Federico’s brother, Oddantonio, or else the attempt to organize a crusade to save Constantinople.

Duration: approx. 52’

22) *A Roman road: the Via Flaminia* (2008)

What was the Via Flaminia like in Augustus ‘time? This most important of Roman roads is at the centre of a detailed 3D reconstruction carried out by the Laboratory for Applied Technology of Artistic Heritage of the National Research Council (CNR) in Rome. The remains of Livia’s - Augustus’ wife - villa are at the heart of this reconstruction. There’s an ancient legend associated with her villa : it’s told that a white hen with an olive branch fell into Livia’s lap in this very abode. The CNR’s researchers studied this story in great depth as well as the structures of two other monuments: The Ponte Milvio bridge and Constantine’s Arch which were transformed into the village of “Malborghetto” during the Middle Ages. Situated a few kilometres apart these two places are however connected by an historic event: Constantine’s victory over Maxentius in 312 AD, the Battle of Saxa Rubra or Ponte Milvio which opened the doors to Christianity within the Roman Empire.

Duration: approx. 48’

23) *Sabbioneta, the ideal city* (2008)

In the second half of the 16th century Vespasiano Gonzaga realized his dream: an ideal city. Sabbioneta (Mantova) is a hymn to harmony and architectonic perfection, built however by a violent (he was a soldier by profession in service for Spain) and vindictive man (his first wife was poisoned and one son killed in a moment of rage). Even so, this brutal temperament did not stop Gonzaga being a lover of the arts. Although he was pursued by debt and misadventures Vespasiano clung to his dream and when he finally carried it out so successfully he considered Sabbioneta his one and only first born child. This is History which is a perfect cross-section of the Renaissance with its artistic splendours, dreams of perfection alongside murder and violence.

Duration: approx. 54'

24) *The Great Cardinal: Alessandro Farnese* (2009)

Representing the Renaissance cardinal par excellence Alessandro Farnese, Paul the Third's nephew, was to dominate political, religious and cultural life over several decades in 16th century Rome. More than once on the point of becoming Pope, the Great Cardinal, as he was known, left many traces behind him: numerous documents and letters, the Church of Gesù – where his tomb is- and the restructuring of the splendid Palazzo Farnese di Caprarola. Then there was the affair of his secret child, Clelia, at the centre of a singular dispute with another highly powerful Cardinal of the time: Fernando de'Medici. Evidence for this dispute was provided by some licentious and allusive paintings commissioned by De'Medici portraying Clelia nude and in ambiguous poses...

Duration: approx. 56'

25) *The “Spring Mystery”* (2009)

Simonetta Cattaneo is a name which doesn't sound familiar but just look at Botticelli's “Spring” or “The Birth of Venus” for a moment and you'll realize who we're talking about! This young lady from Genoa was the talk of Florence around 1475. Both muse and model for many artists Simonetta – who had married a Vespucci – was the mistress of Giuliano de'Medici, Lorenzo the Magnificent's younger brother. However in Botticelli's masterpieces there is more than meets the eye. But these secrets are so well hidden that over the centuries many different interpretations have developed. What emerges is what it was like to paint during the Renaissance, an age in which art called not only upon culture but also the news and politics of the day.

Duration: approx. 52' (*disponibile anche con sottotitoli in inglese*)

26) *The drama at Mayerling and Rudolf of Hapsburg* (2008)

Who was Rudolf of Hapsburg exactly? The heir to the throne of Austria and Hungary, the son of Franz Josef and Sissy, died at the age of thirty alongside his young mistress in shady circumstances in his hunting lodge at Mayerling on the 30th of January 1889. The official version – despite contemporaries' doubts - was that of suicide and yet, especially in recent years, historical research has revealed new elements that suggest the possibility of a double homicide. This homicide was an epilogue to a complex, international plot organized between Paris and Vienna in order to place Rudolf on the throne as quickly as possible to put an end to his father's pro-German policies. However this project hadn't taken two things into account: first Rudolf's psychological fragility and then the extreme efficiency of Bismarck and William the Second's German secret services...

Duration: approx. 48'

27) *The Renaissance Courtesans* (2009)

The equivalent of today's luxury "escort girls" lived between Rome, Florence and Venice. They had their own districts, their homes, their vices, their hobbies, their five star clientele but also their own churches. Divided into "ladies of the street" and "high class ladies" the courtesans –who often paid their taxes- were kept under control by the authorities. For example in Florence and Venice a list was drawn up of these professional women. They were tolerated but even more often visited upon! These courtesans not only left behind them a memory of dissolution and social climbing but also stamped their names on the streets (vicolo dell'Onestà – Honesty Close- in Florence, the Ponte delle Tette – The Bridge of Breasts- in Venice) and on the history of literature and on famous paintings. The memories of some of them have come down to us thanks to their cultural and artistic merits, be they direct or indirect: Veronica Franco in Venice the "Redhead" or the "Curly headed girl" in Florence (loved by Machiavelli) or the "Divine Empress" in Rome.

Duration: approx. 54'

28) *An independent woman: Giulia Gonzaga's adventurous life* (2009)

Giulia Gonzaga (1513-1566) was a land owner (Fondi, far from her native Gazuolo, beside Mantova), smacking of heresy, independent to the point of being a feminist (married one of the Colonna family at 16 years old and was widowed when only 18) friend of both men of letters and warriors. She was beautiful, without a husband and the object of an attempted kidnapping by the famous Ottoman pirate Red Beard. She got away by the skin of her teeth. She similarly narrowly escaped from the investigations of the Inquisition who suspected her of being sympathetic to the Lutheran cause which was being diffused in those years. In both towns of Fondi and Itri we can still see the castles

where she reigned and loved Cardinal Ippolito De'Medici, nephew of Clement VII, who was poisoned in Itri but maybe not before conceiving a child with the lovely Giulia. She spent the last years of her life in a convent but not before having looked after the education of one of the most splendid princes of the Renaissance: her nephew Vespasiano Gonzaga. Giulia Gonzaga was included in the «Biographical Dictionary of the Italians» for the important historical and cultural role she played.

Duration: approx. 49'

29) *An enigma named Celestine V* (2009)

Celestine V was the only Pope who left his appointment before his death (and for this reason Dante placed him in Hell in the Divine Comedy). During the four months of his pontificate he never once went to Rome. He'd been elected during one of the longest conclaves in history despite the fact that he wasn't a cardinal: Pietro Angeleri was a hermit monk noted for his saintliness who in that summer of 1294 was already 79 years old. He was nominated clearly because there was an impasse between the other cardinals. But his behaviour and his first decisions (for example to be crowned in a ceremony in Aquila, where Dante Alighieri was also present) risked breaking many of the practises inside the church. His resignation in December 1294 was "helped along" by his successor, Cardinal Castani who, as soon as he was elected Pope Boniface VIII, had his predecessor thrown into prison where he died a few months later. He was surely murdered as results of recent analysis of his remains have shown. After this analysis it has recently been shown that Pietro's remains had been the object of a strange and unexplained theft.

Duration: approx. 55'

30) *Galileo Galilei* (2009)

Both a scientist and a man deeply rooted in his times, and determined to change them with his discoveries and inventions, GG engaged a tug of war with the catholic inquisition, that he eventually lost having to give up some of his credos. The documentary follows the long life of the scientist and the man, his contrasts between faith and scientific research in the counter reform times in Italy. This contrast will mark his life until the trial of 1633, where he was sentenced partly because of a document of dubious authenticity describing a private conversation between Galileo and the powerful Cardinal Bellarmino. In 1633, though, Bellarmino had been dead for a while, and could not help Galileo to reestablish truth any more. A misfortune that would lead the scientist to spend the last few years of his life confined near Florence, sick and lonely.

Duration: approx. 65'

31) *The many deaths of Cagliostro* (2009)

After a life full of adventure and enigmas, Giuseppe Balsamo, better known as the mysterious Count Alessandro of Cagliostro, spends his last days in the pontifical jail of Saint Leo. While enduring tough detention, Cagliostro tries to stay in control of the situation and to study a way to break out. Events surrounding his death, officially in August 1795, leave room to theories that either see him successfully escape or die in the attempt. Fact is that Cagliostro's mortal spoils have seen vicissitudes in line with his tumultuous life and have been wandering in the restricted perimeter of the county that has linked his name to Cagliostro's forever: San Leo.

Duration: approx. 49'

32) *Giordano Bruno* (2009)

Alone against everything and everyone, for years Bruno challenged, astray for Europe, academic and cultural environments but especially the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist world. Eventually the adventure of this monk of complex personalities and vast culture (which ranged from magic to astronomy, from metaphysics to theology) ends in Rome, in Campo de' Fiori (1600) at the end of the longest trial ever instructed by the Inquisition: almost eight years. Years in which Bruno, with clever tactics, manages to avoid to abjure his openly anti-Christian philosophy. The arrival of the (not yet) Cardinal Bellarmino finally bring Bruno to choose between the gallows and the abjuration of his theories. In fact, the burning on which Bruno loses life is also the spark that will give life to his legend, a legend powered, during the Risorgimento, by the erection of the statue in Rome, commissioned by the laicy and Masonic Lodges in controversy with the Church that had obstructed the Italian unification.

Duration: approx. 58'

33) *McCartney's Code* (2010)

The famous "legend" of "Paul is dead" to the test of forensic identification techniques. Since 1969 the hypothesis that Paul McCartney – bassist of legendary Beatles – died in a car accident in November 1966 and was replaced by an almost perfect look-alike feeds tens of thousands of websites and forums around the world. Several clues deliberately inserted by the Beatles in their songs and covers of their album fuel this "legend" (one of the most articulate and followed of all times). A team of forensics experts has submitted images, vocals and lyrics by McCartney to accurate anthropometric, graphological and phonic analysis to verify on which concrete grounds the legend may lie, analysis then compared with those commissioned by a German woman who claims to be the daughter of McCartney, who would have used a look-alike in order to effect a paternity test that – while negative – leaves many questions open...

Duration: approx. 56'

34) *The True Story of Monza's nun* (2010)

25 November 1607: the nun that sword hand holds at bay the men who came to arrest her-and that must struggle in order to restrain her suicidal attempts– is not an ordinary woman from any point of view. She has been in a convent for over twenty years, she is the daughter of the Lord of Monza, she had two sons, a relationship with a violent and powerful man and has at least one murder on her conscience. She is Sister suor Virginia Maria of Leva made famous by Manzoni as Sister Gertrude, the nun of Monza of "The Betrayed". But what Manzoni told is only a part of what happened in truth in the Benedictine convent of Santa Margherita, at Monza. The true story of the Nun of Monza (guilty of murder, tortured and kept prisoner for thirteen years) is told by ten files of judicial-era stories and revelations about the feats of sister Virginia Mary: despotic, violent, in love with Gian Paolo Osio, a noble man arrogant and violent who lives next to the convent of Santa Margherita and that gets her pregnant twice. Osio enters and exits the convent as he wishes, to the nuns' complicity. All but one nun: sister Caterina, a novice that for jealousy and revenge threatens to reveal everything. And gets killed by Osio instigated from Virginia and other sisters. Everybody will pay for that horrible sin: the two nuns accessory to the crime will be killed by Osio during the flight; the same Osio, sentenced in absentia will be killed by a nobleman to whom he requested asylum. In the end, the only one to save her skin will be the nun of Monza that will survive all: the victims' relatives, the accomplices, the torturers, the judges and even the terrible plague of 1630 retraced by Manzoni. She will die 75 years old. Those who saw her shortly before her death will say that "to see her you could hardly believe that there was a time when she was beautiful and shameless".

Ready june 2010

35) *Caterina Sforza, a woman between War and Alchemy* (2010)

Among the great women of the Italian Renaissance, Caterina Sforza Riario has more than one reason to excel. She exerted political influence but, unlike other contemporary women, she achieved it through battles, succeeding on several occasions to achieve important results. Like, for example, when she wanted to avenge the death of his first two husbands or when she conquered Castel Sant'Angelo, in August 1484, on the death of Pope Sixtus IV. Catherine was only 21 years old in those days and she was the wife of the Lord of Imola and Forlì. She will live to be only 46 years old, but she lived to the fullest: three weddings, seven children, clashes and battles, and a "hobby": herbal medicine, natural medicine and beauty treatments. The more than 400 his recipes, fruit of personal searches of Alchemy, came up to us. In short, she was a woman who knew how to combine "manly" talents to a very feminine nature. Her proverbial beauty contributed to her myth while she was still alive. But, at least on one occasion, it was the origin of the ugliest of experiences: several days at the mercy of fierce Duke Valentino, Cesare Borgia, after the fall of her hometown, Forlì. In her story the protagonists of the late 400's intertwine: the Sforzas (she was the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of Milan Galeazzo Maria and Ludovico II

Moro was her paternal uncle), the Riarios (the family of Sixtus IV), the Borgias (with whom she was always in clutch, both with Pope Alexander VI and with his son Cesare) and the Medici (her third husband was Giovanni Il Popolano, cousin of the Lorenzo il Magnifico: their son was Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, the main captain of ventura of the fifteenth century, and the parent branch of the Dukes and Grand Dukes of Tuscany).

Ready september 2010

36) *The True story of Lucrezia Borgia* (2010)

Legend paints her to be beautiful, perfidious, cynical and murderous. History leaves a much better memory: Lucrezia Borgia was not an Angel but she was a woman forced by men of her family to endure painful choices. But most of the terrible events that have been assigned to her or that actually saw her involved occurred within a few years, in the midst of the pontificate of his father, Pope Alexander VI, and of the maximum power to his brother Cesare, the notorious Duke Valentino. Once left Rome forever, things changed. And if, particularly in Spain, historians are working on a partial rehabilitation of the entire family, starting with the discussed Alexander VI, perhaps for Lucrezia there's no need for complex exercises in revisionism. In fact, starting from his third marriage, with the Duke of Ferrara Alfonso I d'Este, in 1501, Lucrezia, only 21 years old, began a new life. A quiet life, of the Court, where, as other dames of the era she was celebrated by poets (as Bembo and Ariosto), she was loved by her husband and gave birth to six children. The last delivery was fatal. She was only 39 years old. An end extremely normal – for its time – for a woman who has seen her reputation over the centuries to become linked to poisons and lust. The documentary will focus on her private life, especially in Ferrara.

Ready september 2010

37) *The Magnificent Deception: Cesare Borgia and the “Dinner of Senigaglia”* (2010)

It was not only one of the more obscure and dramatic episodes of the Renaissance but, according to Machiavelli, it was a real "masterpiece". It was the great Florentine thinker who coined the expression "magnificent deception" to tell how, in the night between 31 December 1502 and the dawn of the first January 1503, Cesare Borgia, the Duke Valentino, son of Pope Alexander VI, summoned in Rocca di Senigaglia four captains who had conjured against him and his project to combine Marche and Romagna in a personal state. Paolo Orsini, Francesco Orsini, Oliverotto Offreducci, Vitellozzo Vitelli agreed to meet with Valentino for a peacemaking dinner. Instead, once finished eating Borgia stops being mild and conciliatory, and his men block the four. For two of them (Oliverotto Offreducci and Vitellozzo Vitelli) die by strangulation shortly after the dinner as Machiavelli reconstructs. For the two Orsini, as members of a powerful family always averse to Borgia but with important support, the child

shall consult with Rome. After getting the go-ahead from his father, Cesare Borgia Valentino has the two other survivors of the "Dinner of Senigallia" strangled. It's the apotheosis of Borgia power but also the beginning of the end. Eight months later, with the sudden death of Alexander VI, everything will quickly collapse.

Ready july 2010

38) *The True story of Donna Olimpia* (2010)

If there ever was a powerful woman in the Vatican that woman was Olimpia Maidalchini (1594 – 1657) who was called "Priestess" (but for the Romans was the "Pimpaccia"). In Rome in mid-17th century Donna Olimpia, noble, greedy, adventuress will deeply impact the papacy of Innocent x (1644-1655), of whom she is sister-in-law, having married the younger brother of the future Pope. At the heart of gossips of all kind – both among the people and between the noblemen and the prelates – Donna Olimpia has egemonized power in Rome for more than ten years, deciding civil and ecclesiastical careers and influencing foreign policy. As in the case of the so-called "war of the Castro". The Duchy of Castro, in Viterbo county, was a small and young " Model State " created from Paul III (in 1537) for his family – the Farnese- within the possessions of the Church. Partly at the instigation of Maidalchini, the Duchy of Castro (in the middle of a dispute between the papacy and the Farnese) was being attacked, and its capital – Castro- totally destroyed. The bells of its cathedral still ring today from Sant'Agnese in Agone in Piazza Navona, the Church next to the Palace where the Maidalchini lived and where the Pope was born. The hardness of his character – capable of stealing from the room of the dying Pope and to refuse to pay for his funeral – gave rise to a series of black legends that in most cases are real.

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