

# The Confessions Of Catherine De Medici

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in the identities of catherine de medici susan broomhall provides an innovative analysis of the representational strategies that constructed catherine de medici and sought to explain her behaviour and motivations through her detailed exploration of the identities that the queen her allies supporters and clients sought to project and how contemporaries responded to them broomhall establishes a new vision of this important sixteenth century protagonist a clearer understanding of the dialogic and dynamic nature of identity construction and reception and its consequences for catherine de medici s legacy memory and historiography

poisoner besotted mother despot necromancer engineer of a massacre the stain on the name of catherine de medici is centuries old in this critically hailed biography leonie frieda reclaims the story of this unjustly maligned queen of france to reveal a skilled ruler battling against extraordinary political and personal odds orphaned in infancy imprisoned in childhood heiress to an ancient name and vast fortune catherine de medici was brought up in florence a city dominated by her ruling family at age fourteen the italian born young woman became a french princess in a magnificent alliance arranged by her uncle the pope to henry son of king francis i of france she suffered cruelly as her new husband became bewitched by the superbly elegant diane de poitiers henry s influential and lifelong mistress wisely sent her lover to sleep with catherine and after an agonizingly childless decade when she saw popular resentment build against her she conceived the first of ten children slowly catherine made the court her own she transformed the cultural life of france importing much of what we now think of as typically french cuisine art music fashion from italy cradle of the renaissance in a freak jousting accident in 1559 a wooden splinter fatally pierced henry s eye hitherto sidelined catherine found herself suddenly thrust into the maelstrom of french power politics for which she soon discovered she had inherited a natural gift a contemporary and sometime ally of elizabeth i of england catherine learned to become both a superb strategist and ruthless conspirator during the rise of protestantism her attempts at religious tolerance were constantly foiled and france was riven by endemic civil wars although history has always laid the blame for the infamous st bartholomew s day massacre by a catholic mob of thousands of french protestants at catherine s door leonie frieda presents a powerful case for catherine s defense this courageous queen s fatal flaw was a blind devotion to her sickly and corrupt children three of whom would become kings of france despite their weaknesses catherine s indomitable fight to protect the throne and their birthright ensured the survival of the french monarchy for a further two hundred years after her death until it was swept away by the french revolution leonie frieda has returned to original sources and reread the thousands of letters left by catherine and she has reinvested this protean figure with humanity the first biography of catherine in decades it reveals her to be one of the most influential women ever to wear a crown

catherine de medici 1519 89 was the wife of one king of france and the mother of three more the last sorry representatives of the valois who had ruled france since 1328 she herself is of preeminent importance to french history and one of the most controversial of all historical figures despised until she was powerful enough to be hated she was in her own lifetime and since the subject of a black legend that has made her a favourite subject of historical novelists most notably alexandre dumas whose reine margot has recently had new currency on film yet there is no recent biography of her in english this new study by a leading scholar of renaissance france is a major event catherine a neglected and insignificant member of the florentine medici entered french history in 1533 when she married the son of francis i for short lived political reasons her uncle was pope clement vii who died the following year now of no diplomatic value catherine was treated with contempt at the french court even after her husband s accession as henry ii in 1547 even so she gave him ten children before he was killed in a tournament in 1559 she was left with three young boys who succeeded to the throne as francis ii 1559 60 charles ix 1560 74 and henry iii 1574 89 as regent and queen

mother a woman and with no natural power base of her own she faced impossible odds france was accelerating into chaos with political faction at court and religious conflict throughout the land as the country disintegrated catherine s overriding concern was for the interests of her children she was tireless in her efforts to protect her sons inheritance and to settle her daughters in advantageous marriages but france needed more catherine herself was both peace loving and in an age of frenzied religious hatred unbigoted she tried to use the huguenots to counterbalance the growing power of the ultra catholic guises but extremism on all sides frustrated her she was drawn into the violence her name is ineradicably associated with its culmination the massacre of st bartholomew 24 august 1572 when thousands of huguenots were slaughtered in paris and elsewhere to this day no one knows for certain whether catherine instigated the massacre or not but here robert knecht explores the probabilities in a notably level headed fashion his book is a gripping narrative in its own right it offers both a lucid exposition of immensely complex events with their profound impact on the future of france and also a convincing portrait of its enigmatic central character in going behind the familiar black legend professor knecht does not make the mistake of whitewashing catherine but he shows how intractable was her world and how shifty or intransigent the people with whom she had to deal for all her flaws she emerges as a more sympathetic and in her pragmatism more modern figure than most of her leading contemporaries

soon to be the tv series the serpent queen starring samantha morton the bestselling revisionist biography of one of the great women of the 16th century orphaned in infancy catherine de medici was the sole legitimate heiress to the medici family fortune married at fourteen to the future henri ii of france she was constantly humiliated by his influential mistress diane de poitiers when her husband died as a result of a duelling accident in paris catherine was made queen regent during the short reign of her eldest son married to mary queen of scots and like many of her children he died young when her second son became king she was the power behind the throne she nursed dynastic ambitions but was continually drawn into political and religious intrigues between catholics and protestants that plagued france for much of the later part of her life it had always been said that she was implicated in the notorious saint bartholomew s day massacre together with the king and her third son who succeeded to the throne in 1574 but was murdered her political influence waned but she survived long enough to ensure the succession of her son in law who had married her daughter margaret

a financial times book of the year a new biography of catherine de medici the most powerful woman in sixteenth century europe whose author uses neglected primary sources to recreate the life and times of a remarkable and remarkably traduced woman history is rarely kind to women of power but few have had their reputations quite so brutally shredded as catherine de medici italian born queen of france and influential mother of three successive french kings during that country s long sequence of sectarian wars in the second half of the sixteenth century thanks to the malign efforts of propagandists motivated by religious hatred history tends to remember catherine as a schemer who used witchcraft and poison to eradicate her rivals as a spendthrift dilettante who wasted ruinous sums of money on building and embellishment of monuments and palaces

and most sinister of all as instigator of the st bartholomew s day massacre of 1572 in which thousands of innocent protestants were slaughtered by catholic mobs mary hollingsworth delves into contemporary archives to discover deeper truths behind these persistent myths the correspondence of diplomats and catherine s own letters reveal a woman who worked tirelessly to find a way for catholics and protestants to coexist in peace a goal for which she continued to strive until the end of her life who was well informed on both literary and scientific matters and whose patronage of the arts helped bring into being glorious châteaux and gardens priceless work of art and magnificent festivities combining theatre music and ballet which display the grandeur of the french court

in catherine de medici honoré de balzac delves into the life and political machinations of one of history s most enigmatic figures this historical novel written in balzac s characteristic detailed and vivid prose intricately weaves the tapestry of 16th century france against a backdrop of court intrigue religious strife and the quest for power balzac s exploration of the psychological depths of catherine from her fierce determination to defend her children s claims to the throne to her use of manipulation in a male dominated world is underscored by richly developed characters and acute social commentary characteristic of the author s broader literary project known as la comédie humaine which seeks to provide a comprehensive portrait of french society honoré de balzac a seminal figure in french literature drew upon his keen observations of society and politics to craft catherine de medici having lived through the tumultuous changes of 19th century france balzac s lifelong interest in the complexities of human nature and societal structures sparked his fascination with historical figures who shaped france s destiny his approach reflects not only a deep understanding of the historical context but also a critique of contemporary societal norms this novel is highly recommended for readers who are interested in historical fiction political intrigue and character driven narratives balzac s penetrating insights into power dynamics and the human condition offer a profound understanding of how a woman despite the constraints of her era wielded formidable influence over a nation catherine de medici is an essential read for anyone captivated by the intersections of history and literature

this is a new release of the original 1936 edition

i was ten years old when i discovered i might be a witch the sixteenth century the era of queens catherine de medici is an impressionable mystical girl she is orphaned and taken hostage by her enemies and manipulated by her advisors yet she is to become france s most powerful regent history will make her name synonymous with evil but she is all too human humiliated at the hands of her husband and his mistress and haunted by her gift of second sight she must rise above her troubles and fight to save her dynasty and adopted country from the brutal wars of religion in the confessions of catherine de medici c w gortner vividly depicts the turbulent life of one of history s most notorious yet misunderstood women

now the tv series the serpent queen starring samantha morton the bestselling revisionist biography of one of the great women of the 16th century orphaned in infancy catherine de medici was the sole legitimate heiress to the medici family fortune married at fourteen to the future henri ii of france she was constantly humiliated by his influential mistress diane de poitiers when her husband died as a result of a duelling accident in paris catherine was made queen regent during the short reign of her eldest son married to mary queen of scots and like many of her children he died young when her second son became king she was the power behind the throne she nursed dynastic ambitions but was continually drawn into political and religious intrigues between catholics and protestants that plagued france for much of the later part of her life it had always been said that she was implicated in the notorious saint bartholomew s day massacre together with the king and her third son who succeeded to the throne in 1574 but was murdered her political influence waned but she survived long enough to ensure the succession of her son in law who had married her daughter margaret

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miss sichel is an accomplished historian who draws her characters with spirit and skill her volumes are the result of much diligent research and the material is fully sifted and illuminated by a trained imagination it is recognized by all critics that miss sichel s pictures of catherine and the actors in the drama of which she was the central figure are trustworthy transcripts of the life of the time the story of catherine is replete with sensational interest and full justice is done to her in miss sichel s volumes edith sichel was also the author of the household of the lafayettes women and men of the french renaissance and catherine de medici and the french reformation

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includes a letter written on 8 january 1571 by catherine de medicis to monsieur de fourquevaux member of the king s privy council and ambassador to spain a private letter detailing catherine s views of relations with spain the french queen discussed the upcoming marriage in portugal negotiations at torres and the treatment of her granddaughters by the new spanish queen anna of austria she notes the receipt of a gift of the spanish king and concludes with assurances of personal affection and goodwill collection also includes one 4x5 negative of a photograph

of catherine de medicis

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