



The Birth of the Mafia: Crime, Power, and the Making of Modern Sicily

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Books on Sicily ... and on the Sicilian Mafia

John Julius Norwich, *Sicily: A Short History, from the Greeks to Cosa Nostra* (2015): A clear and concise exposition by one of the great popular historians of Italy and the Mediterranean.

Vincent Cronin, *The Golden Honeycomb* (1954): One of the best travel books ever written, and much more than a travel book. Cronin travels across Sicily in search of the mythical golden honeycomb made by Daedalus.

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard* (1958): One of the great Italian novels of the 20th century. It shows the turmoil and divided loyalties in Sicily at the time of the Risorgimento - and the conditions in which the mafia thrived. Also a film and a Netflix series (see below).

John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia* (2004): An excellent overview of the Mafia by one of the top historians of Sicily.

Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*: Likewise an excellent study of the mafia, concentrating on economics and sociology.

Mario Puzo, *The Godfather* (1969): Puzo did his research, and besides being a great family saga - captured in multiple films by Francis Ford Coppola - the novel gives us information on the development of the mafia in Sicily.

Film and television

The Godfather (1972), *The Godfather Part II* (1974), and *The Godfather Part III* (1990): Francis Ford Coppola's trilogy is a masterpiece of cinema but not especially reliable about the Sicilian mafia. However, the films do capture elements of Sicilian landscape, codes of honour, vendetta, and the weight of family loyalty.

The Leopard (1963): The film adaptation of Lampedusa's novel, directed by Luchino Visconti and starring Burt Lancaster. The film is sumptuous and brilliantly evokes the decaying world of the Sicilian nobility - and the vacuum into which the mafia will step.

The Leopard (2025): The 6-part Netflix adaptation of the novel starring Kim Rossi Stuart. Even more beautiful to watch than the 1963 version. It takes some liberties with the novel, but captures the upheaval of Sicily in the 1860s.