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Condottiere 1300-1500: Infamous medieval mercenaries (Warrior)

David Murphy

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Originally hired by wealthy Italian city states to protect their assets during a time of ceaseless warring, the Condottiere of the Italian peninsula became famous for his wealth, venality and amorality during the 14th century.

The Condottieri's pursuit of profit meant they were prepared to change sides for the right price, even during battle, and they prospered, becoming both powerful and rich in the process. Leaders such as John Hawkwood, with his famous 'White Company', became major political figures.

Once at the peak of their power, they often worked together to protect their comfortable position by staging a number of visually impressive but almost bloodless battles, thereby avoiding the real thing. It was because of this, and their reliance on medieval tactics and weaponry, including grand armoured knights, that they were eventually wiped out or dispersed by the more modern armies.

Lavishly illustrated with contemporary depictions and original artwork, this title examines the complex military organization, recruitment, training and weaponry of the Condottieri. With insight into their origins and motivations, the author, Dr David Murphy, brings together the social, political and military history of these powerful and unscrupulous men who managed to influence Italian society and warfare for over two centuries.

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