

For the weekly luncheon, I have circulated a draft of the last chapter of my forthcoming book entitled *Montefeltro. A Coded Conspiracy, the Medici and the Sistine Chapel* (Doubleday, 2008). This chapter explores the possibility that Botticelli, the quintessential Florentine painter of the late fifteenth-century, might have held a political and personal grudge against the pope, Sixtus IV, when he was summoned in Rome to decorate the walls of the Sistine Chapel. In an elaborate analysis of some iconographical elements of the Vatican frescoes by Botticelli and his famous *Spring*, I propose a new reading of these pictures. I also talk about another potential discovery: the relationship between the Portrait of Federico da Montefeltro (now in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino) in which the Duke is holding a thick volume, and a Vatican codex that he might be reading (this idea is developed in the catalogue of the exhibition "Federico da Montefeltro and His Library" at the Morgan Library, to be held between June 8 and September 30, 2007). All of the above is part of my project on "Images of Power", which I have been so lucky to expand thanks to my Fellowship at the Italian Academy.