

**THE FLORENTINE HOUSE OF MEDICI (1389-1743):
POLITICS, PATRONAGE, AND THE USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
IN SHAPING THE RENAISSANCE**

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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A great many individuals and families of historical prominence contributed to the development of the Italian and larger European Renaissance through acts of patronage. Among them was the Florentine House of Medici. The Medici were an Italian noble house that served first as the *de facto* rulers of Florence, and then as Grand Dukes of Tuscany, from the mid-15th century to the mid-18th century. This thesis evaluates the contributions of eight consequential members of the Florentine Medici family, Cosimo di Giovanni, Lorenzo di Giovanni, Giovanni di Lorenzo, Cosimo I, Cosimo II, Cosimo III, Gian Gastone, and Anna Maria Luisa, and their acts of artistic, literary, scientific, and architectural patronage that contributed to the cultural heritage of Florence, Italy. This thesis also explores relevant social, political, economic, and geopolitical conditions over the course of the Medici dynasty, and incorporates primary research derived from a conversation and an interview with specialists in Florence in order to present a more contextual analysis. Further analysis examines how the Medici successfully used knowledge and beliefs concerning the past, as well as contemporary Florentine culture to advance themselves and cement their legacy. Historical parallels are also explored.

Existing literature makes plain that the Medici contributed a great deal to the Renaissance movement through their acts of patronage. This thesis contributes an original perspective to existing literature by concluding that the House of Medici largely shaped, and ultimately epitomizes the Renaissance itself through its contributions to Florentine cultural heritage, and by historic preservation efforts that define how we understand the Renaissance today. Justification for this conclusion is supported by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Advisory Body Evaluation, which cites Medici contributions to the cultural heritage of Florence and the Renaissance in support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation of the Historic Centre of Florence as a World Heritage Site. The lesson learned is that the cultural heritage of the world is priceless, but it is nothing without measures taken to ensure its protection.

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Part I – Introduction

The House of Medici, Cultural Heritage, and the Renaissance

When one visualizes the cultural heritage of Florence, Italy, some of the world's most iconic examples of tangible culture come to mind. In terms of the built environment, there is Brunelleschi's Dome, the Uffizi Gallery, and the Boboli Gardens. In terms of art, there is Donatello's bronze *David*, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, and Michelangelo's *David*. Associated Renaissance literature includes such masterworks as Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and Galileo's *Starry Messenger*. These examples stand today among the greatest achievements of the human mind set to paper, stone, wood and canvas, as well as being hallmarks of the European Renaissance (14th—17th century). Remarkably, a single family was directly responsible for, was involved with, or was the subject of all the aforementioned, and a great deal more.

The House of Medici was a primarily Florentine family that had a prolific influence on the European Renaissance movement. They accomplished this through acts of patronage, and through the manipulation and use of Florentine Republican culture. To research and expound upon their exploits is, at times, to craft a narrative as analogous to that of an action novel as it is to reflect upon art history. For good reason, intense scholarly focus and volumes of original research center on the more famous members of the Medici dynasty at its peaks, which coincides with points during the High Renaissance period of the larger Italian Renaissance. However, to examine the decline and twilight years of Medici reign, and those responsible for its ultimate failure, reveals astounding truths. In fact, the Medici still engaged in transformational acts of patronage 200 years

after artists Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael and, by the family's end, played a fundamental role in the preservation of tangible Florentine cultural heritage. So, how did the House of Medici come to power in the first place? How did the Medici develop and maintain their power? How has all of this tangible culture for which the Medici are responsible been preserved, intact in Florence, through over a century of successive takeovers after their downfall, prior to the formation of the modern Italian state?

Thesis Overview

This thesis will explore and evaluate the contributions of the Medici dynasty and its patronage to the cultural heritage of Florence, Italy, through the very different lives and exploits of prominent Medici. This body of work shows how the House of Medici not only functioned as artistic and architectural patrons of the Italian Renaissance, as many prominent families of their age also were, but how they used the cultural heritage of Florence to shape the larger European Renaissance movement. This study contributes an original perspective to existing literature by arguing that the House of Medici not only heavily contributed to, but epitomizes the Renaissance itself.

From unexceptional beginnings, the Medici built their power through banking. This afforded them political and financial maneuverability. They engaged in acts of patronage of art, literature, science, and architecture that not only served to elevate their social standing, but also benefitted Florence and its citizens. The resulting love of the people would pay dividends, saving their dynasty from collapse several times. The Medici sought out and used knowledge and beliefs of the past to their advantage, including classical architecture and ancient Greco-Egyptian philosophy. They wrapped

themselves in the cultural symbols of Republican Florence to socially aggrandize themselves and best their enemies, while transforming Florence into a European cultural center. They embraced the concepts of humanism and the creative potential of unfettered talent, using their growing power and influence to nurture and protect their beneficiaries from the stringent dictates of the Church. This resulted in some of history's greatest and most revolutionary literature, scientific achievements, architecture, and works of art. That which was created under Medici patronage would go on to become the foundation of how we understand the Renaissance today. What's more, Medici historic preservation efforts contributed immeasurably to Florence as we know it today, as it existed then, and to its successful nomination as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.¹

Definition of Key Concepts and Methodology

For the purpose of this thesis, "cultural heritage" is defined as both tangible and intangible culture. The tangible culture discussed in this thesis includes the built environment (buildings, monuments and cultural landscapes²), paintings, sculpture, musical instruments, poetry, and literature. The intangible culture discussed in this thesis includes knowledge involving developments in the natural sciences (medical science, astronomy, entomology, and geology), architecture, and religious and philosophical tradition. Historic preservation of the built environment is addressed in the contexts of both the modern era and the historical past.

¹ UNESCO. "Historic Centre of Florence." Accessed December 2014. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/174>

² Cultural landscapes, as defined by UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide12-en.pdf>

The history of the House of Medici in Florence began in the mid-14th century, and ended in the mid-18th century. Clearly, every act of patronage by every member of the Medici dynasty could not be addressed within the constraints of this thesis, nor would that suit its purpose. This being the case, eight consequential members of the Florentine Medici lineage have been selected according to two criteria.

First, the lives of the individuals selected had to largely bridge the years from the birth of the founding member of the formal Medici dynasty, Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici in 1389, to the death of the last royal Florentine Medici of dynastic consequence, Anna Maria Luisa, in 1743. Second, those individuals selected for inclusion had to contribute significantly to: (1) the legacy of the Medici dynasty, (2) the cultural heritage of Florence and/or (3) the greater Renaissance movement. Ancillary concern was given to the notion of presenting as diverse a selection as possible, to illustrate the variety in types of patronage: very different individuals in very different circumstances with very different interests.

To add a deeper, more contextual understanding, this thesis also tells the story of how the City of Florence came to be, and addresses its socioeconomic state in considerable depth throughout the course of the times being evaluated. As well, the lives of the individuals being addressed are fleshed out to give a fuller understanding of their demeanors and motivations. This sheds light on their inclinations and attempts to answer the “why” questions related to their individual acts of patronage. Genealogical relationships are also broken down, showing the links between the selected Medici family members as the reader transitions from section to section. Literature on the subjects of the

House of Medici and its patronage, the Renaissance, and the geopolitical, social and economic climates of the time is also incorporated to provide further context.

As a final component of this thesis, the author's primary research in Florence is explored. Two individuals agreed to speak with the author, providing contextual insight and different perspectives. An informal, revealing conversation with a Medici specialist from the State Archives of Florence shows how the Medici so effectively utilized contemporary Florentine cultural heritage in their patronage. An interview with a living Medici prince who deals in the preservation and promotion of his family legacy offers fascinating insight into Medici psychology and the use of past knowledge and beliefs in achieving their goals. Both segments are supported by anecdotes from the author.

Further analysis takes both secondary and primary research into consideration, delving into the "how" of Medici politics, patronage, and their use of cultural heritage. This is supported by the analysis of previous scholarly research, and by drawing historical parallels. The Medici dynasty is examined as a whole before bearing down on Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici and the significance of his acts in shaping Florentine cultural heritage. The concepts of self-promotion, legacy, and the destruction of cultural heritage are then addressed in the context of salient Medicean identity. Emphasis is placed on ill-fated Grand Duke Gian Gastone de' Medici and his sister, the Princess Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, for their parts in saving the cultural heritage of Florence, thus affecting how we understand the Renaissance movement today.

Florence and the Medici

The Medici understood and played upon the political attitudes of the Florentine people and their system of governance, both of which stem from the early development of Florence itself. To understand the Medici, one must first understand the history of Florence.

Stemming from ancient Etruscan origin, the city of Florence, Italy as we know it today was founded as a Roman colony in 59 BCE under the consulship of Julius Caesar. Following the fall of the Roman Empire, devastating Germanic invasions saw the urban culture of Roman cities replaced by feudalistic, agrarian social and economic systems. Florence was no exception. Roads deteriorated, and travel was dangerous. Small-scale trade existed, but barring an effective system of governance, it remained untenable. This would change around 1000 CE, when commerce began to reawaken.

Merchants and craftsmen began to form guilds. Rudimentary municipal services developed. By the 1100s, a political system would begin to take shape in the form of a *parlamentum*, a general assembly of citizens. Florence would realize precarious self-governance, enduring varying degrees of subjugation under several successive Holy Roman Emperors. Florence finally became a free and sovereign republic through a series of ordinances in 1293. A spiritually egalitarian, if not truly democratic quintessence would differentiate it from all other Italian cities of its time.³ Not yet a cultural and artistic bastion, it would then be a burgeoning trade city with early humanist leanings. This is not to say that the new Florentine Republic would no longer be beset by those

³ Schevill, Ferdinand. *The Medici*. New York: Konecky, Konecky, 1949, 3-20

who would seek to rob it of its fledgling independence: Enter Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici.

Born in 1360, the upstart son of relatively impoverished means compared to that of the connected Florentine merchant class, Giovanni was not the very first to bear the Medici name in Florence. He was, however, the first of historical consequence. This is because Giovanni di' Bicci started the family business, forming the Medici Bank in 1397. He bore two sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo. As the Medici bank expanded, his wealth and influence in Florence would grow, but Giovanni maintained a strict policy of operating behind the scenes in order to avoid scrutiny. Giovanni died in 1429, telling his children on his deathbed, "Stay out of the public eye."⁴ This would not come to pass. The extent to which his son Cosimo's efforts affected the culture of Florence would be too great to be ignored.

The foundation was set for that which would become the House of Medici, a political dynasty that would stretch for nearly 300 years, and see a family raised from obscurity to royalty. This would not come easily. The Medici would contend with rival Florentine families that possessed wealth, pedigree and storied histories. They would grow and leverage their money and power through the Medici Bank (which expanded throughout Europe and lasted for just shy of a century), marriages of convenience, and by financially backing those who would later support them. The Medici would even infiltrate the Vatican, where the family would see to the election of four popes over the course of their history. Certainly, not every single Medici was Lorenzo *il Magnifico* (the

⁴ Parks, Tim. *Medici Money: Banking, Metaphysics, and Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005, 2-3

Magnificent), or Cosimo I, who claimed the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany. Indeed, the family would fall victim to incompetence, betrayal, assassination, and even see itself expelled from Florence multiple times before returning to power.

Part II – The Medici

This section begins with founder Cosimo di Giovanni, son of Giovanni di Bicci. It concludes with Gian Gastone, the seventh and final Medicean Grand Duke of Tuscany, and his sister, Anna Maria Luisa, Princess of Tuscany and Electress Palatine of Neuburg, both of whom died without issue. All played a part in Medici efforts affecting the cultural heritage of Florence. The efforts of Cosimo di Giovanni combined political savvy with symbolism and grandiosity.

Cosimo di Giovanni (1389-1464) “Cosimo the Elder”

Giovanni di Bicci had laid the groundwork for his children, weaving the requisite political alliances and establishing a robust funding mechanism. Now, his son Cosimo would make good on his father’s investments. First, he would have to navigate his way up through the political system. This meant striking a balance between placating the Florentine authorities and outsmarting his detractors. These detractors were from established and powerful families, and they were intent on maintaining their own social positions.

Young Cosimo received a first-class education, along with the other sons of wealthy Florentine families. In what would become a staple of generations of Medici patrons yet to come, Cosimo developed a profound appreciation for classical learning and ideals, coupled with an interest in man’s life on earth. He became a humanist, though for Cosimo, it was more a personal philosophy than a belief in practice. Humanistic inclinations that were characteristic of public life, such as a mastery of rhetoric, would not help him to achieve his ends. Cosimo strove to remain as his father had instructed:

invisible to the powerful, charitable to the unfortunate, and only serving when summoned to do so, without discernible pride. Unlike the progeny of other families, Cosimo was rarely seen walking the streets. He dressed inconspicuously, and he demonstrated great respect to authority figures. As he grew up, he held to these practices. In matters of business, Cosimo would listen carefully. When he spoke, he spoke quietly, with brevity. He was liked and trusted among ordinary citizens. By the time Giovanni di Bicci died in 1429, though he had equipped his son amply, the path to power for Cosimo would be dangerous.⁵ French historian Jean Lucas-Dubreton wrote of Cosimo's growing authority, which he argues was not the outcome of ambition, but of a matter of necessity in order to protect his own life.⁶ Whether or not he wanted the public attention, the Medici Bank was growing under his control, and Cosimo was gaining greater wealth and distinction as a result.

In 1433, the powerful Albizzi family played a part in orchestrating his imprisonment and ultimate banishment from Florence, unjustly accusing him of backing a war against the neighboring city of Lucca. Cosimo was sentenced to reside for ten years in the northern Italian town of Padua. He dealt with his banishment by building his support elsewhere, while maintaining contact with friends and allies in Florence. He was transferred to Venice, where he commissioned friend and architect Michelozzo di Bartolomeo Michelozzi (1396-1472) to build a library for the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore.^{7 8} Cosimo then transferred the headquarters of the Medici Bank from Florence

⁵ Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 37-41

⁶ Lucas-Dubreton, J. *Daily Life in Florence in the Time of the Medici*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961, 57

⁷ Michelozzi's library was destroyed in 1614.

to Venice. This action served the dual purpose of allowing him to exert more direct control over his banking network in exile, while ostensibly causing economic stagnation in Florence due to the loss of commerce formerly prompted by Medici dealings. The economic ramifications of this action may have played a part in worsening Florentine discontent with its political leadership, but whether or not this was the case, Cosimo's methods worked. During all of these events, he never spoke out against his enemies.

In 1434, Cosimo was called back to Florence. Medici supporters had managed the election of priors, or judges, sympathetic to Cosimo. In response, Rinaldo Albizzi, head of the House of Albizzi, tried to lead an attack on the house of government with a handful of his own supporters. The move failed.⁹ This time, it was the Albizzis' turn to lose. Cosimo de' Medici's sentence was rescinded, and not only was Rinaldo now exiled, but his descendants were barred from ever holding public office.¹⁰ Cosimo would resume his artistic patronage in Florence as if he had never left.

Cosimo again commissioned Michelozzo, this time to renovate the church and convent of San Marco in 1436. The work was completed in 1444, the same year the architect was charged to build a new home for his friend and sponsor. Palazzo Medici, completed in 1459, became the archetypal Renaissance mansion.¹¹ This crown needed a

⁸ Mediateca Medicea di Palazzo Medici Riccardi. "1433-1434 – The Exile of Cosimo il Vecchio." Accessed December 2014. http://www.palazzo-medici.it/mediateca/en/Scheda_1433-1434_-_Lesilio_di_Cosimo_il_Vecchio

⁹ Mediateca Medicea di Palazzo Medici Riccardi. "1433-1434 – The Exile of Cosimo il Vecchio." Accessed December 2014. http://www.palazzo-medici.it/mediateca/en/Scheda_1433-1434_-_Lesilio_di_Cosimo_il_Vecchio

¹⁰ Lucas-Dubreton, J. *Daily Life in Florence in the Time of the Medici*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961, 53-55

¹¹ Mediateca Medicea di Palazzo Medici Riccardi. "Michelozzo (1396-1472)." http://www.palazzo-medici.it/mediateca/en/Scheda_Michelozzo

jewel. Cosimo's next act is a case study in multifaceted Medici symbolism through the use of cultural heritage.

Donatello di Niccolò di Betto Bardi's (1386-1466) bronze sculpture of *David* (Figure 1) was commissioned by Cosimo, and generally believed to have been completed between 1430 and 1440. It would now come to adorn the center of the courtyard of the Medici Palace. These acts are significant for two reasons. The figure is unabashedly homoerotic in nature, and without Cosimo's protection, it would have been an extremely dangerous undertaking for Donatello at this point in history due to the influence of the Church.¹² What's more, David was a symbol of Florentine liberty, his biblical triumph over Goliath seen as analogous to the city's resilience.¹³ This statue, in this space, represented Medici defiance, power and control over Florence. However, even this act would pale in comparison to what would become Cosimo's greatest act of patronage.



Figure 1 – Donatello's *David*¹⁴

¹² PBS. "Donatello." Accessed December 2014.

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/medici/renaissance/donatello.html>

¹³ Schneider, Laurie. "Donatello's Bronze David." *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (1973): 213-215

¹⁴ "Donatello David - 1440." JPG Image. The Museums of Florence, National Museum of Bargello. Accessed December 2014. http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/museum_of_bargello.html

Cosimo set to finish the foremost church in Florence. The *Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore*, or “Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Flower,” is situated in the heart of the city. To put its age into perspective, the time between its initial construction and the time of Cosimo the Elder is the same as the span of time between the defeat of General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of Little Bighorn and present-day America. Construction had begun on the Florence Cathedral in 1296, designed by architect Arnolfo di Cambio (1240-1310). Originally built to promote Florence as an economic and cultural capital of Europe, the plan was to crown the cathedral’s octagonal portion with a magnificent cupola. Unfortunately, no one was quite sure how it could be architecturally feasible. The dome would have to be 150 feet across and start nearly 17 stories above the ground, on top of the existing structural walls. This quandary, coupled with politics, wars, and the social and economic impacts of the black plague in the intervening years, meant that the room which would prospectively house the high altar sat open to the elements for well over a century. In 1418, a contest was held by the Florentine city fathers to find an architect who could devise a plan to complete the dome.¹⁵

Among those in contention was a goldsmith named Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446). Considered eccentric at the least, his ideas, which were based on the classical orders of architecture not seen for 1,000 years, were summarily rejected by the city fathers. Cosimo de’ Medici saw something in Brunelleschi that the others did not. Brunelleschi became the house architect for the Medici, and received public and financial support from Cosimo for his ideas to complete the dome. With a plan based on the Pantheon of Ancient Rome, and a demonstration before the church authorities that

¹⁵ Mueller, Tom. “Brunelleschi’s Dome.” National Geographic. Accessed December 2014. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/02/il-duomo/mueller-text>

involved breaking the bottom of an egg so that it would stand on its own, Brunelleschi won the competition. There was not enough timber in all of Tuscany to provide scaffolding for a project of this magnitude, and the recipe for concrete was, at this point, still lost to the ages since ancient times. Brunelleschi found a way to construct the dome without either.¹⁶

With no formal training as an architect, Brunelleschi invented a double-shell brickwork structural design that would be lighter and stronger than a solid dome of the requisite size. He spent years working with all manner of craftsmen, pioneering construction and safety methods for his workers. The dome was completed in 1436, and consecrated by Pope Engenius IV. Brunelleschi's Dome became not only Cosimo's greatest achievement as a patron, but it would be among the most ambitious acts of patronage the House of Medici would ever undertake. The skyline of Florence was forever changed, and Brunelleschi's Dome stands today as the largest masonry dome ever constructed.¹⁷ (Figure 2)

¹⁶ *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*, Part 1: Birth of a Dynasty. PBS Home Video, 2005.

¹⁷ Mueller, Tom. "Brunelleschi's Dome." National Geographic. Accessed December 2014.
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/02/il-duomo/mueller-text>



Figure 2 – Brunelleschi's Dome atop Florence Cathedral¹⁸

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

Cosimo de' Medici leveraged his great wealth to infiltrate and control the Florentine government, and used the favor of the populace, which he gained through public events, to overcome his enemies. Upon his death, he would be dubbed *Pater Patriae*, or "Father of the Country."¹⁹ Political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), in his *Discourses*, would refer to Cosimo as "Prince of the Republic,"²⁰ as testament to his achievements. Machiavelli's magnum opus of his political treatises, *The Prince*, would also be dedicated to a Medici yet to come, among his many attempts to win the

¹⁸ People can be seen on the dome's balcony, surrounding the roof lantern.

¹⁹ Brown, Alison M. "The Humanist Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 24, No. 3/4 (1961), 186

²⁰ Butters, Humphrey. "Machiavelli and the Medici." *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*. (2010), 71

family's favor.²¹ Cosimo undoubtedly exceeded his father's aspirations in establishing a dynasty; but this was only the beginning. His grandson, Lorenzo, would share Cosimo's unassuming temperament, but Lorenzo's bold acts of patronage would shape some of the greatest artists of the Renaissance.

Lorenzo di Giovanni (1449-1492) "Il Magnifico"

Upon the death of his father Piero di Cosimo in 1469, Lorenzo would assume control of Florence. He had already been taking part in public affairs for several years. As a result, and at all of age 20, the grandson of Cosimo the Elder was better prepared to rule than his father or grandfather, who had each been more than twice his age when they took up their respective leadership roles. Lorenzo is remembered as *Il Magnifico*, or "The Magnificent." While this moniker may appear self-aggrandizing, Lorenzo was personally humble. It was for his great talents, and for what he would invest in Florence and its people, that he was remembered as such.

This is not at all to say that the legacy of Lorenzo would not have its detractors, its intrigues, or its controversies. In a departure from how power was exercised by past Medici rulers, in the form of more nuanced political influence, Lorenzo was simply a ruler. Florence as he envisioned it could not come to be if bound by the shackles of republicanism. Private citizens and their quarrels would beleaguer Florentine progress, while an autocracy saw limitless potential for its prosperity. However, Lorenzo did not couple this belief with force. Instead, he maintained the existing political infrastructure supported by Florentine citizens, a system of sortition among guilds called the *Signoria*.

²¹ Butters, Humphrey. "Machiavelli and the Medici." *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*. (2010), 64

Lorenzo would maintain absolute power, but only because his fellow citizens believed in his abilities. There were no guards at Palazzo Medici. He was respected as an equal by the monarchist rulers of France and England, while he showed civility to his city's poorest. Achieving all of this, and devoid of arrogance, earned Lorenzo the admiration of the Florentine people, and the abhorrence of other powerful Florentine families.

When Lorenzo came onto the political scene, the Renaissance was already at its artistic pinnacle in Florence. Festivities were plentiful, with Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano taking part, orchestrating cultural events for the people interwoven with elements of classical thought. Lorenzo gifted villas to famed literary figures of his time, his society of *literati*, with whom he would read of the classical authors and write his own poetic verse in Latin.²² Lorenzo enjoyed the company of many artists and writers, but few as noteworthy as Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti (1475-1564), who practiced their craft in his private garden.

Purchased in either the late 1460s or early 1470s, the walled garden adjacent to the monastery of San Marco was strewn with cypress trees and now ancient statues collected by Lorenzo. The garden served as a training quarter in which young artists could hone their expertise, those training in sculpture using the statues as models. A young man named Leonardo da Vinci frequented the garden, reportedly salaried by and living with Lorenzo. Da Vinci was believed to have worked there with his master Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-1488). Accounts describe this sculpture garden as “a veritable school of the arts under the aegis of *Il Magnifico* that served as a nursery of the greatest

²² Young, Colonel G. F. (George Frederick). *The Medici*, Vol. 1. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 206-216

talents of the Renaissance.”²³ Da Vinci would go on to become the eponymous “Renaissance man,” or polymath, a master innovator versed in myriad disciplines of both art and science.

Lorenzo came upon young Michelangelo as he was carefully sculpting a fawn in marble, copying from one of the antiques. After observing the boy’s extraordinary talent, and at only the age of 15, arrangements were made for Michelangelo to move into the palace to be raised alongside Lorenzo’s own children. Michelangelo’s talent would be nurtured, and he would learn the skills that would later be evident in such works as his *Battle of the Centaurs* (1492, relief), his *David* (1501-1504, statue), and most famously, his *The Last Judgment* (1536-1541, fresco), which would adorn the ceiling of Rome’s Sistine Chapel²⁴ under the commission of Pope Clement VII (Giulio di Giuliano de’ Medici)²⁵.

Renaissance biographer and historian Edward Lee Stuart Horsburgh considers Lorenzo de’ Medici to be the physical embodiment of that which the Renaissance came to represent, more so than any of his contemporaries. More than simply a cult of ancient literature, the revival of ancient learning under Lorenzo represented “...recognition of a new principle by which life was governed. It was the adoption of a new attitude towards Man, towards Nature, and towards God.”²⁶ Whatever his personal motivations, be they

²³ Unger, Miles J. *Magnifico: The Brilliant Life and Violent Times of Lorenzo De’ Medici*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2008, 382

²⁴ Unger, Miles J. *Magnifico: The Brilliant Life and Violent Times of Lorenzo De’ Medici*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2008, 395-397

²⁵ Connor, James A. *The Last Judgment: Michelangelo and the Death of the Renaissance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, xi

²⁶ Horsburgh, Edward Lee Stuart. *Lorenzo the Magnificent and Florence in Her Golden Age*. London: Methuen & Co., 1908, 363

for position or passion, or perhaps both²⁷, Lorenzo stood apart from most patrons, ancient and modern, in that he did not wish to interfere with the creators he patronized. It was his belief that men of genius must be accommodated and humored as such to bring out the best efforts of which they were capable.²⁸

The manifestation of this philosophy is illustrated in Lorenzo's benefaction of painters Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), Filippino Lippi (1406-1469), Pietro Perugino (1446-1523) and Domenico Ghirlandiao (1449-1494). All were commissioned to paint frescoes at Lorenzo's villa at Spedaletto, in western Florence. Even with these artists of repute representing a veritable royal court to The Magnificent, the accompanying social environment was not as such. Lorenzo encouraged his artists to compete with one another rather than denying his peers the opportunity to patronize them. Whether or not he commissioned a particular artist personally, Lorenzo "strived to foster a climate in which architecture, painting, sculpture, literature, scholarship, and music all flourished."²⁹ Botticelli himself serves a case study in how the Medici not only directly commissioned remarkable artistic works, but would set into motion chains of events through the notoriety their artists gained, which would result in the creation of other now-iconic works.

²⁷ Horsburgh, Edward Lee Stuart. *Lorenzo the Magnificent and Florence in Her Golden Age*. London: Methuen & Co., 1908, 365-366

²⁸ Horsburgh, Edward Lee Stuart. *Lorenzo the Magnificent and Florence in Her Golden Age*. London: Methuen & Co., 1908, 367

²⁹ Unger, Miles J. *Magnifico: The Brilliant Life and Violent Times of Lorenzo De' Medici*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2008, 229-230

For example, Botticelli went on to paint *La Primavera* between 1477 and 1482³⁰ for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici,³¹ second cousin of Lorenzo the Magnificent.³² Between the years of 1482 and 1485, Botticelli would then paint *Birth of Venus*, also commissioned by the Medici family, as well as *Pallas and the Centaur* and *Allegory of Spring*.³³ Botticelli would later be commissioned by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco to illustrate Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* with a series of drawings (1480-1500³⁴).³⁵ In much the same fashion, but this time upon Da Vinci's appeal in 1481, Lorenzo referred Leonardo to Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. Under the Duke, da Vinci's desire to create his inventions would be realized. While in Milan, he would also take up a commission that resulted in his painting *The Last Supper* (1494-1498).³⁶

Despite Lorenzo *il Magnifico*'s efforts to alleviate political tensions, at least in terms of artistic patronage, the ire and jealousy felt by other Florentine noble families towards the Medici, particularly Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano, came to a boiling point in the form of the Pazzi Conspiracy. On a Sunday in April of 1478, within the Cathedral of Florence,³⁷ the very cathedral for which their grandfather had patronized Filippo Brunelleschi to complete its historic dome, the brothers attended Mass. At a key

³⁰ Uffizi Gallery Museum in Florence. "La Primavera by Botticelli." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.uffizi.org/artworks/la-primavera-allegory-of-spring-by-sandro-botticelli/>

³¹ Gillies, Jean. *Botticelli's Primavera: The Young Lorenzo's Transformation*. Bloomington: iUniverse, 2010, 20

³² Web Gallery of Art. "Primavera." Accessed December 2014. http://www.wga.hu/html_m/b/botticel/5allegor/10primav.html

³³ Uffizi Gallery Museum in Florence. "The Birth of Venus by Botticelli." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.uffizi.org/artworks/the-birth-of-venus-by-sandro-botticelli/>

³⁴ Web Gallery of Art. "Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy (1480-1500). Accessed March 2015. <http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/b/botticel/93dante/index.html>

³⁵ Altcapenberg, Heinz-Thomas Schulze. *Sandro Botticelli: The Drawings for Dante's Divine Comedy*. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2000.

³⁶ PBS. "Leonardo da Vinci." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.pbs.org/empires/medici/renaissance/leonardo.html>

³⁷ Martines, Lauro. *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 1

moment, an associate of the wealthy Pazzi family attacked Giuliano, thrusting a dagger into his chest. As he staggered back, a second assailant stabbed him furiously. He collapsed, dead. Pandemonium broke out as dignitaries and citizens fled the cathedral. Two priests carrying concealed weapons lunged for Lorenzo from behind, wounding him slightly on his neck. The Magnificent bounded forward, spun and drew his short sword. He parried their thrusts as he retreated, assisted by friends and defenders. Close friend and Medici Bank manager Francesco Nori stepped in to protect Lorenzo, and was then mortally stabbed in the stomach by one of Giuliano's assassins. The uproar continued as Lorenzo made his way to safety in the north sacristy.³⁸

As the plot unfolded, the head of the House of Pazzi, Messer Jacopo, took to the government square with upwards of 100 mercenaries, crying, "People and Liberty!" in full on revolt against the Medici. Unfortunately for Jacopo de' Pazzi, the alarm bells began to ring, and his cause would not convince the citizens of Florence. The people answered with a vigorous, "Palle! Palle!" signifying their devotion to their present rulers. This referred to the six red pellets, or balls, which constituted the Medici coat of arms.³⁹ The Pazzi rebellion had failed, but not without its toll on the Medici family. Recall Giovanni di Bicci's dying wish. It had been ignored most flagrantly by his great-grandson Lorenzo the Magnificent, and fate validated Giovanni's trepidation.

³⁸ Martines, Lauro. *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 116-117

³⁹ Schevill, Ferdinand. *History of Florence from the founding of the City through the Renaissance*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961, 385

That afternoon, in swift acts of retribution, Medici loyalists hanged and otherwise killed many co-conspirators.⁴⁰ As punishment for the severity of retribution taken against his would-be assailants, Lorenzo was excommunicated by Pope Sixtus IV. Sixtus then invaded Tuscany with ally Naples, laying siege to Florence for two years. Lorenzo held off the invaders, ultimately convincing Ferdinand I “Don Ferrante,” (1423-1494) King of Naples, to abandon the Papal States. With the siege broken, Sixtus was forced to make peace with Florence,⁴¹ and Medici rule would once again be re-secured until Lorenzo’s death.

In the absence of his influence, leadership, and diplomatic aptitude, the Magnificent’s city of greater philosophical meaning, classical beauty and artistic free expression would crumble. In years to come, Florence would take on a much different, rigidly dogmatic culture. Jews and prostitutes would be persecuted.⁴² Gays would be executed. Paintings and books would be cast into flame as tokens of ungodly excess.⁴³ In terms of historical perspective, this was a blessing in disguise for the legacy of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s patronage and approach to leadership: a striking contrast of what was to come. With his humanist inclinations and respect for the Florentine system of governance, *Il Magnifico* truly was the people’s dictator. The next to follow in this series of Medici patrons contributed to the Florentine family’s legacy with a freedom to pursue his interests that only the highest level of authority could afford.

⁴⁰ Martines, Lauro. *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 121-126

⁴¹ Zophy, Jonathan W. *A Short History of Renaissance and Reformation Europe: Dances of Fire and Water*, Third Edition. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2003, 65

⁴² Herzig, Tamar. *Savonarola’s Women: Visions and Reform in Renaissance Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, xvi-xvii

⁴³ Kidder & Oppenheim. *The Intellectual Devotional Biographies: Revive Your Mind, Complete Your Education, and Acquaint Yourself with the World’s Greatest Personalities*, Girolamo Savonarola. Emmanus: Rodale, 2010, 111

Giovanni di Lorenzo (Leo X) (1475-1521)

“God has given us the papacy. Let us enjoy it!” – Pope Leo X⁴⁴

Giovanni di Lorenzo would be the first of the Medici popes. Remarkably, the Medici name would see four pontiffs: Leo X, Clement VII (1478-1534), Pius IV (1499-1565) and Leo XI (1535-1605), in that order. The papacy of Leo X was not as long as that of his cousin, then-Cardinal Giulio, who would become Clement VII, or as short as that of his nephew, Leo XI, who is remembered as Papa Lampo, or “Lightning Pope,”⁴⁵ for his reign of only 27 days. What made Leo X stand out was the opulent and brazen manner in which he conducted his affairs.

At the age of eight, Giovanni’s father Lorenzo (the Magnificent) used his political connections to see Giovanni made an apostolic protonotary in short order. Securing benefices, or ecclesiastic incomes appropriate to building Giovanni’s budding prospects within the Church, came next. Tuscany, as well as Florence, was a shaky bet due to Lorenzo’s prior and existing political dealings, so he employed the reach of the Medici Bank. Though his initial efforts faltered, Lorenzo was able to secure significant benefices for Giovanni by the time he had finished his canon law studies in Pisa. Giovanni would then move to Rome, where he took his place as the youngest of the College of Cardinals. Not long after the death of the powerful Lorenzo in 1492, the Florentine House of Medici would find itself under siege on two fronts.

⁴⁴ Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 215

⁴⁵ Jeffers, H. Paul. *Dark Mysteries of the Vatican*. New York: Citadel Press, 138

Fundamentalist monk Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) was gaining prominence in Florence, preaching against what he saw as the decadent and blasphemous nature of Medici influence, while Charles VIII (1470-1498), King of France advanced on Italy in his Italian War. Under the clumsy diplomatic prowess of Giovanni's older brother Piero, the existing alliance with France was cast off in favor of one with Naples. The French invaded Tuscany. Despite a subsequent, desperate agreement struck between Piero and Charles VIII to avoid French conquest, the people of Florence had enough. A revolt was ignited that saw the Medici expelled from Florence in 1494.⁴⁶ All Medici holdings in Florence were confiscated and the Medici Bank, virtually bankrupt at this point, was dissolved.⁴⁷ Savonarola seized control. History would dub Piero de' Medici, "The Unfortunate." He would never return to Florence. Following the Medici ouster, Giovanni would come to live in Palazzo Madama (1505), a Medici acquisition in Rome.⁴⁸

In the years that followed, as the Medici worked to restore their dynastic fortunes in the Tuscan capital, Giovanni's rise within the Church would be meteoric. He was elected Pope Leo X in 1513. His acts were grand. Leo would engage in sumptuous dinners with coveted guests. True to his Medici lineage, he bestowed those in his graces with acts of generosity. Scholars, artists and men of letters were patronized, placed in positions of prominence within his Curia—not only because he wanted to, but do the degree he did, because he could. He counted scholar Pietro Bembo (1470-1547) among his secretaries, and author of the comedy *La Calandria*, Bernardo Dovizi (also a cardinal,

⁴⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica. "Piero di Lorenzo di' Medici." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/372362/Piero-di-Lorenzo-de-Medici>

⁴⁷ De Roover & Larson. *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank: 1397-1494*. Washington, D.C.: Beard Books, 1999, 381

⁴⁸ Senato della Repubblica (Senate of the Republic). "The Senate Buildings – Palazzo Madama. Accessed December 2014. http://www.senato.it/4366?testo_generico=961&documento=22

known as Bibbiena) (1470-1520), as his Treasurer General. Leo was enthralled by music and the dramatic arts, with a particular appreciation for what he felt men of his day could learn from ancient literature. Fortunately for him, he was free in his position to pursue literary scholarship without the fear of conflict between the Christian orthodoxy of the time and that which could very well been seen as pagan knowledge. Leo invited Greek scholars to Rome and sponsored a Greek college. He collected foreign manuscripts for inclusion in the Vatican library. Not solely a patron of the arts, Leo X was also a patron of the built environment.

At Leo's time, the classical structures of ancient Rome were overgrown, strewn with refuse or, as was the case with the Colosseum, being utilized as quarries to extract new building materials. Raphael Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520) once wrote to Leo X, concerned over the utilization of antiquities for such purposes. He proposed a plan in which he, writer Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529), and others called for the creation of an explanatory map of classical Rome. Leo approved, and insisted that, in the interest of furthering historical knowledge, no stone be destroyed if it should bear an ancient inscription. British historian of the Renaissance John Rigby Hale notes Leo as more of a collector than a preserver, who utilized Roman marbles in his own efforts to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica. This notwithstanding, the act is a glimmer of preservationist thought in the early 1500s.

Hale notes that, while Leo was not a formative figure to those he patronized, he used his position to foster an affable environment in which those he patronized could flourish. Leo's patronage, however, was not his most enduring legacy. His infamy came as a result of his vigorous use of the act of selling indulgences, which was charging

money for the absolution of sin, done in part to fund his work on St. Peter's. This would prompt Martin Luther to issue his *Disputatio pro Declaratione Virtutis Indulgentiarum*, better known as the “*Ninety-Five Theses*” in 1517, which argued for the Protestant reformation of the Catholic Church.⁴⁹

Upon his death, Leo was buried quickly and with sparing display. Just as his brother Piero saw to the Medici Bank's ultimate insolvency, Leo X saw to it that the papal treasury was nearly empty by the time he expired. Facing ruin, the Florentine bankers in Rome were in no humor to advance the requisite capital to conduct a proper Papal funeral.⁵⁰ Despite these issues, Florentine cultural heritage was impacted dramatically by the next of this series of Medici patrons, Cosimo I.

Cosimo I (1519-1574)

Pope Leo X had a sister, Lucrezia. Lucrezia married Giacomo (Jacopo) Salviati, and they had a daughter, Maria. Maria married a seldom-seen military man named Giovanni, and they would have a son. This son was Cosimo I de' Medici, who would grow to be the second Duke of Florence and the first Grand Duke of Tuscany.

With his father largely out of the picture, Cosimo barely wept when told that he was mortally wounded in combat. At seven years old, he lived in Venice to avoid the unstable state of affairs at the time in Florence. As circumstances would have it, he travelled often, which one of his tutors remarked as having a negative effect on his

⁴⁹ Hale, J. R. (John Rigby). *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977, 100-105

⁵⁰ Vaughn, Herbert M. *The Medici Popes (Leo X and Clement VII.)*. Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1971, 274-275

education.⁵¹ Cosimo shunned his studies in favor of the soldiers' camp. He wanted to be a soldier when he grew up, and he started to dress as one. This did not meet with the approval of his uncle, now-Pope Clement VII, who ordered that Cosimo be garbed in ordinary Florentine fashions of the time. In spite of his militaristic inclinations, the boy was not uneducated. He is described as graceful, reserved, and shrewd, with a fiercely retentive memory and a thirst for knowledge. There was also iciness about his temperament, which led some to believe he would make for an unsympathetic, dictatorial leader. He was secretive. Cosimo would choose from whom he would learn carefully, and make up his own mind.⁵²

Cosimo grew up to be curt and ruthless. He was not one to hesitate or dwell in penitence for his actions. Rivals were dispatched through assassination, or imprisoned. The Dominicans of San Marco were expelled from their monastery for engaging in "public professions of dissent." Like his forbearers, Cosimo took his place as *de facto* ruler of Florence. Unlike his forbearers, Cosimo was a conqueror. In time, he would conquer and unite the majority of Tuscany. This served to awaken new industries, which would help to revitalize the economy of Florence after decades of political strife at home and invasion from abroad.⁵³ However, economic revitalization was not the sole motivating factor for Cosimo *il Primo*.

In 1557, Cosimo and his army conquered the Tuscan Republic of Siena. It was a bloody excursion that would further embitter the Sieneese toward the Florentines in what

⁵¹ Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 262

⁵² Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 263

⁵³ Kim, Sang Woo. *Historiography of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici's Cultural Politics and Theories of Cultural Hegemony and Opposition*. B.A. Thesis (edited). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2006, 2

was already a strained relationship, and embolden Cosimo's detractors in Florence. His detractors saw a corpse-strewn jaunt at tremendous expense, for a territory with a negligible financial yield. For the Medicean conqueror, however, this expansion of his territorial authority was a means to an end. He pursued the Vatican to a relentless degree for what he truly desired—that which only papal authority could bestow. In 1569, Cosimo I, by the authority of Pope Pius V, was named Grand Duke of all Tuscany. Now “His Excellency,” Cosimo would next set to build a navy. The establishment of a formidable naval force served the dual purpose of protecting Florence from maritime aggression, as well as raising the stature of both Cosimo and his new position to Spain.⁵⁴

Cosimo married Spanish Duchess Eleonora di Toledo in 1539. This was among the most advantageous pairings the Medici would achieve. Duchess Eleonora had royal ancestry that the Medici lacked, which granted Cosimo further legitimacy. The Grand Duke and Duchess moved from the Palazzo Medici to the Palazzo Vecchio (part of the Historic Centre of Florence, UNESCO World Heritage List, Reference 174) which was and still is the town hall of Florence. Extensive renovations were undertaken to construct apartments for the Duke and his family. The upper floors were awash in extravagance befitting of Medici status in society, with Medici coats of arms, as well the dimidiated coat of arms of now-Duchess of Tuscany Eleonora (Figure 3)—a crest split between her Spanish House of Alba and new Medici affiliation—festooning most every room's doorway, ceiling, or molding ornamentation. The coat of arms of the House of Medici was also placed in multiple locations throughout the lower, state floors of the Palazzo

⁵⁴ Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 266

Vecchio (Figure 4). It was not left to assumption: The House of Medici now occupied the house of the people. They were one and the same.



Figure 3 – Dimidiated coat of arms of the Duchess Eleonora di Toledo, Palazzo Vecchio⁵⁵

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014

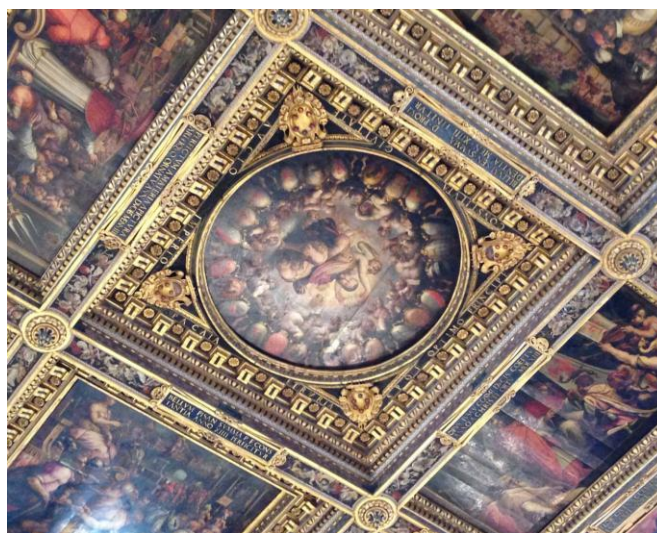


Figure 4 – Medici coats of arms adorn this ceiling panel on the state floor, Palazzo Vecchio⁵⁶

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014

⁵⁵ Located within the Room of Penelope, Apartments of Eleonora, in the Palazzo Vecchio.

⁵⁶ Located within the Salone dei Cinquecento (Hall of Five Hundred), principal hall of the Palazzo Vecchio.

Further consolidation of Cosimo's power would follow. In 1559, Cosimo selected Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) to be the architect of a tremendous new office building, the Uffizi (Figure 5). Built adjacent to the Palazzo Vecchio where Cosimo could exert more precise control, all major guilds, as well as judicial and administrative offices would now be housed there, together. In 1560, Cosimo and his family moved out of the Palazzo Vecchio. Just across the Arno River was the Palazzo Pitti . This century-old palace was purchased by the Duchess Eleonora in 1549/50. Eleonora retained architect Bartolomeo Ammannati (1511-1592) to do for the Pitti Palace what she and Cosimo did best: make it bigger and make it grand. The Palazzo Pitti would be known as the Ducal Palace (Figure 6). Acres of land were procured behind the residence, some of which came from a family named Bogoli. It is from this name that the famous *Giardino di Boboli*, or “Boboli Gardens,” derived its namesake.



Figure 5 – The Uffizi Gallery Museum⁵⁷

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

⁵⁷ Wing of the Uffizi in the left portion of this photograph is obscured by renovations.



Figure 6 – Palazzo Pitti, which served as the Ducal Palace

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014

Some of the most remarkable landscaping of the era is contained within the borders of these expansive gardens, to say nothing of commissioned sculptures and exotic acquisitions. The grounds' Neptune Pond (Figure 7) and its amphitheater (Figure 8) were designed by Niccoló Pericoli Tribolo (circa 1500-1550), who landscaped Boboli until his death in 1550. Taking over from there were architects Bernardo Buontalenti (circa 1530s-1608), Alfonso Parigi (?-1590) and his son Giulio (1571-1635). At the suggestion of the Duchess, Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560) designed an elaborate grotto (Figure 9). Unfortunately for Eleonora, her deteriorating health made it so that she did not enjoy these treasures for long. In the winter of 1562, Eleonora di Toledo died, in the arms of her husband. After several personal tragedies and having suffered a debilitating stroke, Cosimo himself expired a dozen years later.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 261-274



Figure 7 – Neptune Pond, Boboli Gardens

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014



Figure 8 – Amphitheater, Boboli Gardens⁵⁹

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

⁵⁹ Approximately half of the Boboli Gardens Amphitheater. The Egyptian obelisk, which lies at its center, is seen on the right of the photograph. The far pathway ascends to the Neptune Pond.



Figure 9 – Buontalenti Grotto, crowned with the Medici coat of arms, Boboli Gardens

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

The best propagandist of his House, Cosimo I de' Medici wrapped his name into his achievements like no other. Vasari's seminal publication, *The Lives of the Artists* (1550), which chronicles 200 years of key Italian artists and their works, is regarded as being the first ever work of art history.⁶⁰ It is also dedicated to his patron, Cosimo I, and amply credits the Medici. Also to these ends, the contribution of the Duchess Eleonora di Toledo to the legacy of Cosimo I de' Medici cannot be considered merely complimentary. In large part, his legacy is theirs. The Duchess seemed to have pushed Cosimo toward more grandeur in their surroundings and lifestyle. This could have been due to her own pedigree, perhaps a lifestyle she enjoyed that she sought to recreate in her new role as consort of the Grand Duke of Florence. Regardless, her doings elevated the status of her husband and his House. The association of her established name granted a greater degree of credence to his, given that the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany was new.

⁶⁰ *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*, Part 4: Power vs Truth. PBS Home Video, 2005.

With this in mind, one wonders which of the two derived greater satisfaction from instances in which the dimidiated coat of both their houses was used.

The next Cosimo in the Florentine Medici lineage was a very different type of ruler and patron than Cosimo I, but one who also made significant contributions to the cultural heritage of Florence and the Renaissance.

Cosimo II (1590-1621)

The grandson of Cosimo I and Eleonora di Toledo, young Cosimo II de' Medici became the fourth Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1609, upon the death of his father, Ferdinando I. If viewed through the larger lens of history, this period marks the downward social and economic trajectory of the Medici dynasty. However, this time is still quite significant in terms of their patronage of art and architecture and its consequence to the larger Renaissance movement. Cosimo II is remembered for breaking new ground in his sponsorship of scientific development.

Cosimo was named Grand Duke at 19, assuming the title even younger than that of Lorenzo *il Magnifico*. For much of his reign, he was incapacitated by illness. Governance of Tuscany was conducted by ministers trained by his father, and complicated by the interventions of his mother, Christine of Lorraine and his wife, Archduchess Maria Maddelena of Austria.⁶¹ When composing his court, Cosimo was disposed to have it excel not only in the arts, but also in science. With this mindset, he invited astronomer and mathematician Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) to serve him.

⁶¹ Hale, J. R. (John Rigby). *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977, 177

Under Ferdinando I, Galileo had tutored young Cosimo II in mathematics.⁶² As Cosimo the Elder did for Donatello over 100 years prior, Cosimo II's patronage would now shelter Galileo from the Church's authority, allowing him to flourish as a scientist and astronomer. Mathematics historian Florian Cajori believes that, barring Cosimo's protection, much of Galileo's later work would have been impossible.⁶³

Galileo now taught Copernican Theory, the work of fellow Renaissance astronomer and mathematician Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543). This body of work argued for heliocentrism, an astronomical model which stated that the earth was among other planets in the solar system that revolved around the sun. Galileo's great improvements to the rudimentary telescope and his subsequent astronomical observations in early 1610 supported this theory.⁶⁴ He observed that Earth was not the only planet to have a moon, but that in fact Jupiter had several of its own, with the planetary bodies themselves being the centers of motion. Having discovered these moons of Jupiter, he named them. They would be either the "Cosmic Stars," after Cosimo II, or the "Medicean Stars." The latter term was decided upon, and this nomenclature would remain for much of the 17th century.⁶⁵ This discovery was announced in Galileo's astronomical treatise, *Sidereus Nuncius*, or "*Starry Messenger*" (1610) (Figure 10), which he dedicated to

⁶² Cochrane, Eric. *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973, 178

⁶³ The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. "Galileo." *The Mathematics Teacher*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1931), 119

⁶⁴ Westfall, Richard S. "Science and Patronage: Galileo and the Telescope." *Isis*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (1985), 18

⁶⁵ The Galileo Project. "Satellites of Jupiter." Accessed December 2014.
http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/observations/jupiter_satellites.html

Cosimo II de' Medici.⁶⁶ These findings, while revolutionary, would not sit well outside of the walls of the Palazzo Pitti.

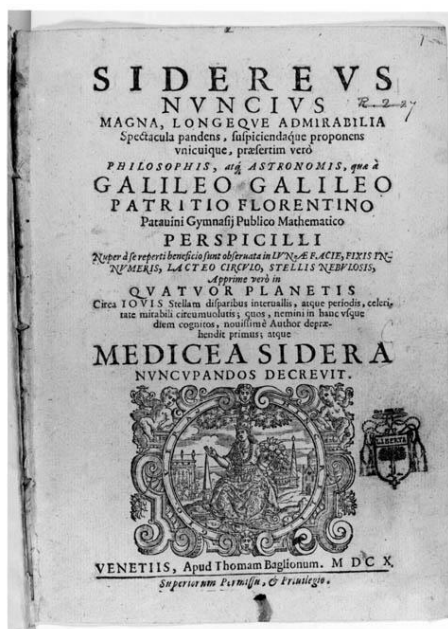


Figure 10 – Title page of Galileo’s *Sidereus Nuncius* (*Starry Messenger*), which mentions the *Medicea Sidera* (Medicean Stars).⁶⁷

Galileo’s support for Copernicus and his own research stood in opposition to the teachings of the Church, which were along the lines of Ptolemaic-Aristotelian geocentrism.⁶⁸ This model argued for a universe in which Earth was the center of all celestial bodies. In 1615, Galileo was warned by the Vatican to limit himself to research that would not challenge current theological dictates. In response, the following year, he

⁶⁶ Museo Galileo. “Book Reviews on the History of Science.” Accessed December 2014. http://www.museogalileo.it/en/newsletterslist/nunciusnewsletter_06_2012_eng/book_reviews_06_2012.html

⁶⁷ Soysa, Kemal de. “Sidereus Nuncius: The Starry Messenger.” JPG Image. University of Cambridge, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, 1999. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/starry/galsidnun.html>

⁶⁸ Central Rappahannock Regional Library. “Early Astronomers: Ptolemy, Aristotle, Copernicus, and Galileo.” Accessed December 2014. http://www.librarypoint.org/early_astronomers

traveled to Rome to explain his views to the papal court. He would not, however, stop his research.

In 1621, at age 30, Cosimo II died. The House of Medici had deal with the matter of succession and regency among Cosimo and Maria's eight young children. English historian Christopher Hibbert writes that, aside from extending the Pitti Palace, and renovating a villa for his family which included setting up a telescope for Galileo, Cosimo achieved "very little worthy of record."⁶⁹ On the contrary, the historic impact of his association with Galileo makes up for any perceived idleness or lack of quantity of other ventures. Regardless, Galileo's shield from the Church was now gone.

In 1632, Galileo published another controversial text on astronomical theory. He was at once called back to Rome. Chief Inquisitor Vincenzo Maculano da Firenzola, under the auspices of Pope Urban VIII, put Galileo on trial for heresy. He was convicted, forced to recant his findings,⁷⁰ and spent the rest of his life under house arrest. It would be more than 300 years before the Church would admit that Galileo Galilei was correct, and clear his name.⁷¹

While Cosimo II could not ultimately save his beneficiary, and his life's personal achievements may be considered small in the grand shadow of his dynastic predecessors, the developments realized under his patronage of Galileo forever changed the

⁶⁹ Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 282

⁷⁰ The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. "Galileo." *The Mathematics Teacher*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1931), 118-119

⁷¹ History. "Apr 12, 1633: Galileo is Convicted of Heresy." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/galileo-is-convicted-of-heresy>

understanding of natural science. Cosimo II's grandson, Cosimo III, would also be a patron of science, but bring a renewed focus on Medici artistic and literary patronage.

Cosimo III (1642-1723)

Cosimo III de' Medici entered into his birthright to realize a Tuscany in decline. The grandson of Cosimo II, son of Ferdinando II and nephew-in-law of King Louis XIV of France, he was the sixth and penultimate Grand Duke of Tuscany. His reign began upon his father's death. He was 27.

Ferdinando II had established a firm tax structure, and he had left his son Cosimo an inheritance, but times were bad. Trade was in rapid decline. The population of Tuscany was declining similarly, due to malaria, plague, and food shortages brought on by low agricultural yields. At first, Cosimo tried to tackle these issues. This proved futile. Cosimo began a gradual withdrawal from public life and abdication of his responsibilities. His mother, Vittoria della Rovere and her friends would take on the affairs of state. In his stead, he charged his brother Francesco, a boy of 11, to receive foreign dignitaries. Cosimo, more and more, sought the solace of his chapel.⁷²

A devout man who feared death and was concerned for his salvation, Cosimo fittingly patronized medical science. He accommodated physicist Francesco Redi (1626-1697) with all manner of research assistance for his experiments: equipment, a new library at the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, a botanical garden at Pisa, creatures to dissect, and corpses of executed criminals for Redi's anatomists. Noted American

⁷² Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975, 293

Entomologist⁷³ and author Harry B. Weiss would dub Francesco Redi the “Father of Experimental Entomology”⁷⁴ for his work. In the natural sciences, Scientist Nicolas Steno (1638-1686) was provided for in his study of geology and mineralogy. Galilean researchers were also supported, even those who were more forthright in their beliefs.⁷⁵

In 1673, Cosimo established the *Accademia Fiorentina* in Rome. This art institution would be directed by painter Ciro Ferri (1634-1689) and sculptor Ercole Ferrata (1610-1686), both of whom worked in the nascent baroque style. All of the painters and sculptors of the Medici court were invited to the academy, where they learned an artistic style that combined the Roman Baroque approach with that of Florentine style of contemporary European Mannerism. This influence is seen in the work of sculptors Giovanni Battista Foggini (1652-1725) and Massimiliano Soldani Benzi (1656-1740). Cosimo was also responsible for collecting a great deal of art and literature.

Cosimo III amassed the collected written and artistic works of his father, his mother and his cardinal uncles Carlo, Giovan Carlo, and Leopoldo. The majority of paintings were committed to the gallery of the Uffizi. Cosimo also added his personal acquisitions to the gallery. The collection would be further supplemented by that of his brother, Cardinal Francesco Maria, who died in 1694, and the considerable bequest of his son, the Grand Prince Ferdinando (1663-1713), who would predecease his father. Apart

⁷³ Treasurer’s Office, State of New Jersey. *Report of the Joint Committee on Treasurer’s Accounts and of the State Treasurer to the Legislature of New Jersey, with the Treasurer’s Report to the Governor on the Finances of the State for the Fiscal Year Ending October 31st, 1912*. Trenton: State Gazette Publishing Co., 1912, 783

⁷⁴ Weiss, Harry B. “Francesco Redi, The Father of Experimental Entomology.” *The Scientific Monthly*, Volume 23, Issue 3 (1926): 220

⁷⁵ Cochrane, Eric. *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973, 250-251

from these efforts, the state of Cosimo III's turbulent personal life mirrored that of his waning State of Tuscany.

Cosimo married Marguerite Louise d'Orleans of France in 1661, at the behest of his father. Their union was not amicable, and they ultimately lived separately. Despite this, the couple had three children.⁷⁶ As time went on, Cosimo grew increasingly concerned with the idea of succession, a concern made worse by the fact that his finances were starting to dwindle.⁷⁷

His first son was Ferdinando, born in 1663. The Grand Prince married Princess Violante of Bavaria in 1688, made official in 1689.⁷⁸ Ferdinando was a patron in true Medici style, of music, in addition to his art collection. A talented musician himself, he sang and played the harpsichord.⁷⁹ Bartolomeo Christofori (1655-1731), who invented the piano almost entirely on his own, did so under Ferdinando, while serving at his court.⁸⁰ Ferdinando died without issue in 1713.

Cosimo's second child was Anna Maria Luisa, born in 1667. Many hoped that the Princess would marry the Grand Dauphin of France, the first son of King Louis XIV, which could repair the relationship between her parents.⁸¹ Due to various personal and political reasons, this and several other prospective matches ended in failure. Anna Maria Luisa eventually married Prince Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine, in 1691, becoming

⁷⁶ Mediateca Medicea di Palazzo Medici Richardi. "Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1642-1723)." Accessed December 2014. [http://www.palazzo-medici.it/mediateca/en/Scheda_Cosimo_III_de_Medici,_granduca_di_Toscana_\(1642-1723\)&id_cronologia_contenuto=3](http://www.palazzo-medici.it/mediateca/en/Scheda_Cosimo_III_de_Medici,_granduca_di_Toscana_(1642-1723)&id_cronologia_contenuto=3)

⁷⁷ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 208

⁷⁸ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 170-172

⁷⁹ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 160

⁸⁰ The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "The Piano: The Pianofortes of Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655-1731)." Accessed December 2014. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cris/hd_cris.htm

⁸¹ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 151

Electress Palatine and Duchess of Neuburg.⁸² Prince Johann died in 1716. After spending another year at their home in Dusseldorf, Anna Maria Luisa returned to Florence.⁸³

Born third, in 1671, was Gian Gastone. He married Princess Anna Maria Francesca, Duchess of Saxe-Lauenburg in 1697.⁸⁴ After enduring a bitter union in which they were often apart, Gian Gastone abandoned his wife to return home to Florence, alcoholism, and solitude in 1708.⁸⁵ Upon the death of his brother Ferdinando, he became Cosimo's heir apparent. He would ultimately succeed his father in 1723.

With no grandchildren, and nearing death, Cosimo began to wonder who would succeed the Medici if the worst should come to pass. As Cosimo the Elder once worried, Cosimo III now concerned himself with what might happen to his people. He, as well as other European rulers, feared a war for power over Tuscany if his children did not procreate. Cosimo first put forth a plan to place Florence back into the hands of its people, which seemed to have been received favorably by the other powers that be. Then, he introduced a last-minute stipulation: if he and his sons should predecease his daughter, she would become Grand Duchess, and the Republic of Florence reconstituted after her death. Because of this condition, neither this, nor any other agreement, would come to pass.⁸⁶ Having the longest reign of any of the House of Medici, over 50 years, Cosimo III died at 81.

Gian Gastone, the unlikely heir of Cosimo III, is the last patron of the formal Medici dynasty. The transition now begins from more direct Medici artistic and

⁸² Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 182

⁸³ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 264

⁸⁴ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 211

⁸⁵ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 244-245

⁸⁶ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 253-256

architectural patrons to those who would end up saving the family contributions to the cultural heritage of Florence.

Gian Gastone (1671-1737)

The seventh Grand Duke of Tuscany. Gian Gastone de' Medici, second son of Cosimo III, was the very last of the royal Florentine Medici rulers. He succeeded his father at age 52, but was already senile and often drunk in public. A band of sycophants kept him amused and catered to. Gian Gastone spent more and more time in bed, sometimes for months at a time. Yet, he managed to enact legislation as His Royal Highness, The Most Serene Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Gian Gastone rescinded his father, Cosimo III's edicts concerning the persecution of Jews. Cosimo's theological bent caused him to prohibit sexual intercourse between Hebrews and Christians, forbade Christians to serve in the homes and businesses of Jews, and harshly punished Jews who would solicit Christian prostitutes.⁸⁷ He would go on to pass laws to stop the interference of the Church on functions of the state, and lower taxes on the working poor. Still, Tuscany was in an economic depression. The passage of time cemented the notion among the other European powers that Gian Gastone would die without issue, and the vultures of geopolitical opportunism began to circle.

As he remained on his deathbed, decisions regarding the future of his Duchy were made for him: In 1731, England, Holland, Spain, Austria and Savoy met in Vienna and decided that Don Carlos of Bourbon, Duke of Parma, would succeed Gian Gastone and the House of Medici. Believing his death to be imminent, Don Carlos personally marched

⁸⁷ Acton, Harold. *The Last Medici*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980, 140-141

on Florence with 6,000 Spanish troops to occupy the city and wait for his prize. However, the result of the intervening War of Polish Succession in 1733 meant that Don Carlos would instead rule in Naples as King of the Two Sicilies. This being the case, Tuscany was now awarded to Francis Stephen, Duke of Lorraine, he having lost his own Duchy to the King of Poland. So, in 1736, the Spanish troops left. They were replaced by 6,000 Austrian troops under Francis Stephen in 1737.

Suffering from an accumulation of diseases, the moribund Grand Duke commissioned a monument to Galileo at the Basilica of Santa Croce (1737?) (Figure 11 & Figure 12).⁸⁸ It had already designed by Foggini, but previously held up by the Church upon Galileo's death in 1642.⁸⁹ Beset, and forbidden to celebrate any holiday typically held in Florence to commemorate his family's achievements, Gian Gastone would then rouse from his idle state for an act that would become his own achievement toward saving the cultural heritage of Florence. He was able to garner a promise from those who sought to take the proverbial keys to his kingdom: Tuscany would never be considered part of an Imperial domain. It would remain, through inheritance, to a branch of Francis Stephen's House of Lorraine. Though challenged, the promise was honored. Gian Gastone died.⁹⁰ His sister, Anna Maria Luisa, built on the promise Gian Gastone extracted, while engaging in both artistic and architectural patronage in her own right.

⁸⁸ Young, Colonel G. F. (George Frederick). *The Medici*, Vol. 2. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 494

⁸⁹ Mediateca Medicea di Palazzo Medici Riccardi. "Gian Gastone de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1671-1737)." Accessed December 2014. http://www.palazzo-medici.it/mediateca/en/Scheda_Gian_Gastone_de_Medici

⁹⁰ Hale, J. R. (John Rigby). *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977, 190-192



Figure 11 – Basilica of Santa Croce

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014



Figure 12 – Galileo monument within the Basilica of Santa Croce⁹¹

⁹¹ “Gianbattista Foggini – The Grave of Galileo Galilei.” JPG Image. The Museums of Florence, Santa Croce Church and Museum. Accessed December 2014.
http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/museum_of_opera_s_croce.html

Anna Maria Luisa (1667-1743)

Having returned to Florence from Dusseldorf following the death of her husband, the late Elector Palatine of Neuburg, Anna Maria Luisa lived in the Palazzo Pitti. More forceful and energetic than her two brothers, she had ruled effectively for her father Cosimo III's remaining years, with what power she was able to wield herself. She was 70 at the time of her brother, Gian Gastone's passing. Within a month or two after taking possession of Tuscany, new Grand Duke Francis Stephen departed for Vienna.

The government of Tuscany was left in the hands of an agent, Marc de Beauveau, who was given the title, Prince of Craon. Both he and his wife were of low birth and lacked the social decorum normally associated with those in their positions. They oversaw a contrived and unrefined court. All of the posts in the new administration were filled with associates of the House of Lorraine. The people of Tuscany began to realize that they were under foreign rule. Evidence of the social and political conditions of the time exists in the correspondence of Horace Mann, the first English ambassador to the court of Tuscany in 1741. Mann indicates that the country had gained no less corruption in the change of leadership. The lack of taste and ignorance of the newcomers to all matters relating to art is noted as being tremendous.⁹²

Anna Maria Luisa lived removed from the activities of the new rulers and government, in a separate portion of the palace. She resided, retired, surrounded in ample finery that consisted of jewels, precious metals and expensive clothing. The Electress Palatine kept up the best of Medici traditions. Anna Maria Luisa continued to add

⁹² Young, Colonel G. F. (George Frederick). *The Medici*, Vol. 2. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 496-497

paintings to the Uffizi gallery in the tradition of her great-uncle, the Cardinal Leopoldo; even one she had painted herself. She gave what was reported by Horace Mann as remarkable amounts of money to charity. The bulk of her time and fortune in her waning years, though, was spent continuing work on the Medici family mausoleum at the Basilica of San Lorenzo (Figure 13, Figure 14 & Figure 15), a job that remained incomplete from both the reigns of her father and her brother. With her health in decline, Anna Maria Luisa made arrangements that it be completed, should she not live to do so herself.⁹³ Medici historian Colonel G. F. Young referred to what came next as “the parting gift,”⁹⁴ commonly called the *Patto di Famiglia* or Family Pact.⁹⁵



Figure 13 – Basilica of San Lorenzo

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

⁹³ Young, Colonel G. F. (George Frederick). *The Medici*, Vol. 2. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 498-500

⁹⁴ Young, Colonel G. F. (George Frederick). *The Medici*, Vol. 2. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 500

⁹⁵ Flores, Lourdes. “A day to remember the last Medici.” *Discover Tuscany Blog*. Discover Tuscany, 6 February, 2009. Blog Posting. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.discovertuscany.com/blog/florence/a-day-to-remember-the-last-medici-63/>



Figure 14 – Cloister, Basilica of San Lorenzo

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014^{96 97}

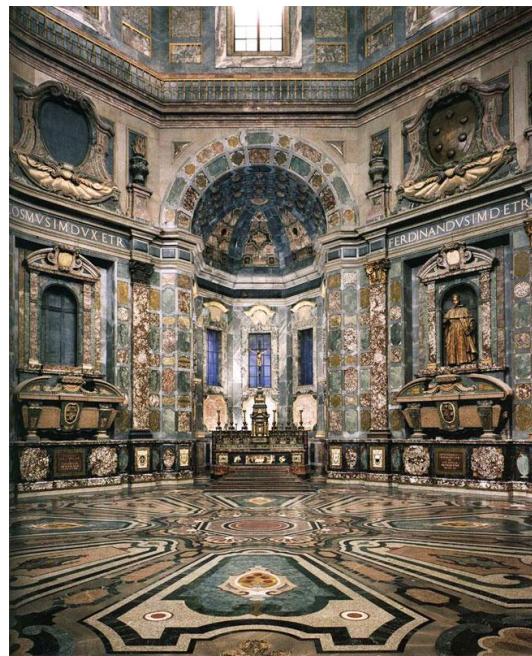


Figure 15 – Chapel of the Princes: Mausoleum of the Medici Family at the Basilica of San Lorenzo⁹⁸

⁹⁶ The Medici coats of arms ornament the second floor balconies, above the ground floor's arches, on both walls shown.

⁹⁷ The arches are supported by columns in the classical Ionic Order. A lush orange tree sits at the center of the courtyard, with a single orange having fallen onto the path below. When it appears in color, the Medici coat of arms consists of a field of yellow, on which rests six balls, all but the topmost of which are red. The oranges could be another of many veiled allusions to the Medici.

Anna Maria Luisa bequeathed all that the Medici family patronized and owned over the history of their dynasty to the new Grand Duke of Tuscany and his heirs: the galleries, the libraries, the villas, paintings, books, maps, antiquities, manuscripts, statues, reliquaries, wardrobe and jewelry.⁹⁹ There was one condition: “That these things being for the ornament of the state, for the benefit of the people and for an inducement to the curiosity of foreigners, nothing shall be alienated or taken away from the capital or from the territories of the Grand Duchy.” Her wish was honored. Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici, Electress Palatine of Neuburg, Princess of Tuscany, and the last of the royal Florentine Medici bloodline, died in 1743 at the age of 75. The treaty of Aachen (aka Aix-la-Chapelle) in 1748 guaranteed Tuscan independence.¹⁰⁰ Tuscany would remain independent until March of 1861, whereupon it formally became a part of a unified Italian state. The cultural treasures born of Medici patronage have remained in Florence.

Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici was laid to rest within the Basilica of San Lorenzo, along with other prominent members of the Medici dynasty. A statue of her is located near the Basilica’s Medici Chapels (Figure 16). The City of Florence has dedicated February 18th, the day of her death, as a day of celebration for the role of Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici in preserving their cultural heritage.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ “Chapel of the Princes Mausoleum of the Medici Family.” JPG Image. The Museums of Florence, Medici Chapels and Church of San Lorenzo (Cappelle Medicee e Chiesa di San Lorenzo). Accessed December 2014. http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/Medici_chapels.html

⁹⁹ Young, Colonel G. F. (George Frederick). *The Medici*, Vol. 2. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1928, 502-503

¹⁰⁰ Hale, J. R. (John Rigby). *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977, 192

¹⁰¹ Flores, Lourdes. “A day to remember the last Medici.” *Discover Tuscany Blog*. Discover Tuscany, 6 February, 2009. Blog Posting. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.discovertuscany.com/blog/florence/a-day-to-remember-the-last-medici-63/>



Figure 16 – Statue of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici^{102 103}

¹⁰² Salimbeni, Raffaello Arcangelo. *Monument to Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici* (?). 1971. Marble (?) Sculpture. Medici Chapels, Basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence.

¹⁰³ The Museums of Florence. "Medici Chapels and Church of San Lorenzo: Cappelle Medicee e Chiesa di San Lorenzo." Accessed December 2014. http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/Medici_chapels.html

Part III – Primary Research in Florence

The Medici Archive Project (MAP)

On the morning of March 19th, 2014, I set out on foot from my hotel for the *Archivio di Stato di Firenze* (State Archives of Florence). The State Archives contain the operational headquarters of the Medici Archive Project (MAP). The MAP is a global hub for Medici scholars, which attracts historians of all stripes from across the world. Its collection is comprised of over four million letters across 6,429 volumes, spanning 200 years amounting to, as they put it, “a mile of shelf space.” The archival collection contains documents covering politics, diplomacy, gastronomy, economics, art, science, military and medical culture of the early modern Tuscan and European era.¹⁰⁴ Prior to leaving for Italy, I had set up a meeting with MAP Vice Director Dr. Elena Brizio.¹⁰⁵

After entering the building, one of the MAP staff came down to assist me, and then showed me upstairs. A tapestry of the Medici coat of arms decorated a hallway (Figure 17). Another large, beautiful tapestry depicting an expansive Medici family tree adorned one of the walls within the main reading room of the Medici archive. Several scholars were carefully toiling over texts hundreds of years old, some volumes six inches thick with bindings in all but tatters (Figure 18). I was told that there were currently researchers at the archives visiting from other locations in Europe, and as far away as Japan, all here to further their studies on the Medici dynasty.

¹⁰⁴ The Medici Archive Project. “Mission: An Unprecedented Model for a Research Institute.” Accessed December 2014. <http://www.medicis.org/about/mission>

¹⁰⁵ Dr. Brizio assisted the author remotely months earlier with preliminary Medici genealogical research.



Figure 17 – Tapestry depicting the Medici coat of arms, MAP¹⁰⁶

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014



Figure 18 – Researchers working with Medici era texts in the main reading room, MAP

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

¹⁰⁶ Located within a corridor of the MAP Headquarters, in the State Archives of Florence.

After placing my belongings into a locker in accordance with the rules in place to protect the old documents, I was escorted to an office off the main room where I was introduced to Dr. Brizio in person. Dr. Brizio then introduced me to several other specialists with whom I discussed my ideas and research endeavors. Given my specific inclinations, Dr. Brizio recommended that I speak with Mr. Samuel Morrison Gallacher, Junior Research Fellow and Fellowship Coordinator for the Medici Archive Project.

Mr. Gallacher came to meet me, introducing himself as Sam, and was kind enough to offer me his insight over coffee. With that, we left the archive and proceeded down the street to a small indoor café. Mr. Gallacher was a vibrant and impassioned personality. I placed a fine point on gaining a better understanding of how the Medici used contemporary Florentine culture in their acts of patronage in order to advance themselves. In a position that would be substantiated by my research, Mr. Gallacher explained that the key to understanding how the Medici used contemporary Florentine culture was to understand Cosimo I de' Medici and the meaning behind Medici symbolism.

A Conversation with Mr. Gallacher

While Cosimo I (1519-1574) is regarded historically as a powerful and imposing master of political intrigue, Mr. Gallacher explained that this was not always the case. Cosimo I was elected to head of state (Duke of Florence) following the assassination of his cousin, Alessandro de' Medici.¹⁰⁷ Cosimo I was in a vulnerable position due to the fact that he was only 17 at the time, and the current Pope, Clement VII, was in an

¹⁰⁷ Alessandro was assassinated by Lorenzino de' Medici, a distant cousin.

uncertain state after the sack of Rome in 1527. Cosimo I grew a beard to be taken more seriously, and would use cultural patronage to secure both his new position as Duke, and that of his family.

A great symbol of Florence is the lion called *Marzocco*, analogous to the United States' bald eagle. Cosimo I would use this symbolism to elevate his position. In the sense that he was "King," having ruled as Duke of Florence, later the first Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I used the *Marzocco* in the works of art he would commission, but he would always have the lion in a position inferior to his own. He would also give gifts to secure his rule, win friends and gain obligations. Mr. Gallacher went on to specify that one of the most important gifts Cosimo would give to other princes were live lions. By doing so, Cosimo I showed his complete control over Florence; such was his power that he has tamed the lion and could simply give it away as a gift.

Another great symbol of Florence adorns the façade of the Palazzo Pitti, which now serves as the entrance to the Boboli Gardens. Acquired during the rule of Cosimo I, carved lion heads can be seen under all of the windows on the ground level. Upon closer inspection, these lions wear the ducal crown. (Figure 19) There was a ceremony every year in which the lion would be crowned. Rather than these depictions serving as the originally-intended representation of sovereignty the Florentine Republic, they were now "conquered." These symbols became simply the animals of the Medici family.



Figure 19 – Carved lion head, depicted wearing the ducal crown of Cosimo I de’ Medici, Palazzo Pitti.

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014

This brand of symbolism is also manifested in the Medici coat of arms. While tremendous variation can be seen in framing (helm, coronet, supporters, etc.), dependent upon time and place, and the family member in question, the escutcheon remains constant. The Medici crest is a field of yellow on which rests six balls in a loosely circular formation, again dependent upon the individual coat’s utilization. The topmost ball in the heraldic field is usually larger than the rest, and adorned with a single large or multiple smaller, French *fleur-de-lis*, which is the coat of arms of Florence. Mr. Gallacher noted that, although Florence was a republic, it still had nobility, and the nobles wanted to associate themselves with power. For example, some families used the *fleur-de-lis*, others the Byzantine eagle, others still a red cross on a white background symbolizing their crusader backgrounds. In the case of the Medici coat of arms during the reign of

Cosimo I, a crown sits above the main crest. Specifically, a full crown, or coronet.

Another such example can be seen prominently within the Palazzo Vecchio. Proceeding upwards on the staircase leading from the ground floor, up towards the *Salone dei Cinquecento* (Hall of Five Hundred), one passes under a wrought iron gateway capped with the Medici coat of arms, helmed with a full crown. (Figure 20) While an open crown signified high societal standing in its own right, the closed coronet was typically reserved for royalty. The use of the closed crown ostentatiously depicted Cosimo I and the Medici as Kings of Florence.



Figure 20 – Gateway adorned with the Medici coat of arms, crowned with a coronet, Palazzo Vecchio.¹⁰⁸

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

Continuing his tradition of gift-giving, making friends and cultivating allies, Cosimo I created the knightly order of *Santo Stefano*, or the Order of Saint Stephen, which his benefactors could join. Mr. Gallacher emphasized that this is what the nobles wanted: a way of developing and maintaining the fealty of the most important people. Members had medals they would wear, and Cosimo had a red cross added to his coat of

¹⁰⁸ The *fleur-de-lis*, the emblem of Florence, is seen here as ornamentation upon the Medici crown.

arms. The noble families could do the same with their coats of arms, but could only ever take the balls of the Medici coat of arms by marrying into the family. Such marriages could result in dimidiated coats of arms, wherein the female spouse's coat would be split between the Medici crest and that of her family's noble house, as seen in the case of the Duchess Eleonora di Toledo. It is also of note that these rules were not always followed. For example, upon the election of Giulio di Giuliano de' Medici as Pope Clement VII, he adopted the full Medici coat of arms, although he was technically of illegitimate birth.¹⁰⁹

Mr. Gallacher's parting recommendation was to get out of the archives and see the city in order to explore the examples of material culture commissioned by the Medici for myself. I took his advice, gaining additional perspective before I interviewed my next subject.

Finding a Tuscan Prince

My loftiest goal had been to have an exchange with someone who had some manner of connection to whatever was left of the Medici bloodline. I discovered that there were several cadet branches of the family, specifically, the lineages of those not directly in the Florentine line of succession by means of being a first born son. These lines are constituted by second and third born sons, and cousins of the royal line. After perusing Medici genealogical retrospectives, and taking to the internet, I found that there was, in fact, someone who I believed to be a living Medici heir.

¹⁰⁹ Woodward, John. *A Treatise on Ecclesiastical Heraldry*. London: W. & A. K. Johnson, 1894, 162

Prior to my research expedition, I located a website for the *Associazione Internazionale Medicea* (Medici International Association).¹¹⁰ This website was for a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving the artistic heritage of Florence. At the head of this organization is a man named Ottaviano de' Medici di Toscana di Ottajano. The title of Ottaviano de' Medici on the website translated to "Representative Dynastic Holder of the Historical House of Medici of Tuscany; Dynastic Legatee pro-tempore of the testamentary Birthright of the Electress Palatine, in favor of paternal Medici kinship."¹¹¹ This meant that Ottaviano de' Medici claimed the honorific title of Prince of Tuscany, in the absence of a male descendant to the Florentine Medici line. The Florentine Medici bloodline was completely extinguished upon the death of the Princess Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici in 1743. The title of Grand Duke/Prince of Tuscany was extinguished before her death, upon the death of Gian Gastone de' Medici, the last Grand Duke of Tuscany 1737.

Fascinated, I sent an email to the website's general information address on February 2nd, 2014, requesting an interview with Mr. de' Medici when I came to Florence. Days turned into weeks, and I assumed that was the end of that: He was either impossibly busy, or had no time to entertain the menial queries of foreign researchers, or his foundation's administrator simply screened out such correspondence. Then, on the 20th of February, at around 6 PM EST, what I received surprised me. Mr. de' Medici responded personally.

¹¹⁰ Associazione Internazionale Medicea (Medici International Association). *Home page*. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.de-medici.com/>

¹¹¹ Associazione Internazionale Medicea (Medici International Association). *Soci fondatori (Founders)*. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.de-medici.com/storica-casa-medicea-di-toscana>

He wrote that it would be a pleasure to answer my questions, and that he would allot as many as several hours for an interview, as long as I could provide him with advanced notice of my visit. I would sit with Ottaviano de' Medici on the 20th of March.

Ottaviano de' Medici and I met at the European School of Economics (ESE), a private business school from which Mr. de' Medici conducts his own business. Sitting privately in a large classroom with a plain white, though elaborately vaulted ceiling, in an aged building not 200 feet from the banks of the Arno in the Historic Centre of Florence, we talked.¹¹²

An Interview with Ottaviano de' Medici

I began by asking for Mr. de' Medici to give me his full title, and to explain how he is a descendant of the Medici. Mr. de' Medici gave his full title as Prince of Tuscany. He explained that other cousins can have the title, but that there is no longer a Grand Duke, because that is a royal title. He went on to say that he and other descendant princes are not pretenders to the state, although anyone who could be related to the family would have the right of succession. Mr. de' Medici then showed me his genealogical tree, which he folded out from a copy of his book, *Storia della Mia Dinastia (History of my Dynasty)*. In reference to Gian Gastone de' Medici, the last Medicean Grand Duke, Mr. de' Medici pointed out that the title of Duke goes to the cousins of the main line in the event that there are no male heirs. He stated that the title in question is still valid, because it is a Holy See, meaning that it is Vatican law, and Vatican law cannot be undone unless done

¹¹² The original interview, upon which the following section is based, is held by the author.

so by the Pope himself.¹¹³ Mr. de' Medici detailed that the dissolution of the Medici line upon the death of Gian Gastone was false, and a political matter, stating that there are four other branches of the family. He added that no one knows a lot of this story, because it has been hidden from history.

Mr. de' Medici explained that his branch of the family was allowed to stay in Florence during the rise of Dominican Priest Girolamo Savonarola, following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494.^{114 115} While other members of the Medici family were banished or left, his branch remained and renounced any claim to power. In time, his family moved to expand the reach of the Medici family, having acquired new land from the Spanish. Mr. de' Medici's bloodline is known as the Princes of Ottajano, named for this land near Naples. He stated that this title is no longer recognized, because the Italian Republic does not recognize noble titles. However, Mr. de' Medici points out that the Prince of Tuscany is a Vatican title, and the Church still recognizes it. Mr. de' Medici remarked that, "The new dynasty always tries to diminish the last member of the pervious dynasty in order to feel better than the previous. This is political."

Mr. de' Medici returned to Florence from his family's home in Naples, in his words, "to preserve and evaluate the Medici heritage." He stated that he created the Medici International Association for the Protection of Fine Arts in 2010, for which he serves as president, and that they now have 40,000 members from all over the world.

¹¹³ Mr. de' Medici is referring to the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany, originally bestowed upon Cosimo I de' Medici by Pope Pius V.

¹¹⁴ As detailed in the Part II section on Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici (Leo X).

¹¹⁵ Girolamo Savonarola was a Dominican priest who came to power in Florence. Savonarola sought to eradicate what he viewed as debauchery and corruption as a result of Medici rule. He enforced a strict doctrine, best exemplified by "bonfires of the vanities." This was the public burning of jewelry, art and cosmetics as a means of purging the sinful excesses of Florentine life under Medici rule.

When asked to define his family's legacy in Florence, Mr. de' Medici stated that the present role of the Medici in Florence, and their legacy, is to protect and evaluate the cultural heritage left by their ancestors in the form of art, science, and literature. He added that the present-day Medici are not claiming ownership of this heritage.

I asked that Mr. de' Medici felt the Renaissance would have looked like, if not for the Medici and their artistic patronage. He responded by saying that the Medici were not the only ones acting to protect the arts, and that the whole city was commissioning masterpieces, especially the Church. He said that the Renaissance would have flourished without the Medici, but the Medici became more famous than other principal actors because they were one of the major protagonists of the movement, as well as having their name forever tied to the Renaissance due to having been made Grand Dukes.

When I asked what it was that differentiated the Medici from other artistic patrons, Mr. de' Medici pointed to their philosophy, which he says came from Hermes Trismegistos and his code. Mr. de' Medici refers the writings that comprise Greco-Egyptian god Hermes Trismegistos's *Hermetica*. These texts, which date from the 2nd or 3rd century BCE¹¹⁶ were rediscovered during the Renaissance, obtained by Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici (Cosimo the Elder), and translated into Latin.¹¹⁷ Hermeticism stresses the unity of God, and humanity's attempt to return to this unity.¹¹⁸ It would be adapted to Christianity to become an inspiration for the spiritual, artistic and scientific

¹¹⁶ Forrest & Forrest. "The Corpus Hermeticum and other Hermetica." *Hermetic Fellowship*, last updated 20 March 2014. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.hermeticfellowship.org/HFHermeticism.html>

¹¹⁷ Forrest & Forrest. "Hermeticism Banished—and Returned." *Hermetic Fellowship*, last updated 20 March 2014. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.hermeticfellowship.org/HFHermeticism.html>

¹¹⁸ Beyer, Catherine. "Hermeticism and Hermetic Beliefs." *About Religion*. Accessed December 2014.

renewal of the Renaissance.¹¹⁹ Hermeticism would also influence Italian humanism and Renaissance science.¹²⁰ Mr. de' Medici stated that this is something that not many consider, adding that the Medici did a lot to finance and translate classical literature, but in specific, the *Codice Ermetico*. When I asked what differentiated the Medici legacy as compared to that of other prominent families of their age, he added that it was not a question of money, but of this philosophy.

With my previous conversation with Mr. Samuel Gallacher of the MAP in mind, I asked Mr. de' Medici to talk to me about Cosimo I de' Medici and his use of artistic patronage, as well as how he saw Cosimo I's role in the Medici dynasty. Mr. de' Medici stated that the influence of Cosimo I on those he patronized was mostly political, that he used art in order to advance his political actions. When I asked that historical figures he could compare Cosimo I to, Mr. de' Medici responded by saying, "No one was so good as Cosimo." He went on to explain that no one could imitate Cosimo's work after him. Mr. de' Medici explained that Cosimo I was exceptional in his ability to use art for political purposes, as well as for using politics to protect the arts. He went on to say that Cosimo did not abandon the rules of the Hermetic Code when he was contemplating commissioning a piece of art. Mr. de' Medici cites the Boboli Gardens as one of the biggest examples of the use of Hermetics.

Further research on the subject revealed that patronage and the use of cultural heritage involving Hermeticism, and its themes of alchemy and astrology, were of interest to both Cosimo I and his successor as Grand Duke, Francesco de' Medici. Recall

¹¹⁹ Forrest & Forrest. "What is Hermeticism?" *Hermetic Fellowship*, last updated 20 March 2014. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.hermeticfellowship.org/HFHermeticism.html>

¹²⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica. "INFLUENCE ON." *Hermes Trismegistos, Egyptian God*. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/263235/Hermes-Trismegistos>

the symbolism ascribed to the crowned *Marzocco* lions beneath the windows of the Palazzo Pitti. In alchemic tradition, the crowned lion also represents gold, which is the solar metal. This is believed to be a symbol of power and light. The lion is also representative of both the astrological sign of Leo, and the constellation of the same name from which it derives.¹²¹ Recall as well the ancient Egyptian derivation of Hermes Trismegistos. In 1789, the House of Lorraine curiously placed an Egyptian obelisk, originally purchased from Luxor and formerly housed at Villa Medici in Rome, at the center of the Boboli Gardens Amphitheater. (Figure 21).¹²²



Figure 21 – Egyptian obelisk at the center of the Amphitheater, Boboli Gardens'

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

¹²¹ Nencini, Laura. "Alchemy and the Hermetic Arts in the Boboli Gardens." *Tuscany Blog (Blog Toscana)*. Live Your Tuscany, 20 March 2014. Blog Posting. Accessed December 2014.

http://www.liveyourtuscany.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=176:alchemy-and-the-hermetic-arts-in-the-boboli-garden&catid=14&Itemid=319&lang=en

¹²² The Museums of Florence. "Boboli Garden." Accessed December 2014.

http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/boboli_garden.html

Finally, I asked Mr. de' Medici to bring up any subject that he would like to cover along the lines we had discussed. He said that the most important act of Cosimo III de' Medici and of his daughter, Anna Maria Luisa, was the so-called "Pact of the Family," between the Medici their successors, who were of the Habsburg-Lorraine family. He explained, as I detailed more thoroughly in the Part II section on Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, that the pact provided the clause that the Medici would give all of the works of art collected by their ancestors to the new Grand Dukes without condition, other than that nothing be removed from the State of Tuscany. Mr. de' Medici explained that Cosimo III was attacked by historians for being too weak and religious, and ineffective in his political attempts to preserve the wellness of the State of Tuscany. Mr. de' Medici refutes this. He cites 50 years of neutrality under the rule of Cosimo III as the reason Anna Maria Luisa was able to sign the pact with the House of Lorraine. He continued to say that, without the pact, there is a very, very strong possibility that we would not be able to see and admire all of the works of art collected by the Medici in Florence today. Mr. de' Medici stated that, at the time of the pact, a dynasty taking the place of another dynasty would have sold and gotten rid of the works of art of the previous dynasty.

Mr. de' Medici said that it is his personal charge to make sure that the Family Pact is honored in Florence, as well that the legacy of the Medici living today is to ensure that the cultural heritage of the Medici family is maintained and evaluated in the future. Their legacy, he says, is to continue. He concluded by stating that the will of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici left written rules that one particular member of the Medici family living in the future would have to represent the Medici family in front of the world, for the purpose of ensuring the effects of the Medici legacy, as well as her pact, by preserving

and evaluating the culture and artistic heritage of the Medici dynasty. Noted cultural heritage scholar David Lowenthal gives insight into such personal legacies, writing that continuity enhances all manner of inherited careers, and that familial roots remain our most essential legacy; that recovering forbearers has special urgency for folk brutally sundered from their past.¹²³

Mr. de' Medici's depth of historical knowledge, and especially his perspectives on both his ancestors and how he sees his role going forward, provided new and valuable context for my analysis.

¹²³ Lowenthal, David. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 33-34.

Part IV – Further Analysis and Conclusion

The first half of the royal Florentine Medici covered in this thesis (Cosimo di Giovanni, Lorenzo di Giovanni, Giovanni di Lorenzo, and Cosimo I) concerned themselves more heavily with the use of cultural heritage to advance and stabilize the family than did the latter four (Cosimo II, Cosimo III, Gian Gastone, and Anna Maria Luisa). They first four had to, because their grip on power was tenuous. It was only with the founding of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany under Cosimo I that their power was secured and fully legitimized by papal decree. It is during Cosimo I's reign as Grand Duke that one sees the imposing and deeply symbolic acts of Medici dominance incorporated into artistic and architectural patronage.

Further Analysis of Medici Politics, Patronage, and the Use of Cultural Heritage

Cosimo I ingrained his family's name into the cultural and architectural heritage of Florence by building: adding to and moving into the Palazzo Vecchio, building and consolidating the municipal government within the Uffizi complex, and building onto and establishing the Ducal palace within the Palazzo Pitti. For these reasons, Cosimo I represented both the pinnacle of Medici power, and the turning point in the dynasty. After Cosimo I, the acts of patronage, while still of historic significance to the Renaissance, only served the whims of the rulers in question, as befitting the inclinations of a secure royal house. The question then becomes, how did Cosimo I do it, and why were his actions were so effective? First, he learned from his forbearers.

The most successful Medici patrons used elements of contemporary Florentine life to achieve success. Cosimo the Elder used his patronage of Brunelleschi's Dome,

built upon the unfinished Florence Cathedral, to glorify the city. Lorenzo the Magnificent worked through the existing government, serving at the pleasure of the people. Both showed respect for the least fortunate of Florentine citizens. In Cosimo the Elder's case, he was able to garner public support sufficient to have his banishment at the hands of the Albizzi revoked, and his enemies punished. In the case of Lorenzo, the favor he gained saw him through his assassination attempt and overthrow plot by the House of Pazzi, as well as the subsequent Papal/Neapolitan siege of Florence. Their patronage benefitted the people and their charity made them loved. Prince Ottaviano de' Medici said, "No one was so good as Cosimo," in reference to Cosimo I, however, because Cosimo I's use of cultural heritage was particularly deep-rooted and multifaceted.

Cosimo I used contemporary culture and the symbols of Republican Florence in his patronage by twisting them to become synonymous with the Medici name, and then to make those symbols subservient to his position as ruler. Mr. Gallacher detailed this in Cosimo I's use of the *Marzocco* lions. Prince Ottaviano de' Medici went further, detailing Cosimo I's use of ancient Hermetic beliefs and associated symbolism in his patronage. It is by forging their identity in this way that the Medici became ubiquitous, but this was also an effort that had to take shape over time. For Cosimo I, long-term self-promotion was by no means the whole of his efforts in securing the Medici legacy.

Take the example of Cosimo I's Uffizi. It was not simply built on vacant land. Constructed adjacent to the Palazzo Vecchio, in the center of Florence, existing buildings had to be demolished in order to make room. Among them was San Pier Scheraggio, an

ancient and important Romanesque church that was largely destroyed for that purpose.¹²⁴ Contrast San Pier Scheraggio with Florence's Basilica of San Lorenzo, the Medici family church. Consecrated in the year 393, San Lorenzo was an object of Medici patronage from the time of Giovanni di Bicci,¹²⁵ and synonymous with their influence and longevity. San Lorenzo tied the Medici to Florence. San Pier Scheraggio was merely an aged structure standing in the way of their legacy. Similarly, New York City's original Pennsylvania Station was a train station built in 1910. Considered to be an architectural marvel and an important part of the city's identity, it was razed in 1963 in the name of progress.¹²⁶ Not all destruction is born of malice, but the results are undoubtedly the same. The Sienese experienced this for themselves upon the invasion of Cosimo I and his forces in 1557. The Uffizi was intended to symbolize general well-being, of which the regime of Cosimo I was the self-proclaimed champion.¹²⁷ So, does the manipulation, even destruction, of Florentine cultural heritage make Cosimo I, or Lorenzo the Magnificent, or Cosimo the Elder autocrats, or rulers in the Florentine Republican tradition? The answer is, a bit of each. It depended upon the individual ruler in question, and what the situation called for at the time. It is true, that which the Medici stood for can be seen as beneficial to Florentine republican ideals.

A regular theme throughout the exploration of Medici patronage in this thesis is the notion of unlocking the unbridled talents of the individual, as opposed to the

¹²⁴ Uffizi Gallery Museum in Florence. "History of the Uffizi Gallery." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.uffizi.org/museum/history/>

¹²⁵ The Museums of Florence. "Medici Chapels and Church of San Lorenzo: Cappelle Medicee e Chiesa di San Lorenzo." Accessed December 2014. http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/Medici_chapels.html

¹²⁶ The New York Preservation Archive Project. "Pennsylvania Station." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.nypap.org/content/pennsylvania-station>

¹²⁷ Van Veen, Henk Th. *Cosimo I de' Medici and His Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 84

regimentation of the individual artist under the edicts of the Church. This is akin to how Florence itself prized its independence and flourished after suffering subjugation, first under Germanic invasion and then under the Holy Roman Empire. Consider two guiding principles of Medici thought, explored intermittently throughout this thesis: Humanism, which stresses the importance of the individual in relation to God; and Hermeticism, the texts of which primarily concern the potential for the individual to access the secrets of nature in order to achieve a degree of power and understanding.¹²⁸ Both beliefs stress the power of the individual, not an overarching power structure. As opposed to Medici rule being viewed as paradoxical to the idea of what German-American Renaissance historian Hans Baron called “civic humanism,”¹²⁹ in this case Florentine Republicanism, Medici rule was justified and legitimized by it.¹³⁰ Anthropologist Jonathan Friedman of Sweden’s University of Lund defines the constitution of identity as a game of mirrors, a temporal interaction of multiple practices of identification external and internal to a subject population,¹³¹ as with Classical Greece being a crucial aspect of the emergent identity of Europe during the Renaissance itself.¹³² For the Medici, the identity they cultivated as the embodiment of Florentine Republicanism became their shield against their aggressors, just as the Medici shielded those they patronized.

¹²⁸ Larracey, Caitlin A. “Renaissance Drama and Magic: Humanism and Hermeticism in Early Modern England.” *BSU Honors Program These and Projects*, Item 12. (2013), 2

¹²⁹ Baron, Hans. *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, No. 36. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

¹³⁰ Jurdjevic, Mark. “Civic Humanism and the Rise of the Medici.” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (1999), 994

¹³¹ Friedman, Jonathan. “The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity.” *American Anthropologist*, Volume 94, Issue 4 (1992), 855.

¹³² Friedman, Jonathan. “The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity.” *American Anthropologist*, Volume 94, Issue 4 (1992), 839.

The Renaissance is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “The period of European history between the 14th and 17th centuries when there was a new interest in science, and in ancient art and literature, especially in Italy; a period of new growth or activity.”¹³³ It is clear to see that the collective actions of the House of Medici are then indispensable to how the Renaissance is defined, further, that the definition of the Renaissance can interchangeably be used to describe the collective actions of the House of Medici. This becomes even clearer with the Renaissance is broken up into its component parts.

For the sake of this example, component parts are defined as the individuals whose work during the period of time in question are considered collectively to give us the Renaissance. The following individuals were directly patronized by, or who were directly influenced by the House of Medici. Only those individuals and their areas of practice explicitly covered within the confines of this thesis are mentioned. They are listed in chronological order, by Medici patron:

Cosimo di Giovanni (1389-1464)

Michelozzo di Bartolomeo Michelozzi (architect) (1396-1472)

Donatello di Niccolò di Betto Bardi (sculptor) (1386-1466)

Filippo Brunelleschi (architect, painter) (1377-1446)

Niccolò Machiavelli (writer) (1469-1527)

Lorenzo di Giovanni (1449-1492)

¹³³ “The Renaissance.” *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Merriam-Webster Online. 2014. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/renaissance>

Leonardo da Vinci (painter, sculptor, inventor) (1452-1519)

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti (painter, sculptor) (1475-1564)

Andrea del Verrocchio (painter, sculptor) (1435-1488)

Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510)

Filippino Lippi (painter) (1406-1469)

Pietro Perugino (painter) (1446-1523)

Domenico Ghirlandiao (painter) (1449-1494)

Giovanni di Lorenzo (Leo X) (1475-1521)

Pietro Bembo (scholar, writer) (1470-1547)

Bernardo Dovizi (writer) (1470-1520)

Raphael Sanzio da Urbino (architect) (1483-1520)

Baldassare Castiglione (writer) (1478-1529)

Cosimo I (1519-1574)

Giorgio Vasari (architect, landscape, writer) (1511-1574)

Bartolomeo Ammannati (architect, landscaper) (1511-1592)

Niccoló Pericoli Tribolo (architect, landscaper) (circa 1500-1550)

Bernardo Buontalenti (architect, landscaper) (circa 1530s-1608)

Alfonso Parigi (architect, landscaper) (?-1590)

Giulio Parigi (architect, landscaper) (1571-1635)

Baccio Bandinelli (architect, landscaper) (1493-1560)

Cosimo II (1590-1621)

Galileo Galilei (mathematician, astronomer) (1564-1642)

Cosimo III (1642-1723)

Francesco Redi (physicist, entomologist) (1626-1697)

Nicolas Steno (geologist, mineralogist) (1638-1686)

Unnamed “Galilean Researchers”

Ciro Ferri (painter) (1634-1689)

Ercole Ferrata (sculptor) (1610-1686)

Giovanni Battista Foggini (sculptor) (1652-1725)

Massimiliao Soldani Benzi (sculptor) (1656-1740)

Bartolomeo Christofoti (inventor) (1655-1731),

as mentioned through son Ferdinando

Gian Gastone (1671-1737)

Giovanni Battista Foggini (sculptor) (1652-1725)

Anna Maria Luisa (1667-1743)

(Work on Medici family mausoleum, Basilica of San Lorenzo)

If only this example is used, the resumes of Grand Duke Gian Gastone de' Medici and his sister, the Princess Anna Maria Luisa are undeniably very thin in comparison to their forbearers. However, this thesis becomes invalid if not for their inclusion. This is due to the fact that the goal of this thesis was to explore the full extent of the House of Medici in shaping the Renaissance. Without Gian Gastone and Anna Maria Luisa, there is no Renaissance as we know it today. If the works of the above component parts are accepted as that which constitutes a fair representation of the idea of the Renaissance as a movement, keeping in mind that they do not define the totality of Medici patronage, the only reason we know of these contributions, in their proper context, is because of the actions of Anna Maria Luisa and Gian Gastone.

If not for the promise extracted by Gian Gastone before his death, which stated the Grand Duchy of Tuscany never be considered part of an imperial domain, it is highly likely that Tuscany would have lost its sovereignty. Recall Francis Stephen, Duke of Lorraine, who succeeded the Medici Dynasty in the name of the House of Lorraine upon the death of Gian Gastone in 1737. In 1745, Duke Francis Stephen would be crowned Francis I, Holy Roman Emperor. Tuscany was not absorbed into the Holy Roman Empire. The 1748 Treaty of Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle ended the War of the Austrian Succession, which meant the restitution of several disputed territories. Tuscany was not among them.¹³⁴ As Ottaviano de' Medici said, if Tuscany had lost its sovereignty to

¹³⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica. "Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle." Accessed December 2014.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/11186/Treaty-of-Aix-la-Chapelle>

another nation, or if had been absorbed into an empire, it is almost a guarantee that Tuscany would have been stripped of its cultural properties. Napoleon Bonaparte, who annexed Tuscany briefly in 1808 as part of the Spanish Campaign of his Napoleonic Wars,¹³⁵ did this rampantly, bringing back to Paris as much European art and treasure as he could.¹³⁶ However, just because Tuscany was able to retain its sovereignty does not mean that its cultural heritage would not eventually be removed, taken to adorn other locations that fell under the possession of other dynasties that had dominion over Tuscany from the time spanning the death of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici in 1743 to the unification of Italy in 1861. Essentially, what Gian Gastone succeeded in doing was to buy time for his sister, Anna Maria Luisa, to act.

Anna Maria Luisa's behest guaranteed that the material culture of Florence not be removed, and that it be protected for the benefit of the people and curiosity of visitors. This was the defining act upon her death, but there is no telling what could have been lost in the interim, should Tuscany had lost its independence. The fact remains that, if Medici cultural acquisitions had been removed from Florence, the perception of their influence and of the Renaissance itself would have been forever altered. Certainly, subsequent dynasties could have also destroyed Medici architecture which instead fell under the protection of Anna Maria Luisa's pact, for the sake of building their own structures, or to otherwise wipe out the memory of the Medici in order to elevate their own houses. One need only look to the present to find such an example of this.

¹³⁵ The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "Timeline: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815)." Nations Borders and Identities Conflict Studies Project. <http://www.unc.edu/nbi/texte/NBITimeline.pdf>

¹³⁶ Merryman, Henry, and Elsen. *Law, Ethics, and the Visual Arts*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002, 5.

Following the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, an extremist sheikh named Morgan Al-Abrashi claimed that, if he and his followers were to gain power in post-Mubarek Egypt, they would not hesitate to destroy antiquities, even the Sphinx and the Pyramids of Giza as pagan monuments and idols, “if they were worshipped before or afterwards.” For much the same reason, Al-Abrashi also took part, along with the Taliban, in the destruction of Afghanistan’s Bamiyan Buddhas in March of 2001.¹³⁷ This was shocking, but while a grave transgression, hardly a new tactic.

Going back to 1457 BCE, during ancient Egypt’s 18th Dynasty, Hatshepsut ruled Egypt as regent. Her husband, Tuthmosis II, died before his son was of age. Instead of eventually relinquishing power to her stepson, Tuthmosis III, she crowned herself King. After her death, her monuments were attacked, statues torn down, and her image defaced.¹³⁸ Just as Prince Ottaviano de’ Medici said of his own political status, “The new dynasty always tries to diminish the last member of the previous dynasty in order to feel better than the previous. This is political.”

It is for these reasons that Gian Gastone and Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici are every bit as important to the legacy of the House of Medici in shaping the Renaissance as chief patrons Cosimo the Elder, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Cosimo I. This leads this thesis to its conclusion.

¹³⁷ Wedeman, Ben. “Extremist calls for destruction of Egyptian antiquities.” *CNN* 13 November 2012. Accessed December 2014. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/12/world/wedeman-ancient-monuments/>

¹³⁸ Tyldesley, Dr. Joyce. “Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis: a royal feud?” *BBC* 17 February 2011. Accessed December 2014. http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/egyptians/hatshepsut_01.shtml

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore and evaluate the contributions of the Florentine House of Medici (1389-1743) to the cultural heritage of Florence, Italy, and to the larger Renaissance movement. As established, the Medici did this through the patronage of art, literature, science, and architecture, through the use of contemporary Florentine cultural heritage, and by using knowledge and beliefs of the past. This required the successful amassment and expenditure of their capital, both political and financial, over a span of more than 300 years. Unexpectedly, the hero of this body of work turned out to be the Princess Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici.

The princess was not under consideration as a formal part of this thesis as originally outlined, as this thesis sought to explore and evaluate the patronage of Medici *rulers*. As the Medici dynasty was dissolved in 1737, upon the death of Grand Duke Gian Gastone and the ascension of the House of Lorraine, the scope of this work ended there. This made sense on paper. It would have proven sufficient in illustrating the contributions to the House of Medici and their use of cultural heritage in shaping the Renaissance in an abstract sense. However, it would have missed the larger, and more nuanced point, being not only what Medici efforts were, but how we know of them in the first place.

Prompted by the emphasis placed on Anna Maria Luisa and the Family Pact in the author's interview with Prince Ottaviano de' Medici, further research brought new context to the final and subsequent years of Medici rule, as well as to the Medici dynasty as a whole. As explored in the Further Analysis section of this thesis, the acts of Anna Maria Luisa, as well as those of her brother, the unlikely, and largely historically derided

Gian Gastone, made them the saviors of the Medici dynasty. Because of this, Anna Maria Luisa was given her own section within Part II of this thesis. It is true that she was not the patron that her forbearers were. She did not transform Florence into a cultural capital of Europe, or garner the adulation of the masses. What she did do is save the cultural heritage of Florence, as well as her family legacy in shaping the Renaissance. This is best encapsulated in the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Advisory Body Evaluation, which supported the nomination and ultimate inscription of the Historic Centre of Florence on the UNESCO World Heritage List as Reference 174 in 1982.¹³⁹

Across four of five UNESCO selection criteria (I, II, IV and VI), the ICOMOS Advisory Body Evaluation of May, 1982 justifies the outstanding universal value of the Historic Centre of Florence by citing Medici contributions to the cultural heritage of Florence and the Renaissance. Criterion I is justified using such terms as “a unique artistic realization” containing “the greatest works of art in the world,” within the Palazzo Vecchio, the Uffizi, and the Basilica of San Lorenzo. Criterion II is justified by lauding “a predominate influence on the development of architecture and the monumental arts~ first in Italy, and then throughout Europe,” defined in part by Brunelleschi and Donatello. Criterion IV is justified by calling Florence “a first-rate economic and political power in Europe from the 14th to the 17th century,” “covered during that period with prestigious buildings which translated the munificence of the bankers and the princes,” exemplified by the Palazzo Riccardi-Medici,¹⁴⁰ Palazzo Pitti, the Boboli Gardens, the sacristy of San Lorenzo, and the funerary chapel of the Medici. Criterion VI is justified by stating that “Florence is materially associated with events of a universal importance. It was in the

¹³⁹ UNESCO. “Historic Centre of Florence.” Accessed December 2014. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/174>

¹⁴⁰ Palazzo Medici is now known as Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, or in this case, “Riccardi-Medici.”

milieu of the Neo-platonic Academia^{141 142} that the concept of the Renaissance was forged. Florence is the birthplace of modern humanism...^{143 144}

This is the Medici legacy, understood now by that which was saved by Anna Maria Luisa and her Family Pact. This exemplifies the larger argument that the cultural heritage of the world is priceless, but it is nothing without measures taken to ensure its protection and stewardship for future generations. Emphasis and praise should not only be placed on those who facilitate artists, architects, scientists, and literary scholars in their work by way of patronage, but shared with those who use their authority to preserve that which came before them, for the benefit of those who come after.

¹⁴¹ The “Platonic Academy” were gatherings of scholars and poets convened by Lorenzo de’ Medici.

¹⁴² Unger, Miles J. *Magnifico: The Brilliant Life and Violent Times of Lorenzo De’ Medici*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2008, 12

¹⁴³ UNESCO. “The Criteria for Selection.” Accessed December 2014. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

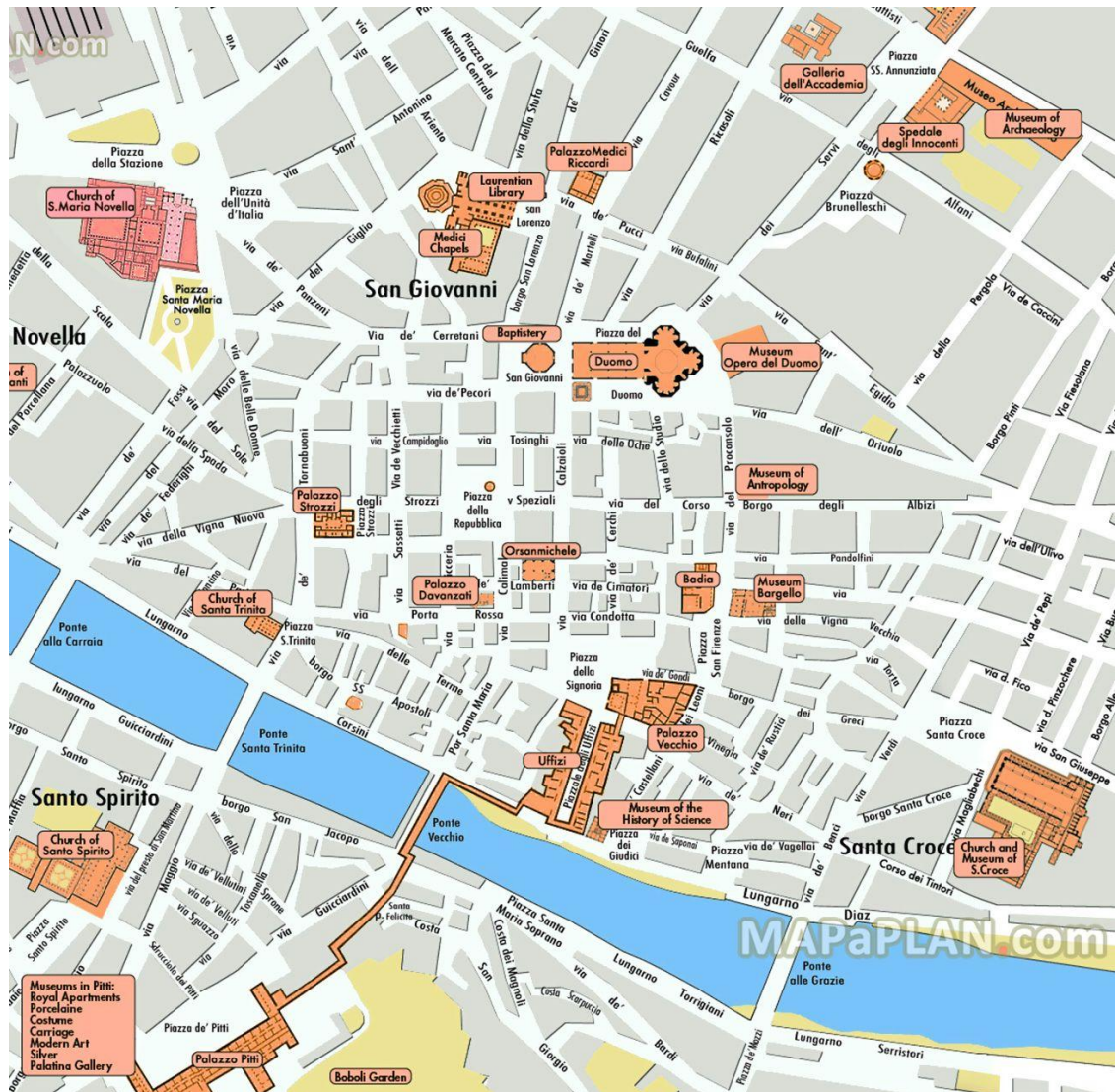
¹⁴⁴ UNESCO. *ICOMOS International Council on Monuments and Sites*, Advisory Body Evaluation, May 1982. Accessed December 2014. http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/174.pdf

Appendix I: Maps of Florence



Map 1 – The Historic Centre of Florence: UNESCO World Heritage Site Map¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ UNESCO. “Historic Centre of Florence” (Maps). Accessed March 2015.
http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/174/multiple=1&unique_number=193



Map 2 – Historic Centre of Florence Map with Major Landmarks¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ MAPaPLAN. "Florence top tourist attractions map - High resolution." Accessed March 2015. <http://www.mapaplan.com/travel-map/florence-italy-city-top-tourist-attractions-printable-street-plan/high-resolution/florence-top-tourist-attractions-map-03-english-map-inside-floor-plans-historic-attractions-duomo-cathedral-uffizi-gallery-palazzo-pitti-high-resolution.htm>

Appendix II: Medici Influence in Everyday Florence

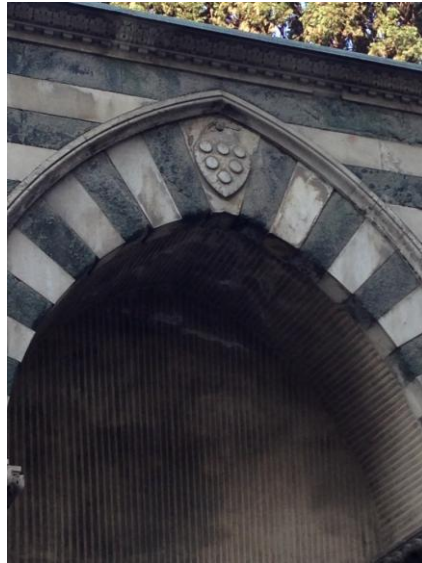


Figure 22 – Medici coat of arms above a decorative archway in the city

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014



Figure 23 – “Pub Lorenzo de’ Medici” (1 of 2)

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014



Figure 24 – “Pub Lorenzo de’ Medici” (2 of 2)

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014



Figure 25 – Dimidiated Medici-Abla coat of arms on a building

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014



Figure 26 – Medici coat of arms above Liu Jo boutique

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014



Figure 27 – Medici coat of arms, mantled with Florentine Marzocco lions, on the base of a statue outside of the Basilica of San Lorenzo^{147 148}

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

¹⁴⁷ This is an example of multifaceted Medici symbolism through the adoption of Florentine cultural heritage as a part of their heraldry. Important context for the use of the Marzocco lions in this instance lies in the fact that mantling traditionally hangs from one's helmet, serving the function of shielding the wearer from the sun, as well as snaring or deflecting sword strikes. More elaborately styled mantles are reserved for kings and sovereign princes.

¹⁴⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica. "The chief components of armorial bearings (The Mantling)." Accessed December 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/262552/heraldry/8823/The-chief-components-of-armorial-bearings#ref19984>



Figure 28 – The ecclesiastical heraldry of Pope Leo XI (Alessandro Ottaviano de' Medici) on a building

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014

Appendix III: The Beauty of 2014 Florence through Medici Patronage



Figure 29 – Florence and the Hills of Tuscany, as seen from the top of Brunelleschi's Dome

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014



Figure 30 – A path within the Boboli Gardens

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuzzo, March 2014



Figure 31 – The Palazzo Vecchio at night

Photographed by Nicholas J. Cuozzo, March 2014

Addendum: The Queen and the Pope

It is remarkable how members of the Medici dynasty had managed to marry into and infiltrate royal bloodlines. Had this body of work ventured outside of the Florentine Medici line, the endeavors of Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589) as an artistic patron would have been at the top of the list. Catherine would come to serve France, not Tuscany. However, her marriage represents the highest degree to which Medici political capital was leveraged to grant an individual member an elevation in social status. The union also explains how the Medici returned to power after their exile from Florence in 1494, following the death of Lorenzo "*Il Magnifico*" de' Medici.

Catherine de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo II (a ruler of Florence and Duke of Urbino), was married to Henry II, the Dauphin of France, in 1547. With that, she became Queen of France. Catherine would go on to birth ten children, of whom several sons would become Kings of France and a daughter Queen of Spain. Following the tragic death of her husband, Catherine ruled France herself for many years as Queen Regent.

As the reader proceeds through Part II's retrospective of historically significant members of the Florentine House of Medici, it is plain to see that their pedigrees improve longitudinally. If the reader wondered why the author referred to the marriage of Cosimo I de' Medici to Eleonora di Toledo as "among" the most advantageous pairings, it was because Catherine's was far and away the Medici dynasty's greatest marriage of convenience. It was also, for his family, the finest hour of Pope Clement VII.

Clement survived the sack of Rome by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor in 1527. He then played Charles V off of Francis I, King of France to arrange the marriage of

Catherine and Henry. In the bargain, Clement managed to have the House of Medici reinstated as rulers of Florence after they had been exiled under the circumstances surrounding the rule of his cousin, Piero “The Unfortunate.” Clement would refer to this, for undeniably good reasons, as “The greatest match in the world.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Frieda, Leonie. *Catherine de' Medici: Renaissance Queen of France*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006, 31

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