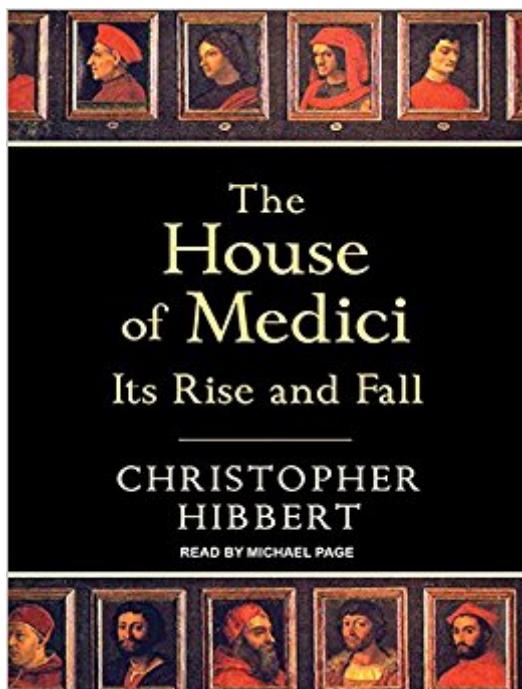


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# The House Of Medici: Its Rise And Fall



## Synopsis

At its height, Renaissance Florence was a center of enormous wealth, power, and influence. A republican city-state funded by trade and banking, its often bloody political scene was dominated by rich mercantile families, the most famous of which were the Medici. This enthralling book charts the family's huge influence on the political, economic and cultural history of Florence. Beginning in the early 1430s with the rise of the dynasty under the near-legendary Cosimo de Medici, it moves through their golden era as patrons of some of the most remarkable artists and architects of the Renaissance, to the era of the Medici Popes and Grand Dukes, Florence's slide into decay and bankruptcy, and the end, in 1737, of the Medici line.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A superb introduction to the history and arts created by one man's greed." ---Books for Breakfast

Christopher Hibbert (1924-2008) was an English writer, historian, and biographer. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the author of over fifty books, including *The Story of England*, *Disraeli*, *Edward VII*, and *George IV*. Michael Page has been recording audiobooks since 1984 and has over two hundred audiobooks to his credit. He has won several *AudioFile Earphones Awards*, including for *The Lies of Locke Lamora* by Scott Lynch. A professional actor, Michael is currently a professor of theater at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I was expecting the storytelling to actually provide details about what drove the Medici to power and

what was there downfall. Also, there are no facts presented about the family business other than dates and facts about public records. It's an ok introduction if you want to learn more about the Medici family and important dates.

I have read only a few books about the Renaissance in Italy; other than Ross King's book about the creation of the Sistine Chapel amid the drama of the late 15th and early 16th Century, a recent biography of Savonarola, and a bunch of art history books, nothing comes to mind. I have been to most of the art museums in Rome and Florence, and other than that, I'm a complete novice when it comes to this stuff. I knew virtually nothing about the history of the Medici family, and I found this book compelling and easy to follow. If you're looking for a book that tells the story clearly without requiring any background, this is the one. Now I'm going to read his book about the Borgia family. Excellent book!

This was a fascinating biography of a family! It made me want to read more of the great families of the era, and I am super pumped for my Italy visit next year! I wish the Kindle version could handle the portraits the analog version has. And I would have liked to have read more about the wives, as well as the family's incredible influence on the art and architecture of the age (it was touched on, but I wanted more).

Interesting more for its placing of many artists and sculptors in the time line of Florence than for its thoughtful examination of the importance of the Medici in civic affairs. An excellent book to read on kindle so you can look up the many words relating to the time, to architecture and the Church. Not a great book, occasionally confused, but interesting nonetheless...perhaps a bit long, and long in describing the sexual exploits of the Medici. Be grateful that you did not live back then.

This is not an in-depth read into the history of the Medici family; this account is an simple overview of the Medici reign. If you are looking for a detailed historical study, then you will be disappointed in this work. I found this account useful in that it provided a sense of life during the Medici's reign. Although the Renaissance is characterized by great art and scientific discovery, it was also rife with plague, invading armies, and a despotic rule from the Medici family and the church. Overall, the rule of the Medici and its ultimate decline was based on a philosophy of "better with the devil that you know than the devil you don't know". The family's reign was based on power alignments through the church in Rome and through marriage. In the height of its power, the Medici family in Florence could

call upon the support of France or Spain to offset the influence of Rome. Their rule was based on checks and balances. A failure to maintain a system of balance finally signaled the decline of their empire. This book was not a riveting read; sometimes the author's description of the Medici as indulgent and ugly was amusing, and the account of the time period was interesting. A more in-depth analysis of the artists that the family aligned themselves with would have proved more interesting and useful for further insight into the Medici's way of thinking. Although the Medici were patrons for much of the great architectural innovations of the time, these are given no more than a mere mention. Overall, this is a simple and interesting account that will definitely enhance the reader's visit to Florence, and give a succinct introduction to the origins of the buildings and art of the period.

There are many books and articles about this unusual family, which became a sort of dynasty, but this is one of the best. Always respectful of the Florentine republic, the various generations of Medici also had their way with the territory which they in fact ruled. The book reveals a family which almost singlehandedly brought about the Renaissance, that was interested in "secular" philosophy, but which also produced four popes. When the family was "crossed" by someone, retribution was sure to come -- Machiavelli found out about this as did Savaranola. An excellent history.

A tale of Florentine and Papal politics, told by following the thread of the Medici family from the early renaissance to the early 18th century. The title promises Rise and Fall, but after beginning with some Rise, this story is mostly Fall. Cosimo brings early fortune and prominence to the family, Lorenzo fails to maintain the family business but fosters interest in the arts and plays a prominent role in politics, Popes Leo and Clement were Medicis and used their position to steer politics in Tuscany. Otherwise, the Medicis seem to be a rather unaccomplished lot. There are a lot of interesting bits here about politics in Florence and the Vatican. Especially regarding interactions with Naples, Milan, and Venice, and other nations such as France, Spain, and Germany. However, the subject matter is challenging for the author. Part of the problem is Cosimo's penchant for guiding events from behind the scenes. He chose to govern from a position of power that avoided the appearance of official station. That way he could get the best of both: he could bend Florence to his will, but when callers came to ask him to use his influence for their benefit, he could claim that he was just a private citizen and therefore unable to grant their wish. This makes for a low-key approach that is difficult to spin into an engaging yarn. Pope Leo on the other hand, does rule from a prominent official position, but aside from his opulent lifestyle, meddling in Tuscan politics, and anal

fistula, there's not much to make him a notable character. In the end, the family is not so interesting for the members themselves, but rather for the thread they form through a fascinating history of the politics of Italy. The insights here into the republican nature of Florence, and the bashing Italians would take at the hands of other europeans provides a rich historical context when trying to understand Italy today.

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