

# The medici; heroes of the renaissance

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The Medici; Heroes of the Renaissance In the year 2004, PBS broadcasted the series, " Medici; Godfathers of the Renaissance". This four-part documentary, in attempt to gain viewer interest, compared the Medici to the mobsters found in Francis Ford's " The Godfather". The relation of the Medici to Italian mobsters in the PBS Medici series is in no way accurate, for they were not villains of the renaissance, but heroes. The Medici were very connected with the church, and used their extensive wealth to promote religion.

The Medici became powerful as a result of being the official Papal bankers. They used a lot of their power and wealth to give back to the church throughout their lives. Throughout the Medici timeline there were a total of four Medici Popes. The family was very much intertwined with the church. The Medici patronized the sculpture of David by Michelangelo as a gift to publicly show the beauty their religion. The Medici found and sponsored an architect named Brunelleschi to successfully complete the a dome for the Sistine Chapel.

The building of the dome was an on-going problem and embarrassment for the church for many years, and the Medici had solved it. The Sistine Chapel was now a pride for the people of Florence. The Sistine Chapel was also flooded with famous paintings from Medici artists such as Michelangelo and Botticelli. These painting connected the church with modern society because the Medici artists were used, and they were very popular to the people of Florence. The Medici contributed to the church's beauty, and connection with society throughout the renaissance.

Art and architecture was a crucial part of the renaissance. It was the celebration of humanism, the competition between cities, and the start of new ideas. The Medicis were patrons of the most talented and radical people. The people the Medici supported all contributed greatly to the renaissance outlook on life and human pride. Art was so important to the Medici family that Lorenzo di Medici created a Florentine School of Art. It was at this school Michelangelo was discovered, and brought in as part of the family.

Michelangelo under the name of the Medici completed many inspiring pieces of art that would uplift the feel to society. He created the towering statue of David, which became a proud symbol of the city of Florence. Another Medici sponsored artist, Botticelli was famous for a different kind of art. Botticelli's artwork was sensual, and contained many mythical gods and goddesses. In his painting 'The Birth of Venus' this is seen the most clear. Venus is known as 'the goddess of love', and in this painting she is naked emerging from the sea.

This type of artwork was popular because it radically celebrated humanism, and portrayed 'the perfect humans'. This type of art inspired people, and were uplifting. However, it was controversial because although society accepted it, the church did not approve. This was only one of many Medici artists' artworks that was frowned upon by the church during the renaissance. Architecture played a big role in the uplifting of society as well. Architecture, like art, was another chance to out-do other cities, and win the title as most beautiful city.

The Medici were patrons of the most famous architecture of the renaissance--Brunelleschi. Brunelleschi was the architect responsible for the completion of many Florentine buildings such as The Orphan's Hospital, the Chapel of the Pazzi family, and most memorably; the Sistine Chapel's dome. Brunelleschi's architectural success brought forth a feeling of accomplishment, pride, and happiness for the people of Florence. These feelings were common characteristics of the renaissance era, brought forth by the Medici family.

By supporting a questioning society, proving their power through patronizing, and discovering their own ways of gaining power, the Medici changed the political ways of the renaissance. Before the renaissance, the church was the most powerful and controlling leader. However, it only had power as long as their followers remained loyal. The Medici were household members with, and big supporters of , the very intelligent, church-defying Galileo Galilei. Galileo's completely valid discovery that the Earth travels around the Sun defied the teachings of the Old Testament.

Galileo published a book of his discoveries disguised as a fiction novel. This was not the first scientific discovery to defy Bible teachings, however it was the most publicised. This caused society to begin to question the teachings of the Bible, and everything they had been taught. This theme of questioning lead to less loyal followers of the church, and more loyal followers of non-religion based rulers. The Medici also introduced power through patronage. Rather than fighting to prove power like in the past, the Medici found creating the most beautiful city was just as rewarding.

Their rise to the very top after completing the dome of the Sistine Chapel proved this theory completely. Most of the Medici valued public involvement, modesty, and connections, for that was how they gained power. According to Pope Pius II Cosimo di Medici was “ not so much a citizen, as master of his city...he was king in all but name and state. ” The more people they befriended, the more loyal followers they would have. Cosimo Medici I however, ran Tuscany based on fear. He felt a powerful military and security would produce better results and less threats.

Both forms of government worked for the Medici, and were continued to be used throughout the renaissance, and into today. The Medici positively contributed to the Renaissance through religion, art, architecture, and politics. For this, the Medici should be honoured as heroes of the renaissance. Through their constant contributions to the church, unique taste in art, and daring bold choices, it is not questionable how the Medici kept power and influence throughout the renaissance. Countries in today’s society should aim for well-rounded leaders like the Medici.