

Piero di Cosimo de' Medici

Introduction

Fast Facts

Facts & Related Content



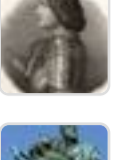

More

More Articles On This Topic

Contributors

Article History

Related Biographies

-  **Lorenzo de' Medici**
Italian statesman
-  **Cosimo de' Medici**
duke of Milan
-  **Ludovico Sforza**
duke of Milan
-  **Cosimo I**
duke of Florence and Tuscany

See All

Piero di Cosimo de' Medici

Italian ruler

Print Cite Share Feedback

Alternate titles: Piero il Gottoso, Piero the Gouty
By The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica • Last Updated: Jan 1, 2023 • Article History

Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, byname **Piero the Gouty**, Italian **Piero II Gottoso**, (born 1416—died Dec. 2, 1469), ruler of **Florence** for five years (1464–69), whose successes in war helped preserve the enormous **prestige bequeathed** by his father, **Cosimo the Elder**.

Afflicted by **gout** (a hereditary ailment of the Medici), Piero was so badly crippled that he was often able to use only his tongue. In 1466 he detected a plot to overthrow his rule, and, showing more courage than he was supposed to possess, he had himself borne on a litter to Florence, where he defeated his enemies. On **Venice's** launching a new war against Florence, he made an alliance with Milan and Naples, defeated the **condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni** at Imola, and, under the peace of 1468, acquired Sarzana and Sarzanello.

Piero's wife, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, was highly intelligent; and his sons, Lorenzo (the Magnificent) and Giuliano (1453–78), received an exceptional literary and artistic education. Piero himself acted as **patron** of the **Platonic Academy** and provided work for such great artists as Donatello, Andrea del Verrocchio, and Sandro Botticelli.

Born: 1416

Died: December 2, 1469 (aged 53)

House / Dynasty: *Medici family*

[See all related content →](#)

Todo lo que necesitas este año está en un solo lugar. ¡Y con el 40% de descuento!

Para individuos!

EL REY DE LA MAFIA. UNA NUEVA TIERRA. **TULSA KING** DISPONIBLE AHORA

SUSCRÍBETE AHORA **Paramount+ ORIGINAL**

Medici family

Introduction

Line of Chiarissimo II

Line of Cosimo the Elder

The grand dukes of Tuscany

Fast Facts

Medici family summary

Facts & Related Content

Quizzes

Media

Videos

Images

More

More Articles On This Topic

Additional Reading

Contributors

Article History

Medici family

Italian family

Print Cite Share Feedback

Alternate titles: Médicis family
By The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica • Last Updated: Nov 20, 2022 • Article History

Summary

Read a brief summary of this topic

Medici family, French **Médicis**, Italian **bourgeois family** that ruled **Florence** and, later, **Tuscany** during most of the period from 1434 to 1737, except for two brief intervals (from 1494 to 1512 and from 1527 to 1530). It provided the **Roman Catholic Church** with four popes (**Leo X**, **Clement VII**, **Pius IV**, and **Leon XI**) and married into the royal families of **Europe** (most notably in **France**, in the persons of Queens **Catherine de Médici** and **Marie de Médicis**).

Three lines of Medici successively approached or acquired positions of power. The line of Chiarissimo II failed to gain power in Florence in the 14th century. In the 15th century the line of **Cosimo the Elder** set up a hereditary principate in Florence but without legal right or title, hence subject to sudden overthrow; crowns burgeoned, however, on the last branches of their genealogical tree, for two of them were dukes outside Florence, their last heir in a direct line became queen of France (Catherine de Médicis), and their final offspring, **Alessandro**, was duke of Florence. In the 16th century a third line renounced republican notions and imposed its **tyranny**, and its members made themselves a **dynasty** of grand dukes of Tuscany.

The differences between these three **collateral** lines are essentially due to circumstances, for there was in all the Medici an extraordinary persistence of hereditary traits. In the first place, not being soldiers, they were constantly confronting their adversaries with bribes of gold rather than with battalions of armed men. In addition, the early Medici resolutely courted favour with the middle and poorer classes in the city, and this determination to be *popolani* (“plebeian”) endured a long time after them. Finally, all were consumed by a passion for arts and letters and for building. They were more than beneficent and **ostentatious** patrons of the arts; they were also **enlightened** and were probably the most magnificent such patrons that the West has ever seen.

branches of the Medici family

[See all media](#)

Role In: *Renaissance*

[See all related content →](#)

Todo lo que necesitas este año está en un solo lugar. ¡Y con el 40% de descuento!

Para individuos!

EL REY DE LA MAFIA. UNA NUEVA TIERRA. **TULSA KING** DISPONIBLE AHORA

SUSCRÍBETE AHORA **Paramount+ ORIGINAL**

Line of Chiarissimo II

The Medici were originally of Tuscan peasant origin, from the village of Cafaggiolo in the Mugello, the valley of the Sieve, north of Florence. Some of these villagers, in the 12th century perhaps, became aware of the new opportunities afforded by commerce and emigrated to Florence. There, by the following century, the Medici were counted among the wealthy notables, although in the second rank, after leading families of the city. After 1340 an economic depression throughout Europe forced these more powerful houses into bankruptcy. The Medici, however, were able to escape this fate and even took advantage of it to establish themselves among the city's elite. But their policy of consolidating their position by controlling the government—the work of the descendants of Chiarissimo II (himself the grandson of the first known Medici)—resulted in 50 years of serious misfortunes for the family (1343–93).

IQ TEST

IQ SCORE: 55 70 85 100 115 130 145

34% 34%

0.1% 2% 14% 14% 2% 0.1%

IQ test - What is your IQ?

Answer 20 questions to find out

test-iq.org

Britannica Quiz 63 Questions from Britannica's Most Popular Visual Arts Quizzes

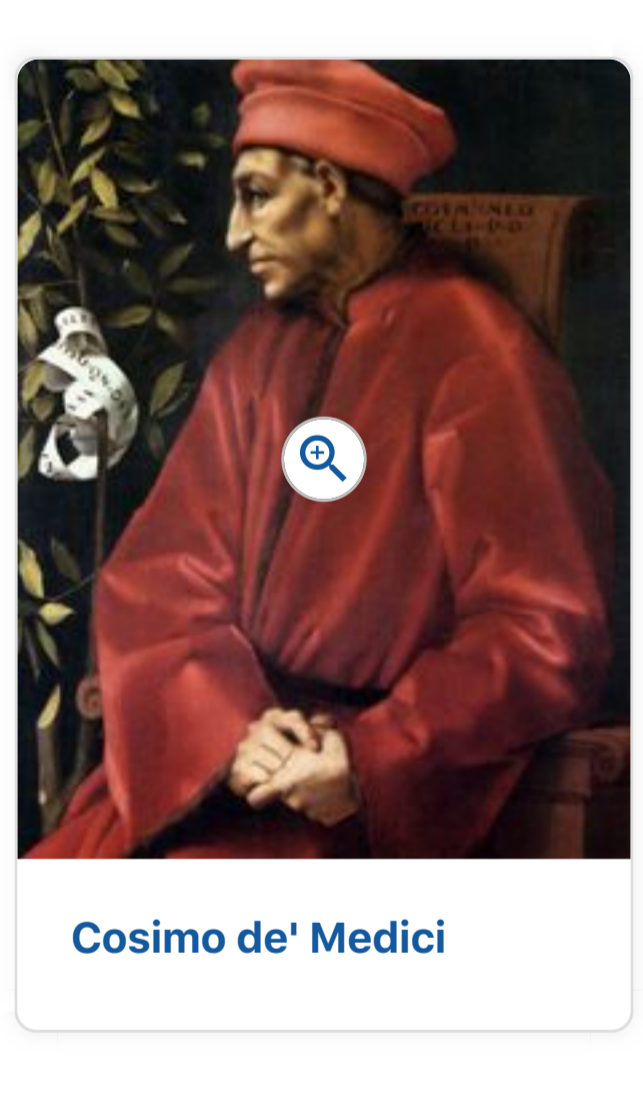
His grandson Salvestro took up his policy of alliance with the *popolo minuto* (“common people”) and was elected gonfalonier, head of the *signoria*, the council of government, in 1378. Salvestro more or less willingly stirred up an insurrection of the *ciompi*, the artisans of the lowest class, against his rivals and, after the rebellion's victory, was not above reaping substantial **monetary** and titular advantages. But in 1381, when the popular government fell, he had to go into exile. His memory, however, was still alive in 1393, when the *popolo magro* (“lean people”) once more thought it possible to take over the *signoria*. The mob hastened to seek out Salvestro's first cousin, Vieri, who was, however, able to fade away without losing face. With Vieri this branch of the Medici was to disappear definitively from **history**.

Line of Cosimo the Elder

A distant cousin of Salvestro was Averardo de' Medici (or Bicci), whose progeny became the famous Medici of history. His son Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici (1360–1429), considered the first of the great **Medici**, **inherited** the family business based on cloth and silk manufacturing and on banking operations and made the family powerfully prosperous. Giovanni's two sons, Cosimo (1389–1464) and Lorenzo (1394–1440), both of whom acquired the appellation of “the Elder,” founded the famous lines of the Medici family.

Get a Britannica Premium subscription and gain access to exclusive content.
[Subscribe Now](#)

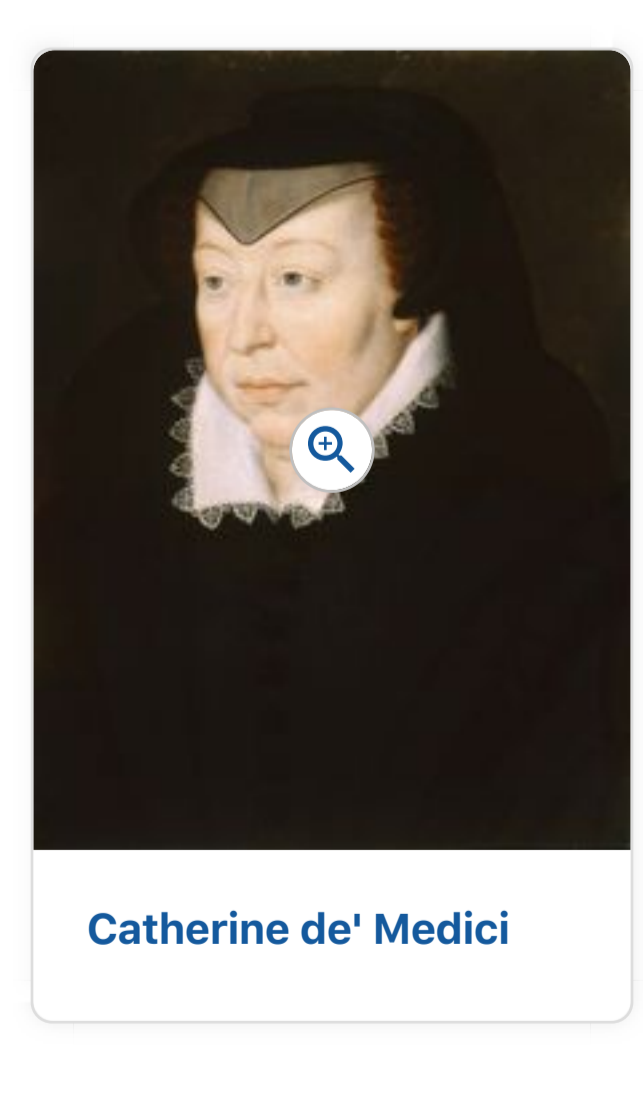
Cosimo de' Medici, the older brother, established the family's political base. He served on the Florentine board of war, called the Dieci (The Ten), and held other posts. His two sons were **Piero** (1416–69) and Giovanni (1424–63). The latter died before his father, who in death received the title “Father of His Country.” **Piero di Cosimo de' Medici** maintained and strengthened the political fortunes of the family. He also fathered two sons, one of whom, Giuliano (1453–78) was assassinated. The second son, Lorenzo (1449–92), became in his own time Il Magnifico (“The Magnificent”).



Lorenzo de' Medici deservedly holds an honoured place in the history of Florence and **Italy**. **Inheriting** from his forebears a deep respect for arts and letters, he became a poet himself as well as a patron of artists and a skilled statesman. His three children, Piero (1472–1503), Giovanni (1475–1521)—later Leo X—and Giuliano (1479–1516), played contrasting roles in the city's history. Assuming the mantle of family power from Lorenzo, **Piero** alienated the people of Florence by siding with the French. Because of this act, considered a betrayal, the Medici had to flee Florence (1494). Giovanni, at that time a cardinal, used his influence with Pope **Julius II** to bring the family back to positions of power. **Giuliano**, who received the French title of duc de Nemours, was in poor health and died relatively young.



Piero, oldest of the children of Lorenzo the Magnificent, fathered one son, also named **Lorenzo** (1492–1519), who in turn had a daughter, **Catherine** (1519–89), who became queen of France as wife of **Henry II**; three of her four sons became kings of France. Giovanni, second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, became Pope Leo X. In commemoration of the deaths of Giuliano and Lorenzo, the two who had died relatively young, the family commissioned **Michelangelo** to complete the famous Medici Tombs in Florence. The few years of this period are often considered to be the **apogee** of the Medici age. The period has even been called “the century of **Leo X**.” From 1513 to 1521, surrounded by five nephews and cousins whom he had named cardinals, Leo X reigned less over Christianity than over arts and letters in the style of his father, the Magnificent, too occupied with patronage to pay sufficient attention to an unimportant monk by the name of **Martin Luther**. By the 1520s, nonetheless, the descendants of Cosimo the Elder had become few in number. To ensure that the lineage of the Cosimo line would continue to rule Florence, Pope **Clement VII**, nephew of Lorenzo the Magnificent, installed **Alessandro** (1511–37), reputedly his own **illegitimate** son, as hereditary duke of Florence. In the same year, 1532, Clement VII abolished the city's old constitution.



citibanamex

Alessandro proved to be cruel and brutally **authoritarian**. He ruled for five years. In 1537 he was assassinated by a companion who was also a relative.

[Load Next Page](#)

EL REY DE LA MAFIA. UNA NUEVA TIERRA. **TULSA KING** DISPONIBLE AHORA

SUSCRÍBETE AHORA **Paramount+ ORIGINAL**