

RISE OF THE MEDICI: 15th C. FLORENCE

1382-1434 Oligarchic Republic

1382 power returned to greater guilds: Albizzi family vs exiled Alberti

Foreign policy: from self defense to territorial expansion

1390-1402 resistance against Milanese Gian Galeazzo Visconti

1384: purchase of **Arezzo** from condottiere

1405: purchase of **Pisa** from Gabriele Maria Visconti, Milanese heir

1406: revolt of **Pisa**, Florentine conquest gains access to sea

1421: purchase of **Livorno** (seaport) from Genoa

1422-8: resumption of Milanese war against Duke Filippo Maria Visconti

1429-33: Lucchese war: unprovoked attack on **Lucca** by Florence

COSIMO DE MEDICI: 1434-1464 head of anti-war faction

1433 communal elections favor Medici; Albizzi fear Medici takeover

Cosimo arrested; banished to Venice

1434 Cosimo recalled: control through manipulation of electoral system;

scrutinio a mano (by hand) by **accoppiatori 10 electors** pro-Medici

exile of enemies of 1433: Albizzi & Strozzi

Cosimo's office holding: **gonfaloniere** of justice 3 terms (6 months out of 30 yrs);

major role = control of foreign affairs & city finances

Foreign Policy under Cosimo:

1440: Milanese Duke Filippo Maria Visconti allies with Albizzi exiles,

Battle of Anghiari: (later Leonardo painting) Milan defeated, end of Albizzi threat

Milanese succession crisis: 1441 Bianca Visconti (illegitimate daughter)

married to Francesco Sforza illegitimate & lowborn condottiere for Milan

1447: death of Duke Filippo Maria Visconti during war with Venice

1447-1450: Ambrosian Republic (guild regime) restored in Milan

Reversal of traditional alliance system with Venice against Milan: now

Cosimo supports Sforza against Venice and against Milanese republic

Outbreak of general Italian war: Milan + Florence versus Venice + Naples

1453 fall of Constantinople triggers cessation of hostilities

1454 Peace of Lodi: ratified by Italian states; ends territorial expansion

Balance of power established between surviving major Italian powers:

Milan (Lombardy), Venice, Florence, Papal States, Naples

1454-1494 Period of (relatively) stable inter-state relations, diplomatic procedures (e.g. resident ambassadors)

Chronology: Cosimo dei Medici (1434-1464)

Piero di Cosimo dei Medici (1464-1469) republican opposition grows under Soderini

Lorenzo the Magnificent (1469-1492) then his son Piero di Lorenzo dei Medici (1492-94)

1494-1512 Florentine Republic restored (Savonarola & Machiavelli)

1512: restoration of the Medici in Florence

1527-1530: restoration of the Republic, second expulsion of Medici

1530: Medici re-instated as Grand Dukes of Tuscany

PIERO DE MEDICI (1464-1469) "Il Gottoso" (gout-ridden)

Republican opposition headed by Niccolo Soderini and Luca Pitti

1465 Soderini leads campaign to restore secret elections

serves two months as gonfaloniere; speeches in favor of "liberty"

1466 death of Francesco Sforza weakens Cosimo's Florence-Milan alliance

Republicans encourage Venice & Ferrara to attack Florence

balance of power restored by Naples Milan/ support for Medici Florence

emergency commission (balia) exiles Niccolo Soderini (but note Niccolo's

brother, Tommaso Soderini, remains as leader of the Medici faction)

For republican opposition under Piero, see Mark Phillips, Memoir of Marco Parenti

Marco Parenti is merchant who marries into Strozzi family after exile of male members of Strozzi by Cosimo in 1434; he writes a political memoir;

Phillips' other major source is the correspondence of Alessandra Strozzi:

Letters of Alessandra Strozzi, English translation available for papers on women

wife & mother of exiled Strozzi men remains behind in Florence;

corresponds with her sons who are bankers in Naples & Spain;

excellent source for role of women "behind the scenes" of political issues,

her major goal is getting her family re-admitted to Florence

matchmaking documented as she tries to find local wives for exiled sons.

LORENZO DE MEDICI (1469-1492) "Il Magnifico"

1469 marries Clarice **Orsini**, old noble Roman family, sign of princely status

joint heir with brother Guiliano, but Lorenzo assumes leadership

after "petition" by Tommaso Soderini; receives title of "Magnifico"

1471-1484 POPE SIXTUS IV (Della Rovere) resumes papal conquest of central Italy

1474-80 war to limit Papal expansion: Venice, Milan, Florence vs Papacy & Naples

1476 Milan: assassination of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza,

assassins: republican humanist motives; classical treatises on **tyrannicide**
power seized by **Ludovico il Moro** (brother in law of Duke's widow)

1478 PAZZI CONSPIRACY: direct inspiration from assassination of Sforza Duke Milan

Pazzi = old Florentine noble family, banned from politics in 1292;

readmitted to Florence by Cosimo with marriage alliance, but

Pazzi have rival bank with headquarters in Rome, resent Medici

plot to kill Lorenzo & Giuliano, seize government for Pazzi family

mercenary captain (condottiere) Gian Battista Montesecco hired

but backs out when plan is set for assassination in cathedral

Papal role: Sixtus IV 1476: 1) transfers papal accounts to Pazzi Bank,

2) appoints Francesco Salviati (Medici enemy) Archbishop of Pisa

3) approves overthrow of Medici, but not their assassination

4) publicly denounces Medici "tyranny" as abomination to God

April 26: assassination of Giuliano (killed) and Lorenzo (survived) set for

Sunday Mass in Florentine Cathedral (Duomo) Santa Maria del Fiore;

AB Salviati plays role in revolt, occupies palace for Pazzi

Pazzi on republican support; Pazzi attempt to use republican slogan

"Popolo et liberta"; crowd replies "Palle, Palle" (Medici symbol

Florence remains loyal to Medici, revolt fails

execution of Francesco Pazzi and Archbishop Salviati angers Pope

1478-80 war resumed: Florence, Venice, Milan vs Naples & Papacy

1479 Ludovico's seizure of power in Milan strengthens Florence

Lorenzo travels to Naples to negotiate with King Ferrante

1480 Turkish invasion of Otranto distracts Pope who withdraws from war;

Lorenzo returns as "savior of Florence" because of truce