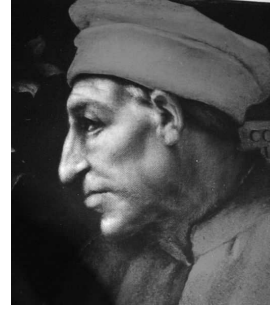




Patrons and the Medici Family



The Medici family were the richest in Florence. They were bankers. They lent money to kings and popes. The most famous was Cosimo and his grandson, Lorenzo. Cosimo loved Florence and wanted to make it beautiful.

Cosimo got the best painters and paid them to paint pictures on the walls of buildings called frescos. Cosimo also encouraged painters and sculptors (people who carve stone to make statues) to try out new ways of painting and making statues. A person who pays artists to work for him is a patron. Cosimo was one of the greatest patrons who ever lived. He invited people into his home and paid them to work for him. He also paid for many public buildings.

Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo was also a patron. Leonardo da Vinci worked for him. Michelangelo went to a school he set up for sculptors. Lorenzo spent a great deal of money making Florence beautiful. He was called Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Soon after Lorenzo died the king of France invaded Italy. This started a war which reduced Florence's wealth. After that Popes became the main patrons in Italy. They employed artists to build great churches and to beautify them with pictures and statues.