



The Complete Literary Works of Lorenzo de' Medici, "The Magnificent" (Italica Press Medieval & Renaissance Texts)

By Lorenzo de' Medici

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Lorenzo de' Medici (January 1, 1449–April 9, 1492), known as Lorenzo the Magnificent, was the scion of the powerful and wealthy Medici family. A diplomat, politician, patron and friend of artists and humanists, he was also ruler of the Florentine Republic from December 2, 1469 until his death. Although he died at the age of forty-three and ruled for only twenty-three years, he was well recognized for his importance to the Florentine High Renaissance, and his death coincided with the end of its Golden Age and with the onset of renewed strife among the Italian city-states. Lorenzo was also an author and particularly a poet. He wrote in a variety of forms, from sonnets to short stories and from eclogues to ballads. His material included love poems, comic works and devotional and philosophical discourses. His reputation as a writer has been the subject of substantial critical work, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this volume, Guido A. Guarino presents, for the first time, the entire corpus of Lorenzo's literary achievement in English translation. This edition provides a fresh opportunity for a thorough re-evaluation of Lorenzo's endeavors in the light of contemporary scholarship and new critical methodologies. 542 pages Introduction, bibliography, notes, index. First modern English translation.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Lorenzo de' Medici was born in Florence in 1449. He was exposed to humanist thought from the beginning of his education, particularly under Cristoforo Landino, Marsilio Ficino and others. At the same time he participated in the tradition of the "brigade," groups of young aristocrats who banded together to look for adventures and entertainment. Probably during his jaunts with the "brigata," he met Lucrezia Donati, and she became the beloved of his love poems. In 1469, however, he married Clarice Orsini, of the powerful Roman family. With the death of his father that year, the citizens of Florence and Tuscany asked him to take over leadership. He accepted for the protection of his family and friends, as well as of Florence. Throughout his life Lorenzo maintained a court of exceptional artists, poets, philosophers and men of letters and of science, including Pico della Mirandola, which made of Florence a center of cultural activities. In the midst of all his occupations, he participated in the creative activities of the members of his cultural coterie by being an estimable poet. In 1472 Lorenzo reopened the University of Pisa and put an end to the rebellion of the city of Volterra. Two years later, Lorenzo concluded an alliance with Milan and Venice. On April 26, 1478, during a mass attended by Lorenzo an attempt on his life was carried out. Lorenzo's brother Giuliano was killed, but Lorenzo escaped with a slight wound by locking himself in the sacristy. Although, often at the instigation of the papacy, there were other conspiracies and assassination attempts, none was successful. Among his cultural projects was a strengthening of the Studio Fiorentino, where his friend Poliziano taught the Greco-Roman classics. With the aid of Pico della Mirandola and Poliziano, Lorenzo founded a great library in Florence that today bears his name, the Laurentian Library. Lorenzo had many diplomatic successes and was able to maintain various alliances necessary for his balance-of-power policy. Lorenzo's political career was most successful in that he survived long enough to come to be regarded as the shrewdest statesman in Italy. To counter his statement that he became the political leader of Florence in order to protect his family's interests, there is ample evidence that he was capable of personal sacrifices to ensure the welfare of Florence. Lorenzo died on April 8, 1492 and was buried in the church of San Lorenzo in the Medici Chapel in a tomb sculpted by Michelangelo.

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