THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDICI FAMILY
OF FLORENCE
UPON THE FIELD OF TEXTILES
FROM THE
THIRTEENTH THROUGH THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Science

by
Corrine Ellen Patterson, B.S.
The Ohio State University
1966

Approved by

D. Lois Gilmore
Adviser
Department of Clothing
and Textiles
Beauty created by man is evident in paintings, fabrics, and costumes. All of the above media closely reflect the social, political, and economic status of man. Therefore would not a politically-influential, wealthy, Renaissance family who were also great art patrons influence contemporary textiles? After some investigation by the writer, the Medici of Florence were selected.

Information concerning the Medici in the area of textile production and marketing is available from a collection of Medici manuscripts translated and contained in the book, *Florentine Merchants in the Age of the Medici*, published in 1932 and edited by Gertrude Richards. In the introduction, she explains how the book was made possible. "Some years ago, when the devastation of war had made it necessary for many of the old nobility to seek purchasers for their treasures, two Florentine princes arrived in London, bringing with them a rare collection of family papers." The "two Florentine princes" were Cosimo de Medici, Marchese della Castelliono, and a brother, the Marchese
Averardo, descendants of the famous Medici of Florence. Before the business transaction was completed the Italian government intervened, declaring the documents state papers and "consequently inalienable". The documents which did not come under this category were purchased by M. H. Gordon Selfridge of London. These were loaned to Harvard School of Business Administration for study. The Selfridge collection covers among other subjects "one firm devoted largely to the manufacture of wool".

Dr. Raymond de Roover, professor of history at Brooklyn College, received his M.B.A. degree from Harvard in 1938 and his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago. His wife, Dr. Florence Edler de Roover, helped her husband with his book and also wrote articles dealing with textiles in the Ciba Review. She is "a Renaissance scholar" and "a student of Florentine and Lucchese history". Dr. de Roover's book, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, was written after "three years of research in Florentine archives". Two chapters in this book, one dealing with the Medici as merchants and the other as industrial entrepreneurs, as well as an article written by Dr. de Roover, entitled, "A Florentine Firm Cloth Manufacturers", from Speculum, January, 1941 have (iii)
been excellent sources of information.

In attempting to determine the extent to which the Medici influenced Renaissance textile design the following museums of art were contacted: Cleveland Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Toledo Institute of Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. These were selected because of accessibility. Textiles photographed in this thesis were examined by the writer with the exception of the fabric from Detroit Institute of Art. Translations of original writings have been used whenever possible, and the reliability of the author was a determinent factor in the selection of a material to be used.

In conclusion the writer wishes to express her gratitude to Dr. Lois Gilmore for her guidance and encouragement; to Miss Mary Millican for her wise counsel and constructive criticism; to Miss Edith Standen, associate curator of textiles, Metropolitan Museum of Art, for making available textiles and information pertinent to the study.

(iv)
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Managers of Two Medici Woolshops</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Partial Genealogy of the Family of Averardo</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Fifteenth-Century Italian Velvet</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Fifteenth-Century Italian Velvet</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Late-Sixteenth-Century Italian Velvet</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Palle of Medici</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Medici Emblems</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Ring with New Pomegranate Variation</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Ring with Thistle Motif</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Ring, in a Huge Renaissance Design</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>Ring, Encircling Pomegranate</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Flaming Branches</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>Flaming Branches and Rings Entwined</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>Sixteenth-Century Italian Satin</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>Crest of Piero de Medici</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td>Sixteenth-Century Florentine Satin</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td>Late-Fifteenth-Century Florentine Brocade</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>Grand-Ducal Crown of Tuscany</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td>Ducal Crowns in Tapestries</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>Seventeenth-Century Italian Brocade</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>Seventeenth-Century Italian Brocade</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(v)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I. THE MEDICI IN RELATION TO TEXTILE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  THE MEDICI INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO WOOL...</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in Wool Guild</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financiers of Raw Wool and Woolen Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers of Woolen Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production of Woolen Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyers of Wool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants of Finished Woolen Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE MEDICI INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO SILK...</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in Silk Guild</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers of Silk Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production of Silk Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants and Financiers of Finished Silk Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasers of Finished Silk Handled by Medici Agents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART II. THE MEDICI IN RELATION TO TEXTILE DESIGN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE MEDICI INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO THE DESIGN OF RENAISSANCE FABRIC</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoters of Artists Who Supplied Textile Design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers of Family-Related Textile Motifs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(vi)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The statement, "Florentine export trade in textiles conquered the world",\(^1\) affects two obvious inquisitions: When did the conquest occur and by whose hand was it wrought? Textiles were produced in Italy as early as the ninth century and in the late eleventh century sericulture was established in Florence. By the thirteenth century the cloth industry and the trades associated with it prospered.\(^2\) The importance of textiles in the late Middle Ages as well as the continued importance of this industry through the Renaissance has been expressed by historians in statements such as these:

"The industry of Florence, particularly the cloth industry and international trade connected with it, was undoubtedly the most important enterprise of an early capitalist character in the whole of the later Middle Ages."\(^3\)

---


"In 1338, Florence had more than 200 factories producing 80,000 pieces of cloth annually. Her merchants were the best informed of the world in finance. They traveled through Europe visiting their warehouses and founding banks. Florence was the seat of capitalism."\(^4\)

From the foregoing quotations as well as from other writers, it is suggested that the hand of the "conqueror" would be that of a merchant. In the early Renaissance, works of art were being commissioned by wealthy merchants. This fact is indicative of their wealth. The authorization of a work of art formerly had been undertaken by the church or a court, because only they had the means necessary for such endeavors. Since merchants were now sponsoring artists, it is evident that their occupation was lucrative. According to Wescher, the trade that resulted in the greatest profit and which made it easiest to rise socially and financially was cloth.\(^5\) Therefore, during the Renaissance, there arose a new class of socially prominent, wealthy merchants.

One family of this type gained such prestige and power in Florence that they were said to have ruled the city in fact if not in name. They were the Medici. The

\(^4\) Lucas, 22.

family originated in Mugello, about fifteen miles north-east of Florence. As early as the twelfth century, the name was registered in the city records. At the end of the thirteenth century an Ardigo dei Medici appeared as leader of the guilds and in 1314 he was "gonfalonier" of the city. The "gonfalonier" was the only official of state to possess the power to command the army. It was this office which made it possible for the Medici to control the entire state by the fifteenth century.\(^6\)

Records of the Medici family of Florence have been studied in relation to the arts, politics, banking and trade. As historians attempt to discover their influence in these realms, frequent mention is made of their relation to textiles. For example, such statements as these:

"Cosimo, the elder, (1389-1464), in his day the foremost merchant in Europe, had a decisive influence on the Florentine wool-guild and filled its most important offices with members of his family."

"By an alum monopoly, which became a European monopoly when he leased the papal mines at Tolfa in 1466, Cosimo controlled the entire dyeing trade of Florence."\(^7\)

---

\(^6\) Punck and Bles, 41.

\(^7\) H. Wescher, "Piero di Cosimo de Medici and his Agents at Bruges", Giba Review, IV, (October, 1943), 1717.

(3)
Funck and Bles, authors of the book, The Renaissance, mention that in the fourteenth century, Salvestro dei Medici, a leader of ciompi, lead an uprising in the city. They further state that the members of the group were mainly wool-carders.

During the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries members of the Medici family were in positions of power and leadership both in Florence and abroad. Their contribution to the major arts has been established. The writers' beliefs are these: 1) The influence exerted upon the field of textiles by the Medici family of Florence is more extensive than can be recognized in present writings because all the areas of their influence pertaining to textiles have not been investigated by one writer. 2) Their less obvious influence upon the minor art, textiles, can be established by examining works of art produced by artists who they sponsored and Renaissance fabrics.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: 1) To examine available literature concerning this family in relation to textile production, design and trade, in order to determine the sphere of their influence in Florence and the rest of the world. 2) To assemble the information or put it in a more accessible form to those interested in
historic textiles. Since the fame of this family has been proclaimed in connection with so many other fields, their importance in the textile industry will be examined.
CHAPTER I. THE MEDICI INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO WOOL

Membership in Wool Guild

The rise of the Medici in Florence was undoubtedly through the guilds. In 1293, guild membership was required to vote in council or to maintain any other rights of a citizen. Nobility could remain noble by not registering in a guild but they were second-class citizens. "To degrade a man Florence left him his social rank."8

Two organizations which developed almost simultaneously in the twelfth century were the "art" associated with finishing and dyeing woolen fabric, and "art" was the name given to association of artisans before guilds were formed. Florence was associated with the finishing of woolen fabrics before the production of fabric. The city listed 200 wool dyers, fullers and tailors (cutters) between 1050 and 1200, but it was not until 1212 that there were listings of spinners and wool-cloth makers.9

8Lucas, 16.

The Calimala, formed in the early thirteenth century, was the name given to the cloth finishing guild. The name was derived from the street on which it was located. In order to obtain fabric for dressing, merchants traveled to the cloth fairs in Europe; therefore the Calimala is sometimes referred to as "The Guild of the Cloth Merchants."\textsuperscript{10} Florentines were buying cloth to be finished in England during the reign of Henry II (1133-1189).\textsuperscript{11} Florentine trade expanded to Northern France and Flanders, where the oriental "cloth halls" were copied. It was here that Florentines purchased Flemish woolens.\textsuperscript{12} The dark, heavy cloth arrived in Italy and in the city of Armo, workmen for the Calimala re-dressed and re-dyed the fabric.\textsuperscript{13} The prepared cloth was stamped with the arms of the Calimala and sold all over Europe at a high profit.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10}Lucas, 29.

\textsuperscript{11}Gertrude Richards (ed.), Florentine Merchants in the Age of the Medici, Letters and Documents from the Selfridge Collections of Medici Manuscripts (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Press, 1932), 37-38.


\textsuperscript{13}Richards, 37-38.

By the thirteenth century the Art di Calimala (Guild of Cloth Finishers) had experienced merchants.\textsuperscript{15} Already they had made large profits as money lenders to the crusaders who passed through Italy.\textsuperscript{16} These merchants became bankers because "instead of taking up credit, the trading companies accepted deposited funds as working capital. This was laid down in the statutes of the Calimala guild of Florence."\textsuperscript{17} To handle transactions between the distant parties the bankers' guild, the Arte del Cambio was established. In 1199 the guild was operating in England.\textsuperscript{18}

The Florentines established a Commune, a product of the new economic revival. From this group a new social set slowly appeared. They were not "men of towers, nobles, more or less of German origin and connected by birth", but wealthy merchants of "aristocracy of the counter".

\textsuperscript{15}Wescher, Ciba Review, IV, 1695.


\textsuperscript{17}Wescher, Ciba Review, IV, 1697.

\textsuperscript{18}Richards, 37-38.
The occupation through which Florentines were able to force their way upward was that of dressing, finishing and dyeing of woolen fabrics. Lucas, author of *Daily Life in Florence*, discusses Salvestro de Medici, a wealthy merchant, who appealed to the *Consiglio de popolo* in 1358 because he was excluded from holding a public office. Undoubtedly he was the same Salvestro dei Medici referred to in *The Renaissance* by Funck and Bles as a leader of the ciompi and a wool-carder. About this time the small artisans, one of which was composed of wool-carders, rose up to establish three new guilds. The equality of all the guilds continued until the fifteenth century when the major guilds (*Cambio* — bankers; *Calimala* — merchants; *Seta* — silk; and *Lana* — wool) again took over the government.19

Shortly after 1212, the *Arte della Lana* (Guild of The Manufacturers of Woollens) was established. Merchants who were formerly buying fabrics were now buying bales of raw wool. The cloth-makers' guild was soon importing material from Spain and Portugal as well as England, Flanders and France.20 Morley, speaking of the Medici, mentions that in 1297, "the founder of this historic clan was a

19 Lucas, 15-20.
20 Ibid., 29-30. (9)
member of a Florentine cloth-makers' guild. The founder of the clan must have been Guccio, upon whose tomb was a crest, showing he belonged to Arte della Lana, the cloth-makers' guild. An "Article of Association", comparable to a legal partnership, included the names of Giovenco di Giuliano de Medici and Giovenco de Antonio di Medici. The purpose of the association was to form a "company to engage in traffic in fine cloth" under the Arte di Lana in the Convento of San Martino. In identifying Giuliano di Medici, (1421-99) son of Giovenco, he is described as holding many offices in Arte de Lana. The Medici rise to power is closely aligned with their popularity with the people. To provide work for these people, whose good-will was imperative, they needed wool from England.

Financiers of Raw Wool and Woolen Fabric

As trade increased and merchants became merchant-bankers and finally banker, the Cambio (Bankers) guild


23Richards, 252.

24Ibid., 290


(10)
established banks in Italy and soon in all Europe. Giovanni de Ricci de Medici, born in 1360, founded the Medici bank in 1397 when he transferred his banking to Florence from Rome.\textsuperscript{26} He was a financial genius. "By manipulation of Exchange during the council of Basle and Constance he became rich." In 1429 Giovanni de Ricci de Medici was able to "affect a financial crisis in any quarter of Europe at any time that he desired."\textsuperscript{27} The success of the Florentines over competitors for wool in England was largely due to combining banking and the buying of wool.\textsuperscript{28}

Although credited with founding the Medici bank, Giovanni de Ricci de Medici's immediate family were not bankers. He was employed by a distant cousin, Messer Vieri de Cambio, (1323-1395) who after 1370 was a leading banker of Florence. Vieri de Cambio was a member of Arte del Cambio (Guild of Bankers).\textsuperscript{in 1348.} He combined banking and trade and established "vieri di Cambio de' Medici and Company" in 1369, and did shipping through Pisan territory. It was in this Medici bank that Giovanni de

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{28}Legget, 142.
Ricci de Medici was first employed and was later junior partner and finally managed it in 1385. After 1397, when he established his own bank he was rivaled by Averardo de Francesco di Ricci who continued his father's bank. It was the firm of Averardo di Francesco de Medici that "also traded in wool and other commodities." When Giovanni established a bank in Florence in 1397, Averardo established a branch in Rome, and later one at Pisa, Spain, Barcelona and Valencia.\(^{29}\)

It was not until 1402 that the Giovanni branch of the family began to invest in the woolen industry. The Medici bank invested 3,000 florins in the cloth industry. The firm was in the name of Giovanni's thirteen-year-old son, Cosimo, and managed by Michele di Baldo di ser Michele. In 1408, another firm was established for making fabric, "Lorenzo di Giovannì de Medici e Compania, lanaiuoli", named for his second son, age thirteen. Four thousand florins were invested and it was managed by Taddeo di Filippo.\(^{30}\) In 1408, Giovanni Medici's banks were established in Florence with branches in Venice, Rome, and Naples. In 1402, when the Medici bank invested in the

\(^{29}\) De Roover, The Rise and Fall of the Medici Bank, 34-39.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 42.
woolen industry, it was a well-established business. The early Italian woolen industry was closely related to the religious orders. The Umiliate, an order that originated in Milan in 1238, was experienced in the Flemish art of weaving; they taught the art to the weavers of Florence. Members of Humilate, who had learned textile arts in Germany, came to Florence in 1239. By 1256, they had established workshops between the Arno River and their church. These monks not only manufactured and dyed cloth but leased their land to merchants who built dyeing and bleaching works. In 1252, a large group of Humilates or Humble Fathers of St. Michael came to Florence from Alexandria, Egypt. They were experienced in weaving and dyeing fabric as well as the use of oriental design in cloth-making. The establishment of this group greatly improved the quality of Florentine fabrics. The Benedictine Order joined the Humble Fathers. This union lead to even greater prosperity. In 1340, this organization produced approximately 60,000 pieces of fabric, it employed 30,000 workers at more than

31 Ibid., 42-43.
32 Richards, 39.
33 Basle, I., 959.
200 establishments. Humilite Cloth was the name given to a fabric originally produced by this order.

As the textile industry prospered, the need for wool increased. It was necessary to import wool to supply the demand. In the book, *History of Medieval Trade and Commerce*, Scheulte is cited as saying, "It was wool that took the Italians to England and it was wool that made them bankers."³⁴

Italians were already in England collecting papal taxes, and consequently in close contact with monastic houses. The English monasteries were producers of wool. In many cases wool was more plentiful than money. The trade in raw wool became evident.³⁵ To handle credit for the wool of the monastery, the need for papal-bankers became imperative.

Raw wool was exported from England, North Africa and Spain to meet the growing demand for raw wool in the expanding domestic industry. Again the problem of financing was evident. This situation, too, led to a need for a merchant-banker. He not only handled matters of finance but also the financial risk involved. The purpose

³⁴Wescher, *Ciba Review*, IV, 1700.

of the merchant-banker was to see that finished fabric was at the cloth fairs, to purchase wool and dyes and to "underwrite the cost for weaving, fulling, dyeing, shearing and dressing from the first to the last." He also insured the supply of raw fiber to the manufacturers. For these services he took a large percent of the profit.\textsuperscript{36}

At the inception of the occupation of merchant-banker, the Medici family is mentioned in various capacities. In 1406, Giovenco di Giuliano de' Medici, who was about twenty years of age, is spoken of as an employee of his "kinsman, the della, Stufa, an important wool-merchant." It was he who, in 1431, founded the firm of Medici and Company, Merchant-Employers. It was Giuliano's responsibility to distribute to the peasants raw wool to be spun, or to buy raw or spun wool from them.\textsuperscript{37}

As the domestic cloth industry increased, the Calimala began to finish not only foreign fabrics but also domestic. The coarse homespun made by the Humble Fathers in Italy was of increasing demand from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, because Europeans were demanding a better quality fabric and design. Legget

\textsuperscript{36}Legget, 103.

\textsuperscript{37}Richards, 7. (15)
mentions that a member of the Medici family was first to capitalize upon the woolen-cloth made by the Humble Fathers and other ecclesiastic orders of Northern Italy. 38 Perhaps it was this Medici who initiated the dressing and finishing of domestic woolen-cloth by the Calimala.

The first authorized records of Florentine merchants in England was in 1223. 39 These merchants sent representatives to examine the English wool. The merchant or his representative contracted with the English Monasteries or landowners for so much wool, often years in advance. The wool obtained from small producers was handled in two ways: A foreign or English agent went through the countryside "gathering wool" or a landlord handled the transaction. He would contract to supply so much wool from his farms and so much from the district, thus becoming a middleman between the small landowner and the merchant. In areas in England particularly suitable for growing wool, such as Cotswold or Sevenhampton, the brasses of the merchant would be displayed as one exhibits a coat of arms. 40

38 Legget, 104-105.
39 Legget, 131.
40 Powers, 104-105. (16)
In exchange for large loans to the Kings of England and to statesmen the Florentines were granted the privilege to purchase raw wool. In 1250, Henry III received a loan equivalent to 125,000 dollars in modern money. The terms of the loan were these: The duration of the loan was two years and "in the event of default he agreed to pay sixty percent interest and assign for the crown treasury a mortgage of the entire export duty on English wool until satisfaction of debt was admitted." The church would not allow interest to be charged during a loan; therefore the transaction was placed in the hands of a Florentine Hebrew so the loan was not controlled by the church.\(^4^1\)

Italians continued to enjoy favor in England because of large loans made to the crown.\(^4^2\) Even though there was no Medici bank established in England until 1448, Medici was represented in London and Bruges as early as 1416. Filippo Rapone, a merchant-banker, represented Medici in Bruges and was a favorite of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders,

\(^{4^1}\) Legget, 142.

who ruled from 1404 to 1419. 43

In 1429, when Cosimo took over the reigns of the Medici banks, representatives were not only in England, but "... the Medici banking house was already a prosperous concern with branches in Venice and at the papal court." 44

The economy of England and Flanders was connected by the wool trade and related commodities. Bruges needed English wool to trade with Italy. The only articles she had to exchange for Florentine luxury items were Flemish tapestry and Dutch linens. In 1436, Bernardo Portinari went to London for the Medici "to accelerate the sale of goods" and to settle matters in London. 45 In 1446, a new manager was sent to London, Gerozzo de Pigli. "Pigli was to stay at his London post but was free to ride to Southampton or Cotswold to buy wool." 46 Under his leadership the London branch became successful and a

43 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 317-318.


45 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 319.

46 Ibid., 324.

(18)
new partnership, Piero de Cosimo de Medici e Gerozzo de Pigli and Co. was established in 1448. Simone d' Antonio Nori went to Bruges to work with trading and banking in this same year, but in 1449 Angelo Tani began to manage the Bruges branch and continued until 1464.\(^{47}\) Gherardo Canigioni, writing in a letter to the Medici in 1453, mentioned pieces of "suantoni". This was probably a fabric made in Southampton since "antoni" was Italian for Hampton.\(^{48}\) The following quotation shows the involvement of this Medici representative in England: "In Edward IV's reign (1442-1483) the most active were Florentines, Gerard Canigioni, sometimes factor to the king, citizen and mercer of London, and merchant of the Staple, who took out letters of naturalization."\(^{49}\)

The Medici became more connected with the cloth trade through the company of Piero de Cosimo de Medici Company. "Although Cosimo remained the real head of the commercial undertakings Piero (1416-1469) was the registered owner of the textile company."\(^{50}\) Wescher further

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 324-326.

\(^{48}\) Ruddock, 93.

\(^{49}\) Power and Postan, 45.

\(^{50}\) H. Wescher, "Piero de Cosimo de Medici and his agents at Bruges", Ciba Review, IV, (October, 1943), 1717.
states that, "In 1459, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the firm's entire capital was invested in 'Piero's Compania'. Its size, therefore, must have been very considerable and its activities proved fruitful for agencies in Bruges and London, that is to say for the wool trade with Flanders and England."\textsuperscript{51}

In 1459, Piero was given the "takings of the Milanese salt-tax" for a period of three months. This was probably for a consignment of textiles priced at 2029 ducats. In 1455, Agnolo Tani, an agent of Medici, was told he could buy "English wool up to 600 pounds without company instructions". To give some idea of the control held by Florentines in the middle of the fifteenth century we are told that in 1461 Tani took over the import duties of Gravelingin. It was through this port that English goods came. "By this piece of tax-farming he gained control of English wool-exports."\textsuperscript{52} A chronicle of Benedetto Dei from 1470 is cited by Wescher: "Florentines in Bruges and London rule the countries, they monopolize the wool and alum trade, as well as controlling

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 1717-1718.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 1718-1720.

(20)
all the other revenues of the country, and they are engaging in financial transactions with towns all over the world."⁵³

As has been seen from Cosimo's activities in London and Bruges, he was truly a merchant-banker. In 1422, Cosimo was even an officer on one of the Sea Consuls in Pisa.⁵⁴ Botticelli's painting of Cosimo was entitled "the great merchant".⁵⁵ He was also very much a banker. Giovanni and later Cosimo did business with Popes. Giovanni was banker for John XXIII and also did business at the Council of Constance (1414-18). He was court banker to Martin V (1417-31)⁵⁶ and in 1429, Cosimo went to Rome on official business.⁵⁷

The papal courts were held in whatever city the pope resided. This complicated the financial transactions and therefore Medici and other Italian banks set up offices in the town where an ecumenical council was

---

⁵³H. Wescher, Giba Review, IV, 1720.
⁵⁴Ruddock, 62.
⁵⁵Funck, Bles, 43.
⁵⁶Frederick Antel, Florentine Painting and its Social Background (London; Kegan Paul), 30.
⁵⁷Morley, 15.
in progress. 58 Medici branch-banks were soon begun in Pisa, Milan, Geneva, Avignon, as well as Bruges and London. 59 A statement of Florentine property tax in 1458 designates Cosimo de Medici as a partner in eleven enterprises. Three of these had to do with cloth manufacturing and the others with banks. 60 Obviously many of the decisions were delegated to managers; however from the manuscripts of correspondences, he was in close contact with the managers.

None of the other Medici banks were associated with raw wool or woolen fabric trade to the extent of the London and Bruges branches. The branch at Milan did handle some woolen fabric and other woolen commodities. The clientele for these products were mostly local citizens of Milan. The imported woolens were priced higher than Florentine woolens, also sold in Milan, and were therefore in less demand. 61

Other Italian branches also handled some wool

58 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 195.


60 Ibid., 8.


(22)
transactions, but most of these were in association with London and Bruges. A balance sheet from the Venice branch of Medici from 1427 shows it sold some English cloth for a Medici agent, Tornabuoni, in London. They also dealt in Spanish wool from Valencia. In 1438, this branch sold cloth sent on consignment by "the firm of Bernard d' Antonio de' Medici, cloth manufacturers."\(^6^2\) Since goods were sent on consignment, the firm sending the commodity was credited with the item until it was sold. A balance sheet of "other Medici companies with the Tavola of Florence, July 12, 1427" credits the firm of "Totto Machiavelli e Ubertino de' Bardi and Co. of London" with 3,600 florins for consignments of wool for selling in Florence.\(^6^3\)

The Florentine bank at Pisa, founded by Averardo de Francesco di Ricci de Medici and operated by his son, Giuliano, and later his grandson, Francesco, (1415-43) also had branches in Spain. "It imported from Spain large quantities of wool and other commodities."\(^6^4\) The banks in other cities were more concerned with

\(^{62}\text{Ibid., 248.}\)

\(^{63}\text{Ibid., 229.}\)

\(^{64}\text{Sieveking, Handlungsbücher, 30-31, edited by De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 276.}\)
silks and will be discussed in the chapter dealing with the silk trade.

In summary, the Medici or their agents did deal in wool. Without comparing their activities with other prominent, fifteenth-century, merchant-banker families it is difficult to determine what proportion of the wool-trade of Florence was Medici. De Roover says, "Although the Medici succeeded in overwhelming their competitors, they never attained the size of the Bardi or the Peruzzi, the giants of the fourteenth century." 65

However, it was the fifteenth century in which the Medici rose to prominence. In this century were they surpassed in trade? In "Wollenluchendustrie" Alfred Doreen describes the "lanaiuoli" (cloth manufacturers) as large operations which were the sources of large amounts of capital. While De Roover says, "The great Florentine fortunes were made in banking and foreign trade, not in manufacturing", 66 Morley says, "No single family of merchant-bankers stand out in equal prominence with the Medici family." 67 He further states, "... even

65 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 3.
66 Ibid., 172.
67 Morley, 103.
after they had attained princely rank as bankers, still they carried on the family woolen-cloth business, for that industry was firmly integrated with their conception of Florentine capitalistic economy. \[68\]

Just as the early Renaissance trade was intertwined with banking, so -- in many instances -- was the trade linked with the manufacturing.

Producers of Woolen Fabrics

The Medici were not only merchants of raw wool and woolen commodities but they actually owned establishments which manufactured woolen fabric. As was mentioned previously, Giovanni invested controlling capital in two woolshops, one in the name of each of his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, when each became thirteen years of age in 1402 and 1408. In the middle of the fifteenth century a "company, Piero di Cosimo de Medici, comprised both of a wool and a silk factory" was begun. \[69\]
Possibly this company was an outgrowth of the woolshop placed in Cosimo's name by his father. Weschler discusses the Flemish Medici representatives in 1456-1480

\[68\] Ibid., 104.

\[69\] Wescher, Ciba Review, IV, 1717.
as Agnolo Tani and Tommaso Portinari\textsuperscript{70} and De Roover lists the Bruges agent for Medici from 1450-1465 as Angelo Tani and Tommaso di Tolco Portinari from 1465-1480.\textsuperscript{71} However, in the case of the latter, they are listed as "general managers and branch managers of the Medici bank". Authors of both sources discuss Giovanni Tornabuoni as Medici agent in Rome in 1471.\textsuperscript{72} Possibly the company of Piero di Cosimo de Medici was established for trade as well as manufacturing, as were many concerns of this type. As late as 1491, Lorenzo the Magnificent invested money in a woolshop under the management of Paolo Benci.

The Medici just referred to, in relation to textile industries, were ancestors of Averardo's son, Salvestro, and were more famous as statesmen and bankers than lanaiolo. The woolshops which they owned were operated by a series of junior partners who managed the shops (Fig. 1). The partnerships entered into by the Medici were typical of the period. The senior partner

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{71}De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 379.

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., 377, and Wescher, Ciba Review, IV, 1718.
**Fig. 1. Managers of Two Medici Woolshops**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shop</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1402-1420</td>
<td>Michele di Baldo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1420-1439</td>
<td>(discontinued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1439-1480</td>
<td>Anticio di Taddeo Taddei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1481-1491</td>
<td>(discontinued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1491-1494</td>
<td>Paolo Benci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1408-1429</td>
<td>Taddeo di Filippo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1430-1433</td>
<td>Giuntino di Giuntino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guido Giuntini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1433-1465 (?)</td>
<td>Andrea Giuntini</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*De Roover, The Rise and the Decline of the Medici Bank, 379.*
invested more than half of the capital and the junior partner was usually an expert in the industry involved in the partnership. In return for management of the establishment they were given an increased proportion of the shares.  

From another of Averardo's sons, Giovenco, came the heads and agents of "Medici and Company, Merchant Employers" (Fig. 2). The company started in 1431 and it was they who were more actively lanajuoli, until the early sixteenth century.  

From 1431 until 1437 the Medici Company and Merchant Employers operated under the Arte di Lana, whose primary purpose was the manufacture of woolen cloth. The woolshops controlled by Giovanni and later his sons were located in San Martino, which was the area where the best woolen cloth was manufactured. In an article of association of the Firm of Medici and Company from 1429-1461, Giovenco is designated as the head of the company engaged in the business of merchant-employers of San Martino. Fine English wool was used in the fabric

\[\text{73 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 169.}\]  
\[\text{74 Richards, 5.}\]  
\[\text{75 Ibid., 8-9.}\]  

(28)
Fig. 2 Partial Genealogy of the family of Averardo de' Medici, showing members of Giovenco's family associated with the firm of Medici and Company -- Merchant Employers*

Averardo (d. 1318)

Giovenco (d. 1322)

Giuliano (d. 1377)

Giuliano

Averardo

Antonio

Giovenco (1332-1463) founder of firm, 1431

Giovenco (d. 1447) associated with firm many years

Bernardo established a woolshop in 1441

Giuliano (1421-1499) head of firm, 1460-1495

Averardo head of firm 1450-58

Francesco (1450-1528) 1470-71 agent

Giovanni agent in Levant head of firm, 1503

in Pera with Francesco

Guido (d. 1532) messenger 1501-03

Raffaello (1477-1555) dyer 1498-1500 also with father

in firm Giuliano


(29)
produced in San Martino, while in Oltrarno the woolshops used less expensive Spanish or Italian wool. In 1441 Bernardo d' Antonio established a shop in Oltrarno with a total capital investment of 1550 florins.\textsuperscript{76}

Via Porta Rossa is given as the location of the business of the Firm of Medici and Company from 1495-1506 with Giuliano at the helm. From 1525 to 1541, Francesco and Raffaello managed firms at Via Porta Rossa.\textsuperscript{77}

Alfred Doren, (1869-1939), a German historian, studied the Florentine woolen industry. His principal source of information was guild records. Doren believed the Florentine woolshops were large manufacturing concerns. He further states that the average production of these shops from 1381-1392 was about 70 bolts of cloth a year with the maximum output about 220 bolts. The two Medici shops in the San Martino area record an average of a little over 90 bolts a year.\textsuperscript{78} De Roover feels these shops were much smaller than Doren believed.

\textsuperscript{76}De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 175.

\textsuperscript{77}Richards, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{78}De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 171-172.
them to be. He supports his theory by the fact that the Medici continued to maintain two woolshops rather than one and the record of a small staff which consisted of "a manager, assistant manager and sometimes a bookkeeper and one or two apprentices to run errands and do routine office work".  

Antal discusses the wool industry of Florence from 1300 to 1338, an earlier period than the time discussed by Doren and De Roover. He says in 1300 there were 300 firms, while in 1338, there were 200 annually producing "70 to 80,000 pieces of cloth valued at 1,200,000 florins and employing 30,000 people out of Florence's total population of 90,000". Thus according to Antal in the early period of Florentine woolcloth production, at maximum output, a firm would be producing 400 pieces of cloth a year. The question of terminology arises. Were the "pieces of cloth" mentioned by Antal comparable to a "bolt of cloth" discussed by De Roover and Doren?

A Medici firm beginning within a three-year

---


80 Antal, 12.
period, starting in 1531, produced on the average 122 pieces of fabric a year. A Medici partnership of 1556 showed 71 cloths in a year, while during the period from 1535 to 1542, an average of over 150 pieces a year were completed. De Roover contrasts these figures with those of Dr. Gertrud Hermes and concludes, "If we compare these figures ......... the annual production of the Medici firm was far above the average of the other producers." 81

Production of Woolen Fabric

The organization of the cloth firm is indicative of the size as well as the operation. In the firm, Raffaello di Francesco de Medici and Company, operative from 1531-1534, Raffaello was the senior partner. He supplied two-thirds of the capital and exercised some control over the transactions of the firm. Chiarissimo di Rosso de Medici was solely an investing partner. The son of Raffaello, Giuliano, was the accountant, while Bernardo di Domenico Baglioni invested no capital but was the acting manager or the "managing partner", He oversaw production and was able to exercise authority

over all but the cashier, Lorenzo Brandi, who was responsible to the investing partners, Raffaello and Chiarissimo. Baglioni controlled those in charge of purchasing needed raw materials, manufacturing the cloth and selling the finished fabrics to retailers, merchants or exporters. 82

The manufacture of woolen-cloth in the sixteenth century was conducted on the "basis of pulling-out or wholesale handicraft system". The raw material involved was the property of the "industrial entrepreneur" or merchant-employer. The wool fiber was given to the artisan to be worked, many times in his own home. The cloth remained the property of the entrepreneur and, therefore, it was he who arranged for its sale. The workers were paid for the services they performed upon the goods. Since the merchant-employer was more familiar with the type product currently marketable, he controlled the cloth produced by the artisan. 83

The manufacture of woolen-cloth was a rather complicated process. In the early fourteenth century the fabric was passed from one location to another, twenty

82 De Rocco, Speculum, XVI, 8, 21.

83 Ibid., 9-10. (33)
times before it was completed. Guild records studied by Alfred Doreen and set forth in his book, Studien aus der Florentiner Wirtschaftsgeschichte (Studies in the Economic History of Florence)\(^{85}\) indicate similar manufacturing steps to those recorded by De Roover in his study of two Medici firms: Raffaello di Francesco de Medici and Company, 1531-1534; and Francesco di Giuliano di Raffaello de Medici and Company, 1556-1558.\(^{86}\) He indicates from manuscripts concerning two firms that there were twenty-six steps involved in the manufacture of woolen-cloth. These can be divided into five areas: (1) preparatory operations, (2) spinning, (3) warping, (4) weaving, (5) dyeing and finishing.\(^{87}\)

The preparatory steps include sorting, washing, cleansing, and carding or combing. Of these, all but washing was done in the shop. The wool-sorter needed to be an expert wool grader. Agnolo Baldocci, a wool-sorter, worked for the Medici for over fifty years. He was also a broker for buying raw wool and selling cloth

\(^{84}\)Antal, 12.

\(^{85}\)Basle, Ciba Review, I, 960-61.

\(^{86}\)De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 5.

\(^{87}\)De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 176.
made by the Medici Company. Dates indicate that he was performing both jobs for the Medici during a given time duration. He was paid by the 100 pounds for sorting wool. 88 Sometimes a wool-sorter went from one firm to another as his services were needed. 89

The washing of the wool was not done at the wool-shop. Records of the Medici in 1556 indicate they paid the wool-washing company of Francesco di Giovanni di Giunta and Company, located along the Gora canal, by the 100 pounds of washed wool. In addition to this sum, they were reimbursed for every 100 pounds of alum used. The Medici used the facilities of the wool-washers at irregular periods. This indicates that the wool-washing companies probably worked for several cloth-manufacturers. 90 The weight of the wool before and after washing was recorded in an effort to prevent a worker from embezzling wool. Because the loss varied with the wool, it was difficult to prevent theft; therefore the guilds set up severe penalties for taking any "working materials". 91

89 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 177.

90 Doren, Wollentrechendustrie, 249-254, cited by De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 12.

91 De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 13.
The wool was returned to the woolshop and prepared for "beating, cleansing and oiling". These operations, as well as combing, carding and spinning, were in charge of "industrial factors". These men acted as foremen or middlemen between the entrepreneurs and the workers.92 The factors hired workers and paid them from their wages. The industrial factor was not in constant employment with the Medici but seemed to be employed as their services were required.93 Beating, cleansing, oiling were probably done in the Medici shops although De Roover states, "there is no clear evidence to this effect in the Medici documents". The capodiecâ was the factor responsible for the above steps.

Spinning was the next step; this process was done by the country women of Florence. Subcontractors or factors, lanini, responsible for corded wool, and the stamaiuoli responsible for combed wool, delivered the wool to the spinners and collected the yarn.94 Tommaso Brandolini, a lanino, was employed by Medici in 1535

92 Dr. Elders, Glossary, 411, cited by De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 13.

93 De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 13.

94 Ibid., 14, and De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 178.
and his employment was continued at least until 1558.\textsuperscript{95} The \textit{stamaiuolo} had a little more prestige than the \textit{lanino}. He worked for several employers if he chose and kept his own record of the names of spinners. The factors were paid per pound of wool at a varying rate dependent upon whether it was combed wool, spun on a distaff, or carded wool, spun on a spinning wheel. The factor then paid his spinners; in the sixteenth century the guilds regulated the wage paid both the factors and the spinners.\textsuperscript{96}

Warping, the next operation, was done in homes. The warp was prepared by women called \textit{orditori}. The one or two warpers hired at one time by the Medici were paid on a "piece-rate basis", which was flexible depending upon yarn count and the length of the finished fabric.\textsuperscript{97} The weaver, also working in his home, sized the warp and the weaving was either done by himself or an apprentice if the cloth were to be a less expensive fabric. Of all the operations the weaving was most closely supervised by the managing partner. In the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Medici Manuscripts, 558 (1), 567 (2), cited by De Roover, \textit{Speculum}, XVI, 14.}
\footnote{De Roover, \textit{Speculum}, XVI, 14, 15.}
\footnote{Elders, 422, cited by De Roover, \textit{Speculum}, XVI, 15.}
\end{footnotes}
earlier Medici partnership the managing partner agreed "to go to the looms". The weavers were paid a week in advance on a piece-rate basis, determined by the weave, the pattern, and the length of the finished fabric. The warp and weft yarns were weighed and compared with the finished fabric weight, which usually increased because of added moisture and sizing. It took about a month for a weaver to complete a piece of fabric. As with other workers in the textile industry, the weaver worked for more than one employer.

The finishing processes consisted of fulling, stretching, and tentering. Fulling was done by workers at fulling mills located by the streams of Italy. The water was necessary not only for the fulling process, but also for power. The fulling vats were first owned by landlords who rented them to the artisan but later in the sixteenth century, the guilds owned or leased the fulling mills.

Tentering was done in a rather large building called a tirotor. The pointed roofs of the tirotor

---

98 Medici Manuscript 495, cited by De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 15.

99 De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 16.

100 De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 16, 17.
dotted the countryside. In 1498, the wool guild owned seven or eight such establishments. Two tentering buildings existed until the beginning of the nineteenth century; Tiratoio all' Uccello at Otrarno near the Gate of San Frediano was destroyed by fire, Tiratoio della Grazia was destroyed to build Palazzo della Borsa, the stock exchange of Florence.101

Dyeing, sometimes considered a finishing process, was controlled by a group of artisans who were constantly striving to maintain their independence. They endeavored not to come under the control of the major guilds: Lana (wool) and Calimala (cloth finishing). Therefore, for this reason and because wool was sometimes dyed in the fiber or yarn state, this process will be discussed in the next section.

The Medici records indicate the cloth finishers were employed by several clients because, as was previously mentioned, the total cloth output of one firm did not furnish sufficient work.102 The management of the Medici cloth firms rested upon the managing partner. The success or failure of the firms was largely due to

---

101De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 180.
102De Roover, Speculum, XVI, 17.
his decisions.

Dyers of Wool

The name, Medici, was early associated with dyers. In 1378, the famous revolt by the ciompi, made up of "dyers and others in the cloth finishings", resulted in a separate guild for three years. Salvestro de Medici was a member and leader of this group. Cosimo and Lorenzo made "large donations" to a hospital founded by the "social and religious union of dyers in the brotherhood of San Onofrio". 103

The Medici were associated with the dyeing of textiles in other ways. They formed partnerships with "master dyers". 104

"On April 20, 1508, they formed a partnership with a master-dyer who was to act as managing partner. According to articles of association, the capital amounted to 800 florins, of which Francesco de Medici was to supply 200; his two brothers, Giovenco and Giovanni, 500 together; and Bartolomeo Bernini, an outsider, the remaining 100. A fifth partner, Giovanni di Ridoffo, dyer, did not put any money into the partnership, but was to manage the company for a share of the profits. The partnership

103 Basle, Ciba Review, I, 965.

104 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 180.
was to last for three years, 1508-1511."\textsuperscript{105}

Raffaello de Medici was head of a dyeing firm from 1498 to 1502. He was much associated with the firm of Merchant Employers, a Medici firm. De Roover says, "Dyeing was the highest in the category of wool workers." Perhaps it was for this reason that the Medici did not hesitate to give their name to the industry.

The dyer, as other finishers of fabric, worked for more than one entrepreneur. The Medici manuscripts further indicate that in order to control the quality of the fabric the manufacturer supplied the dye stuff for his fabric.\textsuperscript{106} The dye so indicated the quality of the fabric that woolen fabric was graded according to the dye stuff.

There were three grades of woolen fabric. "In grain" (panni in grano) denoted an expensive fabric, dyed with scarlet dye, called "grain" because it was made from "a grain-like body of an insect called scarletae". The insect was found on a species of oak which grew in the Mediterranean area. A lower grade of fabric was "in half grain" (panni de demedio grano). Some grain was used

\textsuperscript{105} Harvard University, Medici MSS, 567(6), fols. 29\textsuperscript{r}-30\textsuperscript{r}, quoted by De Roover, "A Florentine Firm Cloth Manufacturers", \textit{Speculum}, XVI (January, 1941), 16.

\textsuperscript{106} De Roover, \textit{Speculum}, XVI, 18.
to produce a purple cloth. Finally, the least expensive were "cloths without grain" (panni sine grano); these were dyed with madder of brasil. 107 From a Medici manuscript Giovanni Maringhi in Pera writes to Neri Venturi in Florence, "These panni which you have sent by Lionardo are poor, especially the purple and pink, the red are excellent, the dark blue very good. However, I have always said in every six panni there must be one red, one pink, one purple and one blue." This portion as well as other manuscripts refer to the panni, and show something of the importance of the dyestuff used. 108

Another red cloth was made from oricello, a lichen discovered in the orient by a Florentine, in 1305. He gave his family the name Rucella to associate it with the dye. Giovenco Medici, son of Averardo, married into this family. 109 The red dye was important to the Calimala (cloth finishing guild), whose members were skilled in the refining and dyeing of fabric. Speaking concerning the Calimala, Villari says, "...... particularly crimson which was in great demand for a


108 Richards, 71.

hooded robe worn by all citizens who were allowed to enter the Public Palace and sit in councils of the Republic.\textsuperscript{110}

In the fifteenth century alum was an important commodity in several industries: glassmaking, tanning and textiles. In the latter it was used to extract grease from the wool as well as a mordant for dye.\textsuperscript{111} The importance of alum in the textile trade placed the controller or owner of mines at a decided economic advantage. "By an alum monopoly, which became a European monopoly, he leased the papal mines at Tolfa in 1466. Cosimo controlled the entire dyeing trade of Florence."\textsuperscript{112} Benedetto Dei in 1470 wrote concerning Florentines in Bruges and London, "they rule these countries, they monopolize the wool and alum trade ......."\textsuperscript{113} The preceding quotes indicate the measure of Medici and Florentine control over the alum industry for this period.

Rock alum was found in Asia Minor close to

\textsuperscript{110} Pasquale Villari, \textit{The Two First Centuries of Florentine}, trans. Linda Villari (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), 320.

\textsuperscript{111} De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 152.

\textsuperscript{112} Wescher, \textit{Cita Review}, I, 1717.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 1720.

(43)
Trebizond and Phocia. The Genoese controlled the latter and the richer of the two deposits. Therefore, in 1460, when alum was discovered at Tolfa close to Civitavecchio by a Paduan, Christendom was liberated from Turkish control of alum. The founder of the mines, along with two Romans, formed the *Societas Aluminum* partnership; the association was ratified by Pope Pius II on September 3, 1462. The papal treasury needed a market for the alum and in less than a year the Medici bank took the place vacated by one of the members of the agreement. 114

The Medici bank had a well organized sales system; therefore, the distribution of alum was accomplished with little effort. The papacy attempted an alum monopoly with the aid of the Medici bank. An attempt was made to eliminate Turkish competition by legislation. Competition from the Ischia alum mines was dealt with by an agreement. In 1470 the Rome branch of the Medici bank entered into an agreement with Angelo Perollo, a Neapolitan merchant. The 25-year agreement was ratified by the owners of the Ischia and Tolfa mines, the King of Naples and the Pope, on June eleventh of

that year. In this way output of both mines would be regulated to control the price of alum. The Medici soon decided the Ischia mines were not the competition they had thought; thus in 1471, the agreement was dissolved.

Attention turned to an alum discovery near Volterra. A lease was obtained by Medici in 1472 without the local citizens' support. The result was a revolt which was subdued in 1472. At the time of the Volterra siege Lorenzo the Magnificent was in control of Florence. From this time, until 1478, the Pazzi conspiracy, the Medici attempted to monopolize the alum trade. 115

Merchants of Finished Woolen Fabric

The method of selling goods in the Middle Ages, for the most part, was that of consignment trade. The marketable product was sent to the consignee, who in turn sold the merchandise for the highest possible price. 116 Before the early sixteenth century, the

115 Ibid., 155-164.

116 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 143.
Medici used this method of sales. The Medici manuscripts, which include letters written by the members of the Medici firms and their agents, and other sources, verify this statement.

"In 1438 the Medici branch in Venice sold cloth which was sent on consignment by the firm 'Bernard d' Antonio de Medici, cloth manufacturers'."117

Raffaello De' Medici writes to Filippo de Empoli and Antonio Bartoli in Pera, on January 4, 1520:

"Having left the 13th of last month as you said, we hope you have arrived (in Pera) at the time you planned. Thus you would at this time have completed half your journey. May God guide you safely with the merchandise, and having found the country in the condition you say, you should find it easy to sell everything quickly and at good prices. You have, we hope, put forth all efforts to sell for cash, in order to be able to satisfy the needs of Zanobi de' Medici and to be able to send something on to us."118

Raffaello continues his correspondence on April 24, 1521.

"We have letters from Filippo also, saying he sold 22 panni for 1730 marks, a good part in cash. Also we hear from Filippo of the good condition in which the panni arrived, which gives us further hope of selling all of it satisfactorily."119

117 Ibid., 240.

118 Harvard University, Medici MSS, 553, trans. Richards, 221.

119 Ibid., 225.
In 1436 Bernardi Portinairi was sent to London to settle some business difficulties. In addition to this task he was "to accelerate the sale of goods".\footnote{De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 319.} In a list of the inventory of possessions of Giovanni di' Francesco Maringhi, a Medici agent in Pera, were, among other things, panni made of Spanish wool''.\footnote{Richards, 198.}

Another Medici agent, Michele di Ferro, did not limit his activities to banking but "included a lively trade in textiles of all sorts: Venetian velvets, Milanese frustians, and Florentine piece goods, both silk and wool".\footnote{De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 282.}

No elaborate sales organization seemed to exist. A large proportion of the cloth produced in the Medici woolshops was sold to "local exporters, individual merchants or companies of merchant-bankers, while the greatest percent of the finished fabric was handled by the Florentine bank". The papal court represented a valuable customer. Merchandise was sent to Rome on consignment.\footnote{Tbid., 184.} But by 1531, Medici account books indicate
that the cloth manufactured in Medici woolshops was sold to export-merchants.\textsuperscript{124}

Although the prominence of the cloth-merchant diminished, there is no question of the prestige he once enjoyed. In the church of Santa Trinita, Ghirlandaio (1449-1494) painted a fresco of Francesco Sassetti (1421-1490), "one of the great agents of the Medici".\textsuperscript{125} He is portrayed with other members of his family and Lorenzo de' Medici, "the great head of the firm and ruler of Florence".\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{124} De Roover, \textit{Speculum}, XVI, 30.

\textsuperscript{125} Wescher, \textit{Ciba Review}, IV, 1703.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Ibid.}, 1704.
CHAPTER II. THE MEDICI INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO SILK

Membership in Silk Guild

Long before Florence was famous for her silks, Italians were breeding silkworms and manufacturing silk. Saracens, who occupied Sicily in 827, taught the Italians these skills and under Roger II, (1101-1154) a Norman king, silk weaving spread to Florence when the Florentines besieged the city. The history of the Italian silk trade was kept in the Trattato dell' Arte della Seta; this record continues to the fifteenth century.¹

The Florentine silk guild, located on one of the richest streets of Florence, was close to the church of Porta Santa Maria. The Arte della Seta used an emblem resembling the gate of the church for its crest. The famous red gate on a white field representing the wealthy guild, was established in 1248 and by the close of the century registered 100 to 150 members.²

¹Basle, Ciba Review, I, 965.
²Ibid., 965-966, and Milan de Francesco, "Guild Emblems and their Significance", Ciba Review, I (September, 1938), 421.
Masters of the production of silk fabric controlled the guild. The roster for the important Florentine guild registered several Medici members.

"The founder of the famous Medici family, provider of popes and rulers, became a member of the guild soon after it was organized and many of his descendants proudly continued as merchant-bankers to the Florentine cloth industry even after they reached the rank of princes."4

Further evidence of Medici interest in the silk guild is given by Legget: "Pater Patriae (Cosimo de Medici) of Venice (he was in exile in Venice) was a later member of this guild and by the end of the fourteenth century 16,000 Florentines were in some way engaged in the silk industry."5 In 1477 Jacapo Tanaglia became a partner in the company of Lorenzo and Guiliano de Medici, "setaiuoli" (silk manufacturers). Obviously they, too, were members of the silk guild.6

The leaders of the silk guild and the consul of

3De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 168.


5Basle, Ciba Review, I, 966.

6De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 168.
Florence endeavored to encourage the growth of the silk industry and to prevent technical knowledge concerning the trade to leave Florence by issuing decrees. In 1444 a law was passed to require every farm owner to plant five mulberry trees each year until the number on his land reached 50. Before this time almost all raw silk was imported. While in the fourteenth century a decree prevented a member of the silk or wool guild from leaving Florence without permission, and no pawnbroker could accept silk or a tool of the trade. Thus the silk guild and its leaders controlled the production of the luxury fabric, silk.\textsuperscript{7}

**Producers of Silk Fabric**

Florentine silk fabrics were in world-wide demand. As early as 1293 a silk fabric called zendado (sendal) was made in Florence. Ger'rand mentions a sendal merchant in Paris.\textsuperscript{8} Another novelty silk fabric was called flag; designed in Florence, the pattern consisted of small insignia in vivid colors. In Europe it was particularly marketable, and especially so, when

\textsuperscript{7}Richard Glazier, *Historic Textile Fabrics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 63-64.

\textsuperscript{8}Balsle, *Ciba Review*, I, 965-966.
dyed purple.\textsuperscript{9} It was not, however, until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that silk fabric became a leading textile product.\textsuperscript{10}

The Medici had controlling capital invested in two silkshops in 1433; their partners at that time were Peiro de Domenica Corsi and Francesco di Francesco Berlinghieri. Partners with the company of Lorenzo and Giuliano de Medici, \textit{setaioli} (silk manufacturers), changed several times from 1426 to 1430; one who remained with them for a long duration was Jacapo Tanaglia.\textsuperscript{11}

Wescher mentions a Medici-owned silkshop. He says:

"In the middle of the fifteenth century the Medici family was even more connected with the cloth trade, through Piero di Cosimo di Medici Company. The company comprised both a wool and a silk factory. Although Cosimo remained the real head of the commercial undertakings Piero (1416-1469) was the registered owner of the textile company."\textsuperscript{12}

The company of Lorenzo and Giuliano de Medici mentioned above may well have been a continuation of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[9] Legget, 225.
\end{footnotes}
company of Piero de Cosimo di Medici Company. Cosimo (1389-1464) placed the company in the name of his son Piero (1416-69). Two of Piero’s sons were Lorenzo (1449-92) and Giuliano (1453-78). In 1494 when the company of Piero di Lorenzo di Medici was taken over by Lorenzo di Giovanni Tornatuoni because the Medici were forced to leave Florence, it was still a prosperous business.13

Production of Silk Fabric

The operating of the Medici silk factories, as the woolshops, was left to a manager. The manager did the organizing and decision making. None of the silk manufacturing processes were done in the shop. The factory consisted of space to keep the raw silk until it was given out for manufacturing and shelves to store the fabric between operations.14

The manufacturing processes through which the silk passed were these: 1) reeling from the cocoon, 2) throwing, 3) boiling, 4) dyeing, 5) warping and weaving. The first process was generally done in the

13De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 168.
14Ibid., 168.
exporting country. In the fifteenth century, the best grade of silk came from Modigliana near Foenzo. Other suppliers of raw silk were Pistoriz and Abruzzi, in Calabria; as well as Sicily, Spain, Asia Minor, and China who also exported silk to Florence. Legget says that up until the sixteenth century Bologne had the only resources for "twisting and processing" silk filaments for weaving, and Florence, Venice and Genoa sent silk there to be prepared for weaving.\footnote{De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 186.} However, Basle says that the technical processes of the Florentine silk trade are shown by illustrations in \textit{Codex 69} of Biblioteca Laurinziana, which dates to 1487. His conclusions are that the illustrations show clearly that the silk spinning and weaving was done by children and women and the dyeing and finishing by men.\footnote{Basle, \textit{Ciba Review}, I, 965.}

A \textit{tocritorio} or \textit{filatorio} accomplished the next step, throwing. The machines were located along the Arno River, their source of power. De Roover describes the equipment as a stationary circular frame surrounded by a rotating circular frame. The owner of the machine worked for more than one employer because, as with some
steps in the manufacture of wool, one employer could not supply sufficient work. The silk was then boiled to remove the gum so the dye could penetrate the fiber. After this operation the silk was an off-white. To obtain a pure white the dyer exposed the fiber to sulfur fumes. If a color was desired, then the silk was dyed.\textsuperscript{17}

Color was important during the Renaissance. Cardinal Ippolito de Medici had his portrait painted wearing the gorgeous, colorful dress of an Hungarian nobleman. While Pope Julius II, the builder of St. Peter's church, wore a green velvet suit.\textsuperscript{18} The dyeing of silk was not only extremely important to the success of the finished fabric but was also a process which required much skill. Dyers of Florence were famous in the Middle Ages and their fame continued during the Renaissance period.\textsuperscript{19} The undyed silk was a yellowish green or orange hue. This fact had to be taken into consideration when adding the correct pigment to produce a desired color. To obtain a pure white, in great demand during the Renaissance, the raw silk was not only bleached by sulfurization but also exposed to "blueing". This was a

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{17}De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 168.


\textsuperscript{19}Basle, \textit{Ciba Review}, I, 966.
\end{footnotesize}
"lengthy and laborious process"; therefore pure white silk was very expensive.  

Weavers of silk were skilled workmen. The weaver was paid a piece rate determined by the time and skill required by the weave of the fabric. In the fifteenth century a weaver of brocade received twice the pay of a cashier in the Medici Bank. Because the weavers of brocade were few, their skills were in demand, and they enjoyed more prestige than other textile workers. A guild statute in 1429 stated that silk weavers were to be treated as masters, not workers.  

The presence of the silk weaver was a determinant factor in the success of the silk trade. "The plundering of the Guelph stronghold of Lucca by the Ghèbellines of Pisa in 1314" sent silk weavers to Florence. They not only transported techniques but also taught Florentines to imitate heavy, gold brocades of Venetians and Genoese. To further demonstrate the importance of the weaver in the industry, attention can be focused upon the inception of the silk industry in France. The production of silk fabric had not gained any

---

20 Deruisseau, Ciba Review, IV, 601.

21 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 188.

22 Basle, Ciba Review, I, 965.
prominence until about 1309 when Pope Clement V moved from Rome to Avignon and brought with him some Italian silk weavers.  

The silk weaver was not only the key to a prosperous silk industry but also to the exquisite motifs which developed. The execution of design was dependent upon technique. Townsend comments that, "A Florentine artist who designed textiles could be sure skill existed to carry out design." Deruisseau remarks concerning the advanced silk weaving techniques, stating that by the sixteenth century any pattern was possible and people preferred patterned silks and velvets.

To appreciate the skill of the silk weaver one needs only to look at the vast variety of weaves found in Renaissance fabrics. A part of a dalmatic dated in the first half of the fifteenth century is woven in a twill weave with yarn of blue silk. An extra weft of gold threads is secured by an extra warp of tan silk on the reverse side. Neither extra yarns is bound to the main


25 Deruisseau, Ciba Review, IV, 596.
fabric and it is therefore a "double cloth technique". 26 Brocades were numerous; many woven with a metallic thread. Metallic threads were "genuine metallic threads, guilded silver alloy wound on silk core". 27

Brocatelles and damasks were produced by the skilled Florentine silk weavers. The Detroit Institute of Art has an orphrey woven in an unusual brocatelle. The fabric woven in the latter part of the fifteenth century has a silk warp and weft with an extra thread of gold. For backing and strength an extra filling yarn of linen is used. 28 Damasks were popular during the second half of the fourteenth century, but their production continued into the next two centuries. 29

Although velvet was produced early in the thirteenth century, the most exquisite of Italian weaving culminated in a velvet called altabassee. The height of the pile of this fabric varied and it was woven upon a


29 Basile, Ciba Review, I, 966.
gold background.\textsuperscript{30} Not only skill was involved in producing these fabrics but also time. It took a weaver as long to produce one inch of patterned velvet as twenty inches of plain velvet.\textsuperscript{31} A concise statement by Glazier summarizes the silks of Florence: "Florentine fabrics are unique in technique of weaving and design.\textsuperscript{32}

Since gold and silver were used in the fabrics, manufacturers weighed out all materials given to the weaver. The weaver was responsible for any waste over one-sixth of an ounce per pound in a figured velvet, brocade and satin. Men were responsible for defective workmanship of work carried out by himself or family members. To further prevent silk workers from selling fabrics at reduced rates they were seldom reimbursed in fabric, but were paid in coin.\textsuperscript{33}

"Silk fabrics have been more closely connected with man than many of the art forms which are often termed major."\textsuperscript{34} This statement might explain the

\textsuperscript{30}Deruisseau, \textit{Ciba Review}, IV, 596.

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, 599

\textsuperscript{32}Glazier, 60.

\textsuperscript{33}De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 189.

\textsuperscript{34}Angelas County Museum of Art and The Detroit Institute of Art, 2000 Years of Silk Weaving, (Los Angeles: The Ritchie Press, 1944), V.
interest shown by Lorenzo di Medici in the silk industry. For history proclaims his great interest in the arts and Thurstan says, "With the help of Lorenzo di Medici the silk industry of Florence had 86 factories sending fabric to all parts of the world." 35

Merchants and Financeers of Finished Silk Fabric

The clientele for silk fabric was quite different from that of wool; therefore the handling of its sale differed to some extent. At the inception of the Florentine industry, silk was a luxury item. The church, the courts, and individual nobility were the recipients of the prized possession. The Medici banks or Medici agents were responsible for the sale of silk fabric produced in the Medici shops. The fabrics were sold to exporters as well as to the buyers mentioned above. The Venetians purchased Florentine silks for re-export to the Levant and the Balkans. Most of the silk, as was true of the wool, was sent on consignment. 36

The merchants or sellers of Florentine silk had a ready market. Weibel substantiates this in a quote


36 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 184-190. (60)
from a letter to the Venetians.

"In 1472 Benedetto Dei, chronicler of the city of Florence and a personal friend of Lorenzo de Medici, says, 'Concerning silk cloth and gold and silver brocades we make, have made and shall always continue making much more than your city of Venice, Geneva and Lucca together... Find out from banking houses of Medici and other, they do not trade in notions, such as sewing threads, fringes, rosaries, glass beads but brocades and ducats.'"37

In summary she says, "By the fifteenth century Florentine silks practically had a market monopoly on the silk trade of Northern Europe."38 Florence not only marketed her own fine silk but that of other Italian centers.

"Lucca used Florence in the role of a merchant. Under the influence of practical Florentine bankers, Lucca silk weavers discarded the usual household growing methods of Italy and organized silk growing on a 'merchant-capitalist' basis, which not only regulated supply volumes but also developed a system of marketing which when necessary could be amply financed."39

Since the Medici were influential bankers of this period they may very well have aided the above commercial endeavor.

38 Ibid., 24.
39 Ibid., 206-207.
Although agents were used by Medici to handle silk sales, members of the family were engaged as silk merchants. Canigian, an agent for Medici in France, reported that Antonio Medici "who had made himself unpleasant to both customer and to colleagues, was to be sent back". In 1681 the work of Giovanni Manetti is recorded as "selling silks in Pisa". The Medici silkshops had outlets and agents in major cities in Western Europe as well as Italy. Because of the varied activities in these cities as well as the political situation and the court itself, each major city will be discussed in relation to its relevance with the Medici silk trade.

Purchasers of Finished Silk Handled by Medici Agents

The papal court in Rome purchased velvets, and brocade for liturgical vestments. These fabrics were

40 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 183-190.

41 Richards, 231.

42 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 190.

43 Ibid., 190.

(62)
of "richly figured borders and braids wrought with gold".  44 A Statement of Assets from a Medici silkshop in 1497, designates the Rome branch as a most important buyer.  45

The Tavola Medici Bank was in all probability managed by Lorenzo's sons, Piero and Giovanni, and his nephew, Pierfrancesco. A portion of a ledger from this branch records a payment for raw silk in 1450.  46

The Medici agent in Geneva in 1420 focused his sales efforts upon the four fairs: Epiphany, in January; Easter; St. Peter in Chains, in August; and All Saints, in November. These fairs brought merchants from all Europe.  47

Italian courts were excellent sources of revenue. In Naples the Aragonese court was the recipient of two chests of velvets from a Medici agent. None of these were products of the Medici silkshops. To give customers a larger selection of merchandise it was sometimes

44 Basle, Ciba Review, I, 965.

45 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 193.

46 Ibid., 237.

47 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 279-281.
necessary to handle fabrics of competitors. The Sforza court of Milan was one of the best Medici customers. In fact the branch at Milan was founded at the request of Francesco delghi Attendoli, known as Sforza in 1452. He was Duke of Milan from 1450 to 1466. Pigello de Tola Portinari became manager of the Medici branch of Milan in 1434. He was so favored by Sforza that he became his financial advisor.

A profit and loss statement issued by the Milan branch of Medici in 1459 designates 7,104 florins as profits from the sale of silk and brocades, and 10,711 florins were credited as interest on a loan to the Duke of Milan. While in 1458 a company, "Cosimo's Sons e' Company", lists Milenese as customers of "raw materials and finished products, English wool, cloth, and especially silks and silkenware from the botteghe (shop) of Medici". The following quotes further indicate the extent of Medici control over the textiles purchased by the citizens of Milan and the Sforza court:

48Ibid., 191.

49De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 262-263.

50Ibid., 209.

in particular. De Roover says, "By far the most important line of business of the Milan branch was the sale of silks and its best customer was the Sforza court." Wescher declares, "In Milan, as a result of the services which they rendered to Francesco Sforza, the Medici held practically a monopoly in supplying goods to the ducal court." 

The friendly relationship which existed between Francesco Sforza and Cosimo can be seen by the edifice erected by Cosimo on a site given him by Sforza in 1455. The land was near the parish of St. Thomas. Cosimo built a palace designed by Mechelozzo. Two medallions, one for Sforza and one for Maria Visconte, are included in the decorations, while the walls are covered with Cosimo's emblem, a falcon holding a diamond and scrolls with the motto "Semper".

Because of the close economic relationship between London and Bruges, their relativity to the Medici silk trade will be considered together. Tommaso Portinari was the Medici agent in Bruges and London at the

52De Roover, _The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank_, 270.


54De Roover, _The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank_, 262-263.
time of the marriage of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York, in 1468. The London branch procured, for Edward IV, all the silks for his sister's trousseau and suite.\footnote{De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 190.} A listing of the losses from a galley, operated by Fortinari in 1473, records among other things, 7,000 or 8,000 florins of silk, satin, brocades and gold threads coming from Italy to England. Fortinari was an agent of Medici.\footnote{Wescher, \textit{Ciba Review}, IV, 1720.}

The people of Bruges preferred Lucchese silks and therefore it was difficult to maintain their patronage.\footnote{De Roover, \textit{The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank}, 190.} However, a statement by Wescher indicates they were able to surpass their competition.

"He (Giovanni Arnolfini, an important silk merchant) was principal purveyor of silk to Duke Philip the Good of Burgandy, (1419-1467) and farmed the import and export duties of the port of Gravelingen before the Medici enjoyed that privilege."\footnote{Wescher, \textit{Ciba Review}, IV, 1722.}

"Italian silk merchants maintained 'silk stalls' all over Europe and were especially active at Bruges in Flanders, the most important silk market north of the
The Lyons fairs were an important market for Italian silks. Louis XI issued an order which exempted all merchants except the English from tolls and customs on March 9, 1453. The Medici were with Francesco Sassetti and Company at this time. The balance sheet for this branch bank shows a large sum of money was at the disposal of Francesco del Tovaglia, "who was in charge of the sale of silk and seemed to run the business as a separate department". A new Medici agreement was formed in 1469. Lorenzo de' Medici and Tommaso Portinari formed a company. The object of the firm was stated as "to sell Florentine cloth, above all, silk brocade from the Medici botteghe as well as wool from England".

A manuscript of Medici (495) includes several correspondences from agents in Pera. An inventory of the possessions of Giovanni di Francesco Maringhi in Pera of the Firm of Medici and Company, made by Lorenzo

59 Legget, 205.
60 De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 295.
61 Gutfkind, 185.
62 Ibid., 185.
de Medici and Bernardo d' Antonio Medici, lists "lemon
damasks, blue satin, red velvet and satin and gold
brocade". 63 Maringhi in Pera wrote to Perio Venturi
on May 1501, "Make good use of the silk, because I tell
you it is one of the most beautiful qualities that has
been weighed in Brusa for the past two years." 64

63 Richards, 198.

64 Ibid., 67.

(68)
CHAPTER III. THE MEDICI INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO THE DESIGN OF RENAISSANCE FABRIC

Promoters of Artists Who Supplied Textile Design Fabric

Silk, the coveted fabric of the Italian Renaissance, was truly the "King of Fabric". It was silk that gave man the raw material necessary to create "variety, richness, perfection, undreamed of in any other fiber".¹ The designs used during the Renaissance were not new in themselves; even though they were built upon various peoples and cultures, a design typical of the period, and favored by a specific locality, did develop. In the thirteenth century textile designs of animals and birds brought into Lucca by the Sicilian weavers was gradually replaced by a large plant-floral type design. A breaking away from the traditions of the early Medieval is evident.

An example, a fourteenth-century Lucchese silk, in the Cleveland Museum of Art has a design of gold

metallic thread on an ivory satin background. The metallic thread is Cyprian gold, "a linen thread covered with a gilded membrane". Horizontal rows of large birds are flying, alternating with rows of smaller, four-footed animals which are looking upward. The animals are thought to be dogs or leopards; they are wearing collars; Arabic scrolls add further design. This Lucchese design was probably a composite of motifs: the birds and animals from the Byzantine, the Arabic scrolls from the Islamic culture.

The animal designs of the thirteenth century were, in the fourteenth century, combined with vines or an all-over pattern. At the inception of the floral design, the animal decreased and the naturalistic floral design increased; then finally, the animal was eliminated to leave only the floral motif. Such a transitional fabric is a diasper silk from Lucca, which combines pairs of gazelles with ovals, scrolls and palmettes. The Chinese influence can be seen in the

---


asymmetric design. As the break occurred from the
Medieval traditions, even the animals became more
naturalistic. Also, design was not applied in borders
to the extent to which it was in the former century.
Blazonry and striped effects were popular. The four-
teenth century design was bolder and larger, beginning
to approach the designs of the fifteenth century. A
fabric with small detached geometric designs or
"powdered" with the owner's personal badge or monogram
were frequently seen. This motif was also used in the
fifteenth century.

The pomegranate, which may have come from
Persia, in Italy began in Lucca, developed in Florence
and helped make the fifteenth century Florentine fab-
rics the most magnificent produced. The technological
developments which made this possible have been treated
earlier in relation to the weaver of silk. The brocades
and polychrome velvets lended themselves to the huge
Renaissance designs. A new naturalistic spirit emerged

---

4G. Underhill, "A Textile of the Fourteenth
Century", Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art,
(March, 1929), 51-52.

5Lucy Barton, Historic Costume for the Stage,
(1935), 142.

6Ibid., 143.

(71)
in the olive and artichoke as well as the architectural motifs. The artichoke and pomegranate were used in Florence simply for the sake of beauty and design. The Eastern symbolism of life and fruitfulness was unimportant.

The new designs omitted small detail; the plant was important, not the small tendrils. It is believed that the Chinese lotus flower finally came out as the Italian pomegranate of the Renaissance velvets. The fifteenth century produced "Ferronerie" velvet named from the ironwork of Florence, where the fabric was produced. Velvets were cut in two heights of pile to obtain some of the popular undulating diagonal of vines, stems, and leaves. The elegance of the sixteenth century emerged. The motifs used in the previous century continued in the silk, satins and velvets; although the motifs began to be more stylized, and geometric design

---

7 Margaret Breuning, "The Italian Renaissance in Textile Design", Art Digest, 26 (March 1, 1949), 17.

8 Glazier, 63-64.

9 Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Detroit Institute of Art, 2,000 Years of Silk Weaving (Los Angeles: The Ritchie Press, 1944), IX.

10 Breuning, 17
sometimes enclosed the stylized flowers;\textsuperscript{11} the all-over floral designs continued. Weibel says Renaissance designs are of two classes: architectural frame and floral.

The designs were outlined with gold and silver, sometimes done in lavish embroidery. A look at the origin of the beautiful motifs may account for some of their beauty. "Great painters contributed textile designs by adapting old motifs to novel compositions and these artistic efforts were converted by experienced weavers into costly silken fabrics which aroused universal admiration.\textsuperscript{12} Textiles and painted art were blood cousins in the Italian Renaissance."\textsuperscript{13} This was particularly true concerning Florentine textiles.

"... Florence demanded that her best artists should supply her textile craftsmen with a graphic image of her own humanist civilization."\textsuperscript{14} Because of the close

\textsuperscript{11}Adele Coulin Weibel, \textit{2,000 Years of Textiles} (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), 66.

\textsuperscript{12}Legget, 203.


\textsuperscript{14}Antonio Santangelo, \textit{trans.} Peggy Craig, "A Treasury of Great Italian Textiles" (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., no date), 42.
relationship between the major art, painting, and minor art, textiles, a general look at Florentine Renaissance painting is necessary.

As early as the fourteenth century Italian painting turned toward the Gothic style to express the emotion and realism. In Italy the combination of freedom in economic and political conditions not only created more dignity for the individual, but also an increased interest in the earlier accomplishments of man.\(^1\) Therefore it was in Italy and mainly in Florence that the Classical culture was studied.\(^2\) Cosimo de Medici lead the study, and by 1441 had 400 of these Classical manuscripts copied. These manuscripts became the nucleus for the present world-famous Biblioteca Laurentiana in the cloister of San Lorenzo in Florence. Architecture turned from the spirals and vertical Gothic cathedrals to the horizontal and Classical motifs of Brunelleschi and Donatello.\(^3\)

Renaissance textile design turned to the


\(^3\) De Wald, \textit{loc. cit.}, 181-183.
scrolls and the laurels of the Greeks and Romans and continued to combine these motifs with the naturalistic plants, flowers, and architectural motifs. A brocasselle woven during the later fifteenth century is described as a fabric with a "Donatello look". The artist was Baldovinette Andrea del Sarto. The orphreys of the early fifteenth century were frequently woven in gold thread, denoting the ethereal and unreal, whereas the later orphrey is described as "gold (color) twill on a red satin ground". 18

This strong resemblance between textile arts and painted works of art is even more evident in the embroidery designs. Florentines were not content with embroidery that was merely decorative but demanded architectural space created by perspective and a sense of movement. The embroidery designs as well as the paintings had textile values. 19

Medici-sponsored Artists

The wealthy of Italy during the fourteenth and


fifteenth centuries not only wanted art to meet an aesthetic need, but also to demonstrate their position to contemporaries and to ensure their fame. The Medici were no exception. They sponsored artists such as Donatello, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Fra Angelico, Luca della Robbia, Benozzo Gozzoli and later Botticelli and Michelangelo and many others less well known. 20 Some of these artists also supplied textile designs.

A Medici-sponsored artist who supplied textile designs was Antonio Pollajuolo. 21 In 1460 three large "and very famous" canvases were painted by Antonio Pollajuolo for the Medici Palace: Hercules strangling Antaeus, Taming the Lion and Destroying the Hydra. 22

Pollajuolo was not only a painter, sculptor and medalist, but also a designer of textile cartoons. It is interesting to note that in Brinton's biographical account, he mentions that on July 17, 1466 he joined the Silk Guild. Pollajuolo is one artist mentioned by

---


21 Hauser, 41-52.

22 Maud Cruttwell, Antonio Pollajuolo (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 61-86.
Deruissetteau as "designing for the great textile manufactories". He is further credited with originating the flower-vase pattern. In a discussion of a wreath design, the wreath is surrounded with a "large leaf" which "marks it Florentine velvet", and is further described as similar to "fruit in another textile designed by Pollajuolo". He designed elaborate patterns for weavers of Florence woven in silk and velvet. A part of a dalmatic is discussed by Phillips. He describes it as a Florentine velvet with a rich, red pile and a design of fruit-bearing vines. The fruit resembles fabric designed by Antonio Pollajuolo. Branting also mentions that in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Pollajuolo designed textiles. The workshop of Pollajuolo was like that of Verrocchio in that it united

---


27 Agnes Branting, Medieval Embroideries and Textiles in Sweden, (Stockholm: Almquistand Wiksells Boktrycker), 142.
crafts; one of these, a decorative designer. 28

Designs for embroideries were also a part of
Antonio Pollajuolo's contribution to the textile field.
He executed designs for San Giovanni in Florence. The
designs and the finished product were exquisite.
Vasari commends them as looking as though "they had
been painted by Antonio with a brush". 29 A series of
designs for embroideries were commissioned by a Floren-
tine guild, Arte della Mercatazia. Thirteen of the
twenty-seven designs are attributed to Antonio while the
rest, which are inferior, are attributed to his brother,
Piero, or assistants. This series are from the Life of
John the Baptist. 30

Botticelli painted first for Piero, father of
Lorenzo. The generosity of Piero de Medici toward
Botticelli is largely responsible for his success.
Piero's wife, Lucrezia Tornabuni, was also very friend-
ly and interested in the young painter. So closely was
Botticelli associated with the Medici that Young classi-
fies the periods of his painting in relation to the life


29 Ibid., 100-101.

30 Ibid., 104-115.

(78)
of the Medici:

"1. The period of rule of Piero il Gottoso -- 1464-69.
2. The period of rule of Lorenzo the Magnificent -- 1469-1492.
3. The time of Savonarola's dominance in Florence -- 1494-1498.
4. The portion of Botticelli's life after Savonarola's death -- 1498-1510."

An allegorical painter, his painting for the family reflects their situation at the time.\(^\text{31}\)

Botticelli did paint upon fabric. Vasari says, "He was among the first to make designs for banners and other ornamental hangings of the type called 'di commerso' because the colors do not fade and are as clear on one side as on the other." In 1475 he painted Giuliano de Medici's banner for a tournament. Indirect references to his relationship to fabric are made. He was "a painter of fanciful costumes", his special gift ..."to make precise outlines, adjust folds of the costume". Museums in Milan house precious embroideries for which Botticelli executed the drawings.\(^\text{32}\) Weibel mentions orphreys designed by Botticelli.\(^\text{33}\) Santangelo mentions a chasuble orphrey (no. 819) now in the Budapest Museum which is after the manner of Botticelli;

\(^\text{31}\)Young, 170-171.


\(^\text{33}\)Weibel, "Woven Orphreys", 96-99.
however the only textile, according to Santangelo, which can be said with certainty to be the work of the artist is the Milan hood.

Tapestries

Tapestries, during the Renaissance, were placed in equality with painting. 34 Many of the cartoons for tapestries were designed by skilled painters; therefore Italy was unexcelled in the production of tapestry design, although Brussels maintained supremacy in the area of manufacturing techniques. For example, when Leo X, the great Medici Pope, became Pope in 1513, he instructed Raphael to execute the cartoons for the Acts of the Apostles. They were sent to Flanders for weaving. This was prior to the establishment of the Medici tapestry factory. 35

Tapestries were of two types: the expensive ones, mentioned above, designed by an artist and made for a particular customer; and the inexpensive type


(80)
called **verdure** (greenery). In the latter type the all-over design could be cut without affecting the design. Therefore it was sold on consignment as was fabric.

Since the expensive tapestry was done for a particular person, the personality of the art patron was depicted by the tapestry. A good example of this is seen in the seventy-four pieces of tapestry made for Catherine de Medici. The theme is her widowhood, the only time of her life at which she could glory. Her marriage, a political maneuver between Pope Clement VIII (1523-34) and Francois I of France, was never happy. Henri II, her husband, loved Diane de Poiter. The tapestries showed her feelings at forty-two, a widow and a Regent of France, not only in the theme of a professional widow but also in small detail, such as Catherine in Chateau d'Anet, a chateau given to Diane by Henri II and later taken by Catherine.

The *Arazzeria Medicia*, the Medici tapestry factory, was established in 1546 by Cosimo I, Grand Duke of

---


38 *Ibid.*, 168-172. (81)
Tuscany. 39 The establishment was wrought as a result of envy of a tapestry manufactory at Ferrara owned by the House of d'Este. The factory continued until 1737. 40 After Cosimo, Duke Francesco I (1574-87) was the next owner of the factory. He was followed by Cosimo II (1670-1723). The last Duke, Jean Gaston, (1723-1737) closed the factory in 1737. 41

Design, not manufacturing of tapestries, was most important in Italy; however several notable weavers did work for the Medici. In 1546 Nicolas Karcher left his brother and their work in Ferrara to supervise the new Medici tapestry factory. He was soon joined by John Roost, described as "an outstanding weaver of Italy". The monogram of Karcher and the rooster on a turnspit of Roost became familiar signatures upon Florentine tapestries. 42 The cartoons woven by Roost and Karcher were designed by outstanding Italian painters. Agnolo Bronzino (1503-1572) began the designing of the cartoons for the History of Joseph.


40 Candee, 83.

41 Ackerman, 208.

42 Ibid., 206, 207 and Hunter, 215.

(82)
in 1540; these were completed with the help of Raffaello
dal Colle, called dal Borgo (d. 1490); Francesco d'Albertino il Baccheacco (1494-1557) designed a series of
Grotesque at the Uffizi. He is described as an out-
standing painter whose work showed beauty and deli-
cacy. At the death of Cosimo I in 1574, Johan van
der Stroaten or Stradano took over the direction of the
shop. The design and weaving deteriorated.

Cosimo II brought in foreign workers, one of whom
was Pierre Fe'vre, a Frenchman. He is called the best
weaver of the seventeenth century. He executed the car-
toons for Bathshea in 1663. Productivity continued
during the reign of Ferdinand I (1621-1670) and slowly
decreased until the factory closed in 1737.

Paintings

Renaissance painters showed textile design in
their paintings and since the Medici were such great
patrons of art, they were associated with many painters

---

42 Ackerman, 208 and Muntz, 224.
44 Caree, 86.
45 Hunter, 215, 216.
46 Ackerman, 209.  

(83)
of the day. Therefore in discussing the paintings showing textile motifs relating to the Medici, an attempt has been made to investigate those artists showing extensive design in their works of art and/or those more directly associated with the Medici.

Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494) has, perhaps, given us the best picture of Florentine society during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the highest peak of Florentine culture. He painted them as they dressed and lived, during the time of Lorenzo. Elaborate textile design is present on a robe over the coffin in the Funeral of Santa Fina (1475). The design is that of the pomegranate. In the Madonna Enthroned an elaborate carpet before the Madonna and a pineapple motif in the dress of one worshipper is evident. In the Birth of the Virgin Mary a young girl, thought to be Lodovica Tornabuoni, sister of Lorenzo, wears a beautiful gold brocade dress.⁴⁷

Benozzo Gozzoli paints the history of the Medici family in The Journey of the Magi, a fresco in the Medici Palace. This fresco is particularly interesting from the standpoint of textile design, not only because

there is much used but also because of its importance in the painting. The historic artist sought to have the viewer recognize the subject not only through an accurate portrait but by dress and symbols. Young points out these facts concerning the portrait of Emperor John VII. He is painted as he was seen during the processions in 1439. The crown on his head is that of an Eastern Emperor of Rome, unlike the shape of the crown of the West. He wears a beard, unlike the Florentine.

The dress of Lorenzo is that which he wore in the tournament in February, 1469. The "rubies and diamonds in his cap" as well as the "velvet embroidered surcoat" and the cape of "white silk edged in red". The seven Medici balls are significant. Because of the known accuracy of detail portrayed in the painting the textile designs in evidence can also be assumed to be an accurate reproduction of Renaissance textiles.\textsuperscript{48} The costume worn by the man on the black horse, to the right of Lorenzo, shows the ogival line which seems to be "etched like metal inlays in the thick pile of the silk fabric".\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} Young, 194-198.

\textsuperscript{49} "Silks of Painters come to Life", \textit{Art News}, 48, (March, 1949), 32-33.
Botticelli, whose association with the Medici has already been established, not only designed textiles, but also showed textile designs in his paintings. For Piero de Medici, he painted the Adoration of the Magi. Lorenzo, at the extreme left in a scarlet robe, kneels in the middle, Giuliano kneels at his right and Cosimo kneels at the child's feet, while Giovanni, brother of Piero, stands by the kneeling Giuliano. The robe of Cosimo is decorated with an elaborate design in gold. Botticelli's Minerva and the Centaur, believed by some to symbolize the political success of Lorenzo, shows the intertwined diamond rings, a Medici emblem in the dress of Minerva. This painting was done in all probability to show the victory of Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, and a Medici device, over the Centaur, symbolic of foolishness and the Pazzi family. Pazzi in Italian means crazy or a fool.\textsuperscript{50} Primavera and the Birth of Venus by Botticelli both show beautiful, naturalistic floral designs.

**Suppliers of Family-related Textile Motifs**

Palle (balls)

The balls were one of the earliest devices to be

---

\textsuperscript{50} Giulio Carlo Argan, trans. James Emmons, Sandro Botticelli (Skira, Switzerland, 1957), 8-12 and Chastel, 101-102. (86)
associated with the Medici. The origin of the balls is unknown. There are, however, several theories to explain their beginning. One explanation is that the early Medici were apothecaries and they used pills on their coat of arms. 51 Young says this is a fable that may have been started in two ways: Giovanni, the eldest son of Cosimo, chose two doctors for patron saints and was therefore pictured with them in paintings. The French started the story because of their dislike for Catherine de Medici, married to Henri II. If the balls on the Medici coat of arms were pills, this proved she was not royalty. Young supports his theory by saying the Medici can be traced 200 years before Giovanni di Bicci and they were merchants and bankers. 52

The number of spheres and their significance changed as the years progressed. The cluster of three discs became associated with the money-lender as Cosimo and his agents touched almost every European city. The client who could not read the language found his way to the Medici establishments by the sign of the golden balls. This device is still used by the pawnbroker


52 Young, I, 20.
today. Giovanni is credited with the origin of the three balls denoting a money-lender.

The eleven balls were altered by various family members. Giovanni di Bicci used eight balls (Fig. 3, Page 97). A Tuscan shield of seven or eight red balls on a gold field was used by Cosimo (Fig. 4, Page 97), seven by son, Piero, and six by grandson, Lorenzo. Louis XI of France permitted the lilies of France to be added to one of the balls and Piero changed one of the balls from red to blue and stamped it with the *fleur-de-lys*. As members of the Medici family rose to the rank of cardinal and pontiff, the balls were combined with the key of St. Peter and the pope's tiara.

Not only the number of the balls was altered but also the color changed with the owner. One of the seven balls was changed from gules, which means a red shown in black and white by vertical lines, to azure as well as adding the *fleur-de-lys* mentioned before. Lorenzo continued to use one blue ball and five gules or red.

---

53 Warren, Cheney, 56.
54 Sheldon, VII.
55 Ibid., VIII and Young, 185.
56 Marquand, 4 and Warren, Cheney, 184.
57 Marquand, 217, 219.
58 Ibid., 4.
The Cleveland Museum of Art has two fifteenth-century velvets which seem to be related to the Medici balls (Page 91 and Page 93). The red balls of the colorful velvet are on a gold background (Plate I, Page 91). A similar motif is used in another fifteenth-century velvet (Plate II, Page 93). Mrs. Weibel, in her book, 2,000 Years of Textiles, classifies the above mentioned textiles as Syria or Asia Minor. However, she does mention that if they are associated with the palle Medici they are then Florentine. The March, 1944 Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art pictures Plate I with the following notation ... "so-called Medici velvet with seven balls". 59 Mr. Phillips discusses a Florentine velvet with a central motif of balls in a two, three, two relationship separated by pairs of vertical lines. He says:

"A dazzling Florentine polychrome velvet makes a central motif of the Medici arms-balls on a shield -- in Mosaic-like pattern in red, green, blue and yellow against white." 60 (Fig. 2, Page 93)

59 Gertrude Underhill, "2,000 Years of Silk Weaving", Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, No. 3, (March, 1944), 38.

PLATE I

Fifteenth-Century Italian Velvet
used by permission of
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Dudley P. Allen Fund
PLATE II

Fifteenth-Century Italian Velvet
used by permission of
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchased from
the J. H. Wade Fund

(92)
A much later fabric (Plate III, Page 97) in the Detroit Institute is discussed in relation to a possible heraldic emblem. Mrs. Weibel says, "If the bunch of twenty-five pellets is not merely grapes but Palle Medici, a device of grand duke of Tuscany," the fabric may have been made in relation to a marriage of the house of Austria. A kneeling cupid offering a crown and the jewel on a chain would indicate a marriage. The double-headed eagle with the lions is an emblem of the arch-house of the emperor Ferdinand II which took place June, 1608. The fabric is classified as late sixteenth century.

A tapestry, Millefeurs with Medici Coat of Arms, 42.824, in the Cleveland Museum of Art, has two large shields with five red roundels and one blue on a pale yellow field; therefore the likeness is to that of the crest of Pierc or Lorenzo. The tapestry is done in blues and reds and covered with flowers except for the narrow border and the two large Medici shields (Fig. 6).

The dotted damask, a motif used on fabric of this period, is said to have come from the original eleven Medici balls.\(^\text{62}\) Branting, in summary after discussing

\(^{61}\text{Weibel, } 2,000 \text{ Years of Textiles, 144.}\)

\(^{62}\text{Warren, Cheney, 56.}\)
several Medici motifs, says, "Velvets and brocades bearing the well-known palle of the Medici arms known from times past are to be found with foreign collections." 63

63 Branting, 142.
PLATE III

Late-Sixteenth-Century Italian Velvet

Courtesy of

the Detroit Institute of Art
PLATE IV
Palle of Medici

Figure 1

Figure 4

Figure 2

Figure 5

Figure 3

Figure 6

\(^a\) Phillips, Art News, No. 20 (1951), 167.
\(^b\) Young, 59, 147, 189, 334

(98)
Diamond Ring

Piero de Medici chose, for his personal crest, the falcon holding a diamond ring (Fig. 7, Page 102). Because of his early death, this motif is not seen to the extent that is the diamond ring or the three or four interlaced diamond rings, the personal crest of Lorenzo (Fig. 8, Page 102), according to Young, 64 and the emblem of Cosimo, according to Floerke and Palliser. The latter believes the rings with the feathers was the crest of Lorenzo 65 (Fig. 9, Page 102). The meaning of the diamond was "not yielding to fire or blows, signifying indomitable strength"; while the ring signified the duration of strength, "eternity". 65

The emblems associated with the Medici, even though they were first used by a particular family member, were certainly used by other family members long after the death of the originator of the crest. 67


65 Floerke, Die Modere der italienischen Renaissance, 32, cited by Agnes Eranting, Medieval Embroideries and Textiles in Sweden, 142.

66 Young, 186.

67 Marquand, 234.
diamond ring motif was used along with other Medici devices on the tabernacle which Piero built by permission of the Calimala (merchant) guild of Florence in 1448. Marquand says, "On the rear of the tabernacle is a medallion of marble displaying Piero's individual emblem, the falcon holding a ring ..." 68

An early sixteenth-century medallion (Fig. 10, Page 102) combines the emblem of Salimbeni and Medici emblems. The diamond ring is effectively combined with other Medici emblems and the Salimbeni poppies. The medallion is believed to commemorate the marriage of Bartolommea di Andrea de Medici and Alexandro di Leonardo Bartolini Salimbeni; however another marriage took place between the families, that of Giowenco di Giuliani de Medici and Giovanni di Stefano Bartolini. 69 The emblems of Leo X, a Medici, were incorporated on a pavement before the altar. One of these is a "diamond azure resting on foliage". 70

A green satin fabric (Page 110) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art combines the Medici ring and the Perussi pears. The fabric was probably woven for the

68 Ibid., 3.
69 Marquand, 219.
70 Ibid., 234.
marriage of Verano Peruzzi and Laudonia de Medici. Although a date for the wedding is not given, Lanai, the father of Laudonia, was made magistrate in 1469 and Laudonia was his youngest daughter. The marriage therefore was probably early in the sixteenth century.71

Several beautiful Italian fabrics (Plates VI-XI, Pages 103-108) are pictured in Branting's book, Medieval Embroideries and Textiles in Sweden. The single Medici diamond ring can be seen in Plates VIII (Page 105) and IX (Page 106) respectively, taken from her book. The single ring shown in Plate VIII (Page 104) is used at the tip of a larger design combined with other motifs. Plate VI (Page 103) shows the ring combined with a new variation of the pomegranate. The interlaced diamond rings, in Plate XI (Page 108), are positioned almost identically in a drawing, "Private Crest of Lorenzo" (Fig. 8, Page 102).72

71 Branting, II, 212 and notes taken from the files of M. M. A. on fabric, No. 46.156.116.

72 Young, 308.
PLATE V

Medici Emblems

Figure 7a
Fierro's Private Crest

Figure 9a
Crest of Lorenzo

Figure 8b
Private Crest of Lorenzo

Figure 10c
Medici and Salimbeni Insignia

aPalliser, 170.
bYoung, 308.
cMarquand, 220.
(102)
PLATE VI

Ring With New Pomegranate Variation

Ska Church, Sweden

(103)
PLATE VII

Ring With Thistle Motif

Valley Church, Sweden

(104)
PLATE VIII

Ring, in a Huge Renaissance Design

Tillhör Prof. Andreas Lindblom
Owned by Prof. A. Lindblom, Stockholm

(105)
PLATE IX

Ring, Encircling Pomegranate

Skallmeja Church, Sweden
PLATE X

Flaming Branches

Company of Merchant Tailors, London

(107)
PLATE XI

Flaming Branches and Rings Entwined

Museum für Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte, Lübeck

(108)
PLATE XII
Sixteenth-Century Italian Satin
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fletcher Fund, 1946

(109)
Feathers

The three peacock feathers were used by Cosimo to signify "three cardinal virtues he most admired": prudence, temperance, and fortitude.\textsuperscript{73} The ring with the feathers is a device linked with Lorenzo.\textsuperscript{74} Lorenzo placed three feathers with the ring; the feathers were green, white and blue. \textit{Semper}, sometimes combined with the ring and feathers, "implied the love of God exists, the virtues -- faith, hope and charity, indicated by white, green and red -- were always to be found".\textsuperscript{75} This emblem is seen combined with the Bartolini poppy pods (Fig. 10, Page 102). The Medici feathers were placed in the area before the altar by Leo X, 1518. The three feathers used here were red, white and green with a pale blue background.\textsuperscript{76} The Medici feathers are used on fabric shown on Page 118. The brocaded leaves are in silver thread, wound on red and green and blue silk, showing a similarity in color to the Medici device mentioned above. The fabric is believed to have been

\textsuperscript{73}Young, 186.
\textsuperscript{74}Branting, 143.
\textsuperscript{75}Palliser, 170.
\textsuperscript{76}Ibid., 234.
made for Pietro de Medici (1471-1503), son of Lorenzo. Pietro reigned from 1492-1494.77

Flaming Branches

Another Medici device used in the fabric just mentioned is the crossed branches with ends flaming. This emblem is that of Piero; his motto, "In viridi teneras exurit flamma nudullas" ("The flame eats out the tender pith in the green (branch)").78 This emblem was also used by Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano, and continued by Piero, eldest son of Lorenzo (1492-1519), who became Duke of Urbino.79 During this time, Florence was a gay, delightful place to Piero. The emblem was chosen to express his temper and his pursuits (Fig. 11, Page 113).80 This device sometimes referred to as the burning tree trunk can be seen in several fabrics discussed and pictured by Branting. Plate X (Page 107) and Plate XI (Page 103) show this device used as a textile design. The device is also

77 Notes from file on fabric 46.156.70, M. M. A.

78 Ibid.

79 Notes from file on fabric 46.156.70, M. M. A.

80 Marquard, 3.
described as a "laurel wreath with branches aflame".\textsuperscript{81} Another early-sixteenth-century Florentine textile, a satin, is woven with the flaming log motif (Plate XIV, Page 116).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{plate_xiii.png}
\caption{Motto and Flaming Branches}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{a}Felliser, 170.

\textbf{Semper}

Cosimo, Piero and Lorenzo all used the \textit{Semper} motto. It was used early in 1447, in the tabernacle built by permission of the \textit{Arte de Calimala} (guild of the merchants) under the direction of Piero.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., 220.
\textsuperscript{82}Young, 205.  (113)
It appears again in the courtyard of Dicomano, built about 1515,\textsuperscript{83} as well as under Piero's and Lorenzo's crests. Semper's meaning always is clearly seen on fabric in Plate \textit{X.V} (Page 118).

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid.}, 308.
PLATE XIV

A Sixteenth-Century Florentine Satin
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Gift of Bashford Dean, 1911

(115)
PLATE XV

A Late-Fifteenth-Century Florentine Brocade
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fletcher Fund, 1946

(117)
Grand-Ducal Crown

Cosimo I earned the title of Duke of Tuscany and the right to wear the Grand-Ducal Crown in 1569 in recompense for political conquests rendered to the Pope, Pius V. The document, now in the Riccardi Palace in Florence, "stipulates the design for the crown by a drawing on the lower part of the Papal Bull". 84 Hayward quotes from Moreni for an accurate description of the crown: "A rayed crown of the ancient kings, decorated in front with a red lily, the device of the Florentine Republic, and further, on the inside of the circlet, there was to be inscribed in perpetual memory of the occasion, Pius V." 85

The Victoria and Albert Museum houses a drawing of the "Crown of the Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany". This was in a collection of jewelry which belonged to the Santini family, who were jewelers and goldsmiths of Florence. Although there is some uncertainty concerning when this drawing was executed, there is no doubt


85 Domenico Moreni, Della Solenne Incoronazione dell Duca Cosimo Medici Florence (1819), XXXVI, quoted by Hayward, Ibid., 509.
that it is a drawing of one of the crowns of the Medici Grand Dukes. Hayward believes it to be a drawing to show the appearance before or after an alteration was made. Such a change occurred in 1661 and 1766. At the earlier date, the circlet of the crown contained pearls and later in 1766 these were replaced with rubies. The style of the crown was also altered. The crown of 1569 was without arches, while Giangastone, successor of Cosimo III, is pictured on coins with an arched crown; therefore another crown was probably made in 1744.86

Two seventeenth-century brocades are believed to possess a motif of the Grand-Ducal Crown, worn by several Medici. One piece (Plate XVIII, Page 126) combines the crown with acorn and oak leaves. The latter is the emblem of the della Rovere family. The bowknot used on the fabric (it's visible on the piece shown) is believed to symbolize the union of the two families. Grand Duke Ferdinand II de' Medici married Vittoria della Rovere in 1634.

Another fabric with these motifs is shown in Plate XIX, Page 128, another seventeenth-century

86 Hayward, 310.
Italian brocade (the bowknot not visible on the piece shown). During the reign of Ferdinand II de' Medici and Vittoria, the ducal palace, now the Pitti Palace, was expanded. Although the ceilings of the state apartments were decorated to commemorate the discoveries of Galileo, the rooms of Vittoria were decorated with her family coat of arms and badge. Therefore these fabrics may have been used for the re-decoration or for the wedding, itself.\(^\text{87}\) Whatever its exact use, there can be little doubt that this fabric is directly related to the Medici; even though crowns were not uncommon motifs for this period the Florentine lily in the middle indicates that particular crown.\(^\text{88}\) The resemblance is striking in the woven fabrics mentioned above and the drawing of the Papal Bull (Fig. 15, Page 123).

The crown was not only a textile motif but it was also woven into tapestries. Two tapestries, showing the two styles of the crown, are now in the R. Galleria Degle Arazzi, Florence (Plate XVII, Page 124).\(^\text{89}\) The crown also found its place in the Medici arms along with the famous palle (balls) (Fig. 14, Page 123).

\(^{87}\) "An Interesting Brocade", Needle and Bobbin Bulletin, XII, No. 1, (1928), 31.

\(^{88}\) Ibid. and Young, II, 297, 298.

PLATE XVI

Grand-Ducal Crown
of Tuscany
Figure 14\textsuperscript{a}
Arms of Medici Grand Duke With Crown Above Palle

\textsuperscript{a}Young, II, 308.

Figure 15\textsuperscript{a}
Papal Bull, 1569, Showing Design for Grand-Ducal Crown of Tuscany

\textsuperscript{a}Bunt, Connoisseur, CVII, 119.
PLATE XVII

Ducal Crowns in Tapestries
PLATE XVIII

Seventeenth-Century Italian Brocade

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Roger Fund, 1920

(125)
PLATE XIX

Seventeenth-Century Italian Brocade

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Roger Fund, 1920

(127)
CHAPTER IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Examination of available literature concerning the Medici indicates an extensive sphere. Members of the family touched almost every area necessary to textile production. They were controlling members of the great Florentine guilds related to fabrics: Calimala (The Merchant Guild), Lana (The Wool Guild), and Seta (The Silk Guild). They were directly associated with producing fabrics: silks, woolens, and tapestries. The greater involvement in the area of production was ownership rather than workmanship; however, Medici were involved in positions of less prestige; for example, Giuliano de Medici distributed raw wool to be spun and bought raw wool (Page 15) and Salvestro was probably a wool-carder (Page 34).

Greater Medici influence existed in relation to wool, as opposed to silk. The raw wool trade, particularly with England, controlled the English crown from the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century.

The Medici monopoly held over the dye industry through the control of alum begun with Cosimo and
continued through Lorenzo. Again in actual participation in the area, Raffaello de Medici was a dyer (Page 41).

The great merchant, Cosimo, was one of the most famous of the Medici merchant-bankers. The ability of the Medici as merchants, bankers or both seemed to make possible the capital necessary for the more significant Medici textile contributions. They or their agents acted as cloth merchants in almost every city of any size in Western Europe. They were agents for courts and popes, particularly in silk; therefore the greater influence in relation to silk was in the area of marketing finished silk fabric.

The wealth obtained in this way, also made possible the support of great Italian Renaissance artists who supplied textile designs.

Since textiles are a minor art, literature examined by the writer was primarily concerned with the contribution of the Renaissance artist in relationship to major arts. Concrete evidence in relationship to specific textiles designed by a particular artist is lacking; however authorities seem to agree that Renaissance painters contributed textile design and some of these artists were sponsored by Medici. Weibel indicates (130)
that Renaissance fabrics were made for particular patrons, and Santangelo in his book, Great Italian Textiles, includes colored plates of Italian textiles designed by artists. The Medici devices were incorporated in textiles. To determine whether the extent of contribution was greater or smaller than that of other wealthy Renaissance families, a similar examination would have to be made in relationship to their family devices used upon Renaissance fabric.

The late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries seem to be the period indicated by most authors examined as the zenith of textile design and production in Florence. All the fabrics referred to in the study except those which bear motifs of the Medici Grand-Ducal Crown are of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The fifteenth century was a century of art in industry when the greatest painters and sculpturers of the day, perhaps of all times, became goldsmiths, jewelers, engravers, as well as textile designers. It is also interesting that in a discussion of how designs seen in paintings of silk are used in silk today, that of the three selected -- Fra Angelico, Botticelli and Benozzo Gozzoli -- all were associated with the Medici and the latter two, to a great extent. As was pointed out, the concentration of influence in relation to production and marketing fabric was
also the fifteenth century.

After the greatest period of Medici influence in relation to textiles had passed, and the Medici were grand dukes and popes, they were still involved with textiles. The tapestry factory was started in the sixteenth century. Also in this century a Medici wool enterprise was begun in England, and Basle says soon after this time a wool was important in Italy only if imported from England. The Medici Grand-Ducal Crown was used on fabrics in the seventeenth century. Not until the early eighteenth century was the tapestry establishment of the Medici closed.

The second purpose of this thesis, that of assembling the information regarding the Medici and their relationship to textiles into an accessible form, will make the study of this family possible for the student of historic textiles and will therefore continue or stimulate interest in the Medici family. The beautiful fabrics -- satins, damasks, velvets and brocades -- popularized in the Renaissance are used today. Contemporary fabric designers are inspired by the beautiful motifs and colors used in Renaissance fabrics as well as paintings of these fabrics. The influence derived from the Renaissance and Medici fabrics continues in our world of textiles, both in production and design.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


(134)


Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Detroit Institute of Art. 2,000 Years of Silk Weaving. Los Angeles: The Ritchie Press, 1944.


(135)


Palliser, Mrs. Bury. Historic Devices; Badges and War-Cries. London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1870.


(136)


Articles and Periodicals


Francesco, de Milan. "Guild Emblems and Their Significance". Ciba Review I (September, 1938), 400-421.


"Honoring the Medici". Art Digest 13 (May, 1939), 19.

"Italian Renaissance Influence in Textile Design". Art Digest 23 (March 1, 1949), 17.


"Medici: Exhibition in Baltimore". Art Digest 14 (October, 1939).


"Florentine Velvet". Metropolitan Museum Bulletin 29 (September, 1934), 157.

"Art in Silk". Art News Annual XX (1951), 172.

"Renaissance in Baltimore; Art of the Medici Family". Magazine Art 32 (November, 1939), 653.


Townsend, G. "Fifteenth Century Italian Velvet". 
*Boston Museum Bulletin* 29 (August, 1931), 63-5.


_______. "Textiles of the 14th Century". 
*Cleveland Museum Bulletin* 16 (March, 1929), 51-52.

_______. "A Textile of the Fourteenth Century". 

_______. "2000 Years of Silk Weaving". 
*Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* No. 3 (March, 1944), 38.

Weibel, A. "Woven Orphreys; 15th Century Florence". 
*Detroit Institute Bulletin* 15 (March, 1931), 96-9.


"300 Years of Medicis". *Art Digest* 14 (October 15, 1939), 18.

"300 Years of Medicis: Exhibition in Florence". *Art Digest* 14 (October 15, 1939), 18.