



Florence and "I Medici" Story: From Fascism to Globalization

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Abstract

The TV series about the Medici aired for three seasons (2016-2019) on RAI 1, the most "important" channel of the Italian public RAdiotlevisione Italiana and still considered "generalist."

The production of the tv serie(not coincidentally Italian-American) is a "bet" of the Lux Vide production company and Frank Spotniz (former screenwriter and creator of The X-Files and The Man in the High Castle). The idea of keeping these two producers together is not trivial: Lux Vide was created by Ettore Bernabei, a former general director of RAI (between 1961 and 1974), born in Florence and very close to the city, who founded his own production company in 1992 exploiting - also and in part - his ties as a former member of the Christian Democratic Party, with the Church.

This TV series (which has created an inducement in terms of tourism, book sales - most of them non-scientific - and more) can only be read starting with two feature movies (which harken back to some nineteenth-century literary productions).

In particular, one of the earliest films about the Florentine family is Lorenzaccio, a 1918 Italian silent film directed by Giuseppe De Liguoro. The film was based on Alfred de Musset's play of the same name, and the movie made in 1935, Lorenzino de' Medici, a 1935 film directed by Guido Brignone (1886-1959), was inspired by the events that really happened in Florence in the first half of the 16th century and were already described in the play but twisted the meaning of the first film.

In the TV series, I Medici therefore recomposes in part the story told by Fascism (and its legacies with the "small homelands" present in pre-unitary Italy) and in part by the Republic: the Medici are the synthesis of "Tuscan-ness" (albeit fake and used to sell its brand in the world) but also of a democratic ideal (only partly verisimilitude) that has to reckon with the "lure of power" (so dear to more current TV series such as House of Cards). Also interesting is the reference to a Catholic Church as the founding heritage of the "Jewish and Christian" set-up of the West (as recalled by the former mayor of Florence and former Italian prime minister, Matteo Renzi); a reading already superseded by the re-branding of the figure of the "Moor" that



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through the short film that recounts, in a multi-ethnic version, the (alleged) African origins of Alessandro de' Medici (2022).

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