This study explores the collecting activity of the Medici family from its rise to prominence in the early fifteenth century to its expulsion from Florence in 1494. By drawing on original documents and a wide range of secondary literature, the book describes the means by which the Medici assembled their art, and places the collection within the broader context of the family’s social commitments and dynastic aspirations. The activities of the household’s principal members are examined, as are the contributions of non-family members. Artistic iconographies are elucidated as expressions of a particular though evolving ethico-political outlook, and the collection as a whole is understood in relation to the Medici’s ambition to define themselves as Florence’s leading citizens. The book takes measure of the consequences of the Medici’s activity on the history of art by suggesting that their initiatives stimulated the production of independent works of art and forested a new form of critical reception. A catalogue raisonné further documents the many extraordinary works collected by the family.

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