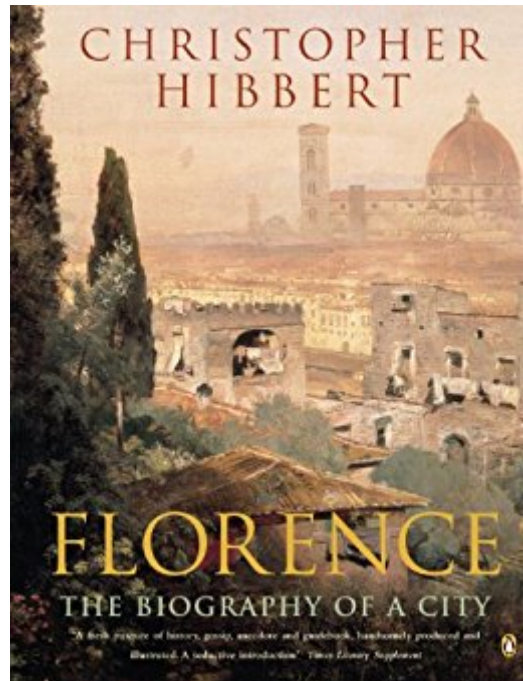




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Florence: The Biography Of A City



Synopsis

This book is as captivating as the city itself. Hibbert's gift is weaving political, social and art history into an elegantly readable and marvellously lively whole. The author's book on Florence will also be at once a history and a guide book and will be enhanced by splendid photographs and illustrations and line drawings which will describe all the buildings and treasures of the city.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I chose this rating because this book is the ideal companion on a visit to Florence. Even without visiting Florence, it is a wonderful trip. It's written with ease and affection and just enough detail and it covers all aspects of life through the history of Florence. There's one on Rome which I am reading and loving. This is the way to read and enjoy history.

I read this after several trips to Florence. A good read that tells the story of a great city. Loved all the pictures, especially older maps and paintings, because so many buildings are still there hundreds of years later.

Very good survey of the development of the city from its Etruscan and Roman roots. Excellent illustrations. A very readable text.

The prolific Christopher Hibbert was memorialized at his death as the quintessential popular historian, responsible for a wide variety of well-researched, highly entertaining works. I really enjoyed his one-volume account of the rise and fall of the Medici, the best introduction I know of to the subject. This book too is a breezy, readable, and concise account of the rise of Florence from its obscure Roman days through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Much of the Renaissance material is necessarily a rehash of the Medici book, but with a wider scope and a guidebook's attention to individual buildings, treated in great detail in the very useful appendix. What inspired my only 3-star rating for this otherwise excellent book is the author's descent into shameless gossip-mongering and nationalistic myopia in the post-Medici section of the book. I've long wanted to know what happened to Florence after its Golden Age, but this book chooses to focus far too much on individuals in its treatment of 18th - 20th C. Florence, and far too little on long-range trends, historical overview, and thoughtful analysis. If Hibbert is to be taken seriously, Florence after the Medicis was notable mostly for being a playground for the English idle rich, whose colorful scandals, dinner parties, and bon mots give him no end of pleasure in describing. I really threw up my hands when even his account of the grim years of fascism and the Second World War feature prominent descriptions of British hostesses and husbands; I really wonder what a native Florentine might make of this perspective on Italian history seen as mere background for the adventures of globe-trotting Brits (with a few Yanks thrown in for good measure). This is popular history as an excuse for name-dropping, a good bet for attracting a mass audience, but hardly a serious attempt at, as the subtitle promises, "A Biography of a City."

Very boring

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