



# The Richest Man Who Ever Lived: The Life and Times of Jacob Fugger

*Greg Steinmetz*

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Jacob Fugger lived in Germany at the turn of the 16th century, the grandson of a peasant. By the time he died, his fortune amounted to nearly 2 percent of European GDP. Not even John D. Rockefeller had that kind of wealth.

Most people become rich by spotting opportunities, pioneering new technologies, or besting opponents in negotiations. Fugger did all that, but he had an extra quality that allowed him to rise even higher: nerve. In an era when kings had unlimited power, Fugger had the nerve to stare down heads of state and ask them to pay back their loans - with interest. It was this coolness and self-assurance, along with his inexhaustible ambition, that made him not only the richest man ever but a force of history as well. Fugger helped trigger the Reformation and likely funded Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe.

The ultimate untold story, *The Richest Man Who Ever Lived* is more than a tale about the richest and most influential businessman of all time. It is a story about palace intrigue, knights in battle, family tragedy and triumph, and a violent clash between the 1 percent and everybody else.

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