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PROJECT

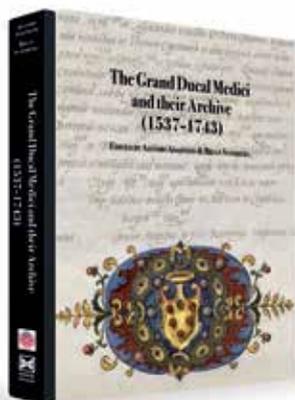
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HARVEY MILLER PUBLISHERS

An imprint of Brepols Publishers

The Grand Ducal Medici and their Archive (1537-1743)



Edited by
Alessio Assonitis & Brian Sandberg

220 p., 4 col. ills, 33 b/w ills,
220 x 280 mm, 2016,
ISBN 978-1-909400-34-4,
€ 85 / \$111.00 / £72.50

Publication scheduled for Autumn 2016

The Grand Ducal Medici and their Archive offers a unique window into early modern Florentine society through an exploration of the archives of the Medici ruling family. Teeming with circa three million letters, the archival collection of the Medici grand dukes housed at the Archivio di Stato in Florence chronicles the culture and history of Europe and beyond, across a span of over two hundred years. The letters of this collection, known as the *Mediceo del Principato*, embrace a great variety of themes including diplomacy, art, medicine, food, science, and warfare. Since its contents originate from a court archive that served both the state and a ruling family, this collection comprises administrative, political, and financial correspondence, as well as more private and intimate accounts of the Medici themselves and their activity at court. At the same time, it would be a great misconception to assume that this enormous archival corpus pertains just to Florence or just to the Medici, given that the vast majority of these missives were written by ambassadors, agents, and informants stationed throughout Europe. This volume, *The Grand Ducal Medici and their Archive*, aims to unlock not only the complex structure of

the *Mediceo del Principato* but also the richness of its content. The sixteen essays address a variety of topics – book history, Ottoman relations, collections of New World artifacts, medical history, gender studies, and material culture – all with direct reference to the Medici grand duchy. The original research that supports these studies was drawn in part from the Medici Archive Project's online platform (BIA) for querying over 350,000 digitized and/or transcribed letters. Making use of these and other original sources, the essays in *The Grand Ducal Medici and their Archive* shed new light on the mechanisms and strategies that enabled Florence to emerge from decades of internecine conflict and diplomatic chaos in order to enjoy cultural and political prominence.

Alessio Assonitis (PhD Columbia, 2003) is the Director of the Medici Archive Project.

Brian Sandberg (PhD Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001) is Associate Professor of Early Modern European History at Northern Illinois University.

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Women Artists in Early Modern Italy Careers, Fame, and Collectors



Edited by
Sheila Barker

181 p., 50 col. ills, 23 b/w ills,
220 x 280 mm, 2016, HB,
ISBN 978-1-909400-35-1,
€ 85 / \$111.00 / £72.50

Publication scheduled for Autumn 2016

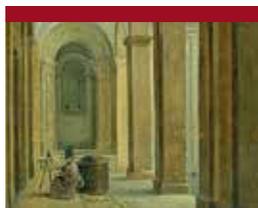
In ten chapters spanning two centuries, this collection of essays examines the relationships between women artists and their publics, both in early modern Italy as well as across Europe. Drawing upon archival evidence, these essays afford abundant documentary evidence about the diverse strategies that women utilized in order to carry out artistic careers, from Sofonisba Anguissola's role as a lady-in-waiting at the court of Philip II of Spain, to Lucrezia Quistelli's avoidance of the Florentine market in favor of upholding the prestige of her family, to Costanza Francini's preference for the steady but humble work of candle painting for a Florentine confraternity.

Their unusual life stories along with their outstanding talents brought fame to a number of women artists even in their own lifetimes – so much fame, in fact, that Giorgio Vasari included several women artists in his 1568 edition of

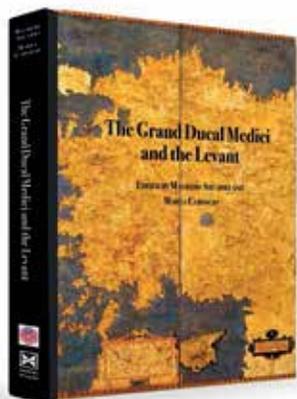
artists' biographies. Notably, this visibility also subjected women artists to moral scrutiny, with consequences for their patronage opportunities. Because of their fame and their extraordinary (and often exemplary) lives, works made by women artists held a special allure for early generations of Italian collectors, including Grand Duke Cosimo III de' Medici, who made a point of collecting women's self-portraits. In the eighteenth century, British collectors wishing to model themselves after the Italian virtuosi exhibited an undeniable penchant for the Italian women artists of a bygone era, even though they largely ignored the contemporary women artists in their midst.

Sheila Barker (Ph.D., Columbia University, 2002), directs the Jane Fortune Research Program on Women Artists at the Medici Archive Project.

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The Grand Ducal Medici and the Levant



Edited by
Maurizio Arfaioli & Marta Caroscio

200 p., 25 col. ills, 43 b/w ills,
220 x 280 mm, 2016, HB,
ISBN 978-1-909400-34-4,
€ 85 / \$111.00 / £72.50

Publication scheduled for Autumn 2016

For over two centuries (1532-1737), the Medici, as dukes of Florence and grand dukes of Tuscany, ruled over a western Mediterranean state whose geopolitical sphere of influence was centered in Europe. The transformation of the House of Medici from republican “*primi inter pares*” of Quattrocento Florence to dynastic rulers occurred at the same moment when the Ottoman Empire emerged as an early modern superpower, polarizing Mediterranean politics. The Italian Peninsula became the stage where the cultural forces of the eastern and western Mediterranean converged. As a result, from the early days of their rule, the Medici grand dukes became enmeshed in a power dynamic that encompassed war, religion, diplomacy as well as economic interests and cultural exchange. This collection of essays sheds new light on key aspects of the complex relations between the Medici grand dukes and the Levant.

Maurizio Arfaioli (PhD, University of Warwick, 2002) is Senior Research Fellow at the Medici Archive Project.

Marta Caroscio (PhD, Università di Siena, 2008) is a former Senior Research Fellow with the Eugene Grant Research Program on Jewish History at the Medici Archive Project.

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