

The Grand Ducal Medici and Their Archive (1537–1743). Alessio Assonitis and Brian Sandberg, eds.

The Medici Archive Project 1. Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 2016. 222 pp. €85.

As the first volume in the series published under the aegis of the Medici Archive Project (hereafter MAP), this volume bears witness to the evolution and scholarly coming-of-age of the important archival database endeavor that traces its pathbreaking origins back to the 1990s, when it was led by Edward Goldberg. After nearly twenty-five years of research activity sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and with the development of technology made possible by crucial grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, this digital platform known as BIA provides students and scholars, free of charge, online access to a significant segment of the Florentine archival collection known as the *Mediceo del Principato*, housed at the Archivio di Stato in Florence. This collection, comprising circa three million letters, is essential for the study of the Medici duchy (and then grand duchy), this court being one of the primary international centers of politics, culture, and art of the early modern period. The research objectives established at MAP by Alessio Assonitis, its director since 2009, have resulted in the publication of this collection of essays, which represents the fruits of the investigations of sixteen former MAP fellows whose scholarship has already brought them international recognition. This volume presents research on diverse aspects of Medici and anti-Medici history, many of which are refreshingly original. As a case in point, the volume opens with Stefano Dall'Aglio. His contribution addresses the documentation regarding the ruthless European manhunt for Lorenzino de' Medici, guilty of assassinating, on the night of the Epiphany of 1537, the first duke of Florence, the "tyrant" Alessandro de' Medici. However, there was someone to whom this vendetta mattered far more than to new duke Cosimo I—the emperor Charles V.

Assonitis carries out an important and systematic study of Cosimo's personal library based on an inventory from 1553. This collection contained some 1,060 titles (mostly printed books and, to a lesser extent, manuscripts), comprising Greek and Latin classics and contemporary Tuscan texts and manuscripts. The subject matter of Cosimo's library ranged from philosophy, to medicine, to geography, to the natural sciences. Assonitis's analysis enables a reconstruction of the progressive intellectual formation of the man who founded the *stato nuovo*, and sheds light on his continued interest in print culture even after 1553 (evidenced by his nocturnal readings of Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia*) and his efforts to enrich the university library in Pisa. Other essays are dedicated to art history: Francesca Funis discusses the reuse of materials in Vasari's Florentine workshops; Roberta Piccinelli addresses artistic exchange between the Medici and the Savoy courts; and Lisa Goldenberg Stoppato traces Archduchess Maria Magdalena von Habsburg's patronage of painters. Additionally, there are contributions on topics that have received far less attention than grand political narratives and art historical debates; these include Piergabriele Mancuso's essay on Cosimo I's personal relation with

antiquities dealer Jacobiglio Ebreo, and several essays devoted to the social aspirations of women (see Elena Brizio, Maurizio Arfaioli, and Brendan Dooley).

Two chapters in particular partake in the growing momentum behind the recuperation (and re-vindication) of women's place in the history of the Medici grand duchy. In the case of Sheila Barker's chapter, women of the house of Medici are demonstrated to have been frequent protagonists in the fields of medicine and pharmacy, not merely as patrons and purveyors, but also as practitioners of both so-called domestic medicine as well as the more prestigious scientific medicine. In another notable chapter, Brian Sandberg compares the "regencies" of Maria de' Medici and Christine de Lorraine. His conclusions resoundingly refute the labeling of their rulership as a "Monstrous Regiment of Women," misogynistic propaganda that was first codified and disseminated in 1558 with John Knox's acrimonious diatribe. The book also contains essays that propel the reader across the Atlantic to survey the Medici court's interest in the New Indies (Lia Markey), or that direct the reader eastward to consider the Medici court's challenges in negotiating the intrigues and dangers surrounding the volatile succession of Ottoman rulership (Mark Rosen).

In conclusion, this volume is a kaleidoscope that, in each of its sixteen essays, deconstructs and recomposes our views on this society, offering multiple perspectives thanks to the variety and quantity of documentation that has been tracked down and pieced together according to a valid interdisciplinary methodology. Much of this documentation, naturally, is kept at the Archivio di Stato in Florence, which has collaborated since the outset with MAP's enterprise. One can only conclude from this volume that the recent international resurgence of Medici and anti-Medici studies owes a great deal to the initiatives of MAP.

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Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict. David Johnston, Nadia Urbinati, and Camila Vergara, eds.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. vi + 424 pp. \$50.

This collection comprises sixteen studies. Harvey Mansfield seems to undervalue the negative quality of necessity for Machiavelli: a prince should not, if possible, depart from good unless necessity makes him embrace evil (*Prince* 18.15). Giovanni Giorgini writes that Machiavelli "put the well-being of the state above the well-being of the individual," but for Machiavelli and his contemporaries *stato* meant "regime" or "dominion," not "the state" in modern terms, and in *The Prince* he never uses the term *politico*, which describes a good and unselfish political order in the sense of the common good (*vivere politico*); the purpose of politics was glory, as shown by the episode of Agathocles (*Prince* 8.10), not the common good. Gabriele Pedullà persuasively demonstrates that the sub-