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Grand Ducal Medici and their Archive (1537-1743)

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Commentaire : 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.

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