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The cultural importance of Florentine patricians

Goudriaan, E.J.

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Author: Goudriaan, Elisa Johanna

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6

The patricians' contribution to cultural events the Medici organised for public ceremonies and in honour of visiting guests

Introduction

The Medici created status in many ways, and one of them was its use of court ceremonies like marriage spectacles, the baptism of a new prince, memorial ceremonies, and festivities to honour a visiting cardinal, king, prince, or duke.¹²⁵⁹ All these ceremonies helped create a positive image of the Medici family and Grand Duchy for the Tuscans as well as at other European courts. The

¹²⁵⁹ Conrieri 2001: 43-52; Fantoni 1999: 265. Important persons who visited Florence in the first half of the seventeenth century were the Cardinals Montalto and Del Monte, (in 1595), the prince of Modena (in 1605), Prince Federigo di Urbino (in 1616), Prince Condé Henri II Bourbon (in 1623) and Prince Wladyslaw of Poland (in 1625). Important marriages that took place in the same period were:

- 1600 Maria de' Medici and Hendry IV of France
- 1608 Cosimo II de' Medici and Maria Maddalena of Austria
- 1617 Caterina de' Medici and Ferdinando Gonzaga of Mantua
- 1621 Claudia de' Medici and Federigo d'Urbino
- 1626 Claudia de' Medici and Archbishop Leopoldo of Austria
- 1628 Margherita de' Medici and Odoardo Farnese of Parma
- 1637 Ferdinand II de' Medici and Vittoria della Rovere.

Sources: Harness 2004: 256; Testaverde 2002: 126; Supino 1904: x.

high cultural and artistic level of the Medici festivities had to impress foreign ambassadors and rulers.¹²⁶⁰ In this chapter we illustrate the important role the Florentine patricians played in bringing these ceremonies to a successful conclusion. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that, although the patricians operated often 'behind the scenes', their activities were nevertheless of the utmost importance for the cultural success and social prestige of the Medici court in seventeenth-century Florence (1600-1670).

Thanks to the fact that the patricians were rooted firmly in all the religious, social, and cultural structures of the city, the Medici could always count on them when they needed people who could assist them in organizing and financing large-scale events like marriages, Carnival, and memorial ceremonies. And they trusted in this case not only on the individual patricians, but also on their extensive patronage networks, which included composers, musicians, actors, painters, and architects.

In the first two sections we see some examples of patricians who assisted the Medici in organizing events to honour visiting guests. Two important patricians who wrote theatre plays for these occasions were Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger and Ottavio Rinuccini. The last two sections illustrate the involvement of the patricians in the organization of marriages and memorial ceremonies.

6.1 Theatre plays in honour of visiting guests

6.1.1 Theatre plays in honour of Fakhr ad-Din

During the reign of Ferdinand I, the Medici tried to conquer the markets of the Near East and tighten their bonds with those territories. In 1598, they sent the patrician Neri Giral di to the Ottoman Empire to conclude a trade agreement and in 1604 Niccolò Giugni went to compliment the sultan of Morocco on his succession.¹²⁶¹ It was difficult to start commercial relations, because France and Venice seemed to have a trade monopoly on this region.¹²⁶² Cosimo II continued the policies of his father and decided to welcome guests from the Orient.¹²⁶³ One of them was the prince of the Druze population, the Lebanese

1260 Maria Alberti in her talk 'Il mondo arabo e la "scoperta" del teatro. Gli spettacoli medicei descritti da uno spettatore d'eccezione: l'emiro druso Fakhr ad-Din.' during the conference *I Medici e il Levante: culture e dialoghi tra Firenze e il Mediterraneo orientale (1532-1743)* which was held in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, 7 June 2013.

1261 Del Piazzo 1952. On Neri Giral di, see 2.1 Patricians as diplomats.

1262 Alberti 1997: 281.

1263 *Ibid.*: 283.

emir Fakhr ad-Din al-Maan (Fakhr ad-Dîne II 1572-1635), who was called Il Faccardino in Italian (fig. 1).¹²⁶⁴ He arrived in Livorno at 20 November 1613 and stayed two years in Tuscany with a retinue of sixty people.¹²⁶⁵ To be able to stay incognito he was allowed to live among Turkish and Levantine people in Livorno, where his different oriental customs would not be too obvious. The Medici paid for the whole stay of Fakhr ad-Din and his large retinue. Cosimo II invited Fakhr ad-Din to many court events and although he always came incognito, his different customs and way of clothing attracted a great deal of attention from Florentine courtiers.¹²⁶⁶

All the normal traditional feasts in those years were celebrated extra lavishly to honour the presence of the emir. On Fat Thursday 1614 (6 February) there was a tournament (*giostra al Saracino*) in the Via Larga (fig. 2), which was invented by the patrician Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger and was called *Disfida di Mandricardo re di Tartaria et di Medoro re di Cataio*. It was based on the poems of Ariosto and Tasso. The Grand Duke dressed up as the witch Medea while courtiers like Paolo Giordano Orsini II and the patrician Carlo Soderini appeared as protagonists from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Among the other masked participants were patricians like Piero Guicciardini, Bardo Corsi, and Vincenzo Salviati.¹²⁶⁷ Fakhr ad-Din watched everything from the windows of Palazzo Medici-Riccardi.¹²⁶⁸ A few days later there was a ballet choreographed by Agnolo Ricci and with music by Jacopo Peri, in honour of the birth of Prince Mattias de' Medici. After a battle three pairs of lovers danced together; each couple consisted of one Christian and one Moor, again based on the protago-

1264 Ibid.: 285. Thanks to the Tuscan representative Ippolito Leoncini Tuscany came into contact with emir Fakhr ad-Din, prince of the Druze in Lebanon. From 1598 on he ruled over the coast of Syria until Damascus, and his domains included many important ports like Beirut. Although Fakhr ad-Din was a member of the anti-Turkish party, Ali Giampulath, the Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I (1590-1617) accepted his independence without violence. Thanks to this peaceful period in his domain Fakhr ad-Din could leave it for a while. He feigned to go to Constantinople, but in reality went to Florence and was received in secret by Cosimo II.

1265 Alberti 1997: 285.

1266 Ibid.: 287.

1267 Solerti 1905: 77-78. Vincenzo di Antonio Salviati, marquis of Montieri, was married with Francesca Rucellai. Their son Antonio Salviati (born in 1617) married Caterina Strozzi. Carlo Soderini (1581-1621) was the father of Lorenzo Soderini (born in 1614).

1268 Alberti 1997: 289.

nists of Ariosto and Tasso.¹²⁶⁹ Their dancing together was meant to show Fakhr ad-Din that different people could live and cooperate easily together.¹²⁷⁰

With Carnival, on Shrove Tuesday (11 February) of the same year, another piece by Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger was performed, the *Ballo di Cortesia*, in the Sala della Comedia of the Palazzo Pitti. Jacopo Peri composed the music, Giulio Parigi designed the costumes, and Agnolo Ricci did the choreography. It was the final part of the theatre play *Il passatempo*.¹²⁷¹ Among the guests were the nuncio from Rome, the Venetian representative and many ambassadors. The emir Fakhr ad-Din was seated on a separate balcony with his wives.¹²⁷² The scenery consisted of several lakes, surrounded by villages and ruins. Behind the lakes were the sea, a forest, and a pasture.¹²⁷³ The play itself consisted of many personifications of concepts like Time, Pastime, Game, Dance, Gracefulness, Respect, Thoughts, and Friendliness. In the play Dance and Game offer to entertain Pastime with a ballet, and Dance orders Friendliness to search for courtiers to participate. The argument to persuade the courtiers had to be that Pastime had already entertained them many times. The courtiers agree to participate and then the ballet begins. The ballet consisted of Tuscan knights and Syrian women. The latter are picking flowers when they are assaulted by Turks. They save themselves by embarking in a small wooden boat and by accident arrive at a Tuscan beach where they meet the knights and dance with them out of joy to be saved. The Grand Duke played the role of one of the knights, together with Paolo Giordano Orsini II and others.¹²⁷⁴ After the ballet, Game confesses to Pastime that he wants to entertain him as well, but Pastime says it is time to eat and that they will do it another day. So now the play could be continued. When the play ended, the Grand Duke ordered his servants to serve a delicious breakfast for all the participants and spectators.¹²⁷⁵

1269 Solerti 1905: 80-81. All the female parts were played by men, but this time no patricians participated. The actors seem to be non-Tuscan courtiers, like the German Paolo Scerenga, Diacinto Pardini and the French Monsu' Monterichier. The dancing couples based on Ariosto and Tasso were Tancredi and Clorinda (Tasso), Rinaldo and Armida (Tasso) and Ruggiero and Bradamante (Ariosto).

1270 Alberti 1997: 291.

1271 Ibid.: 291-293.

1272 Solerti 1905: 81.

1273 Fantappiè 2003: 146.

1274 Solerti 1905: 82-83. Again it seems that the actors were non-Tuscan courtiers: Ferdinando Saracini, Girolamo Strassoldo, Niccolò Montalbano. This time the parts of the women are danced by real women, because this was a ballet and not a play. The women seem non-Florentine, like Contessa San Secondo and Polita Agostini.

1275 Solerti 1905: 84.

One year later the traditional feasts remained still very elaborate, because of the continuing presence of emir Fakhr ad-Din.¹²⁷⁶ On 26 February 1615 (Fat Thursday) there was a masked banquet followed by a ballet, the *Ballo di donne turche*, during which sixteen courtiers dressed up as Turkish men and women in traditional Turkish costumes richly decorated with gold and silver. In the background, there was a scenery with the port of the Arno and the city of Florence. The story was that a group of Turkish women came to Florence to ask the Grand Duke for mercy for their husbands, who were enslaved by the Tuscan knights of Santo Stefano.¹²⁷⁷ The meaning of the ballet was to glorify the clemency of the Grand Duke, even for his enemies.¹²⁷⁸ The iconographic programme was invented by the patrician Alessandro Ginori, the music was by Marco da Gagliano, the choreography by Santino Comesari, and the costumes by the artist Jacopo Ligozzi, who also made sketches of the whole event.¹²⁷⁹ Some of the patricians who dressed up as Turks were Agnolo Guicciardini, Giovanni Martelli, Piero Strozzi, and Francesco Buontalenti. Patricians who danced the women parts were Alessandro del Nero, Tommaso Rinuccini, Lorenzo Strozzi, Leonardo Ginori, and Francesco Martelli. After the ballet at four o'clock in the morning, they all had breakfast together.¹²⁸⁰

What is remarkable is that emir Fakhr ad-Din made notes of all the feasts and theatre spectacles he saw in Florence.¹²⁸¹ The artistic genre of theatre was unknown to him in the non-representational Arabic world and his notes probably constitute the first description of theatre in the Arabic language. To describe his astonishment about the magnificence of the Florentine plays, scenes, special effects, dances, and costumes he even invented new words or used old words in new meanings, since there was no vocabulary in his language to describe theatre performances. About the scenery used during the *Ballo di Cortesia* written by Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, he writes for example:

In una grande sala c'è una casa in cui mettono qualcosa sullo sfondo per dare l'impressione che ci sia qualcosa in lontananza, con un bagliore rossastro simile

1276 Fantappié 2003: 151.

1277 This was made public by Maria Alberti in the cited presentation in 2013. Just before printing this thesis I discovered that after this talk, she published a book about Fakhr ad-Din, which was presented in 2014.

1278 Ibid.

1279 Fantappié 2003: 148.

1280 Solerti 1905: 96-97.

1281 This was made public by Maria Alberti in the cited presentation in 2013. The information in this paragraph is based on the text of her talk.

al bagliore del cielo. E delle persone camminano in mezzo a questo bagliore belli come angeli. (...) E sul pavimento di questa casa hanno fabbricato anche una spirale di legno! E la coprono con una stoffa del color del mare e quando questa spirale gira, si vede la stoffa [muoversi] come le onde del mare. E su questa si muove una barca con al di sotto delle ruote e da sopra si vede come se andasse sul mare.¹²⁸²

Fakhr ad-Din describes everything very literally and with great admiration, whereas a spectator who was familiar with the theatre would write less about the mechanical aspects of these machines and more about the narrative aspects of the play.

With all these new experiences, Fakhr ad-Din left Florence in 1615 to return home. Although before his departure everything in his domain had been peaceful, after his return some of his ports fell to the Turks. Grand Duke Cosimo II organized a mission to reconquer the ports for the Druze population. His idea was that by helping the emir, in future the Tuscan ships should have some support from the Levant in their fight against the Turks.¹²⁸³ After Cosimo II's death the emir remained in contact with the regents and Ferdinand II. He asked them to send Tuscan architects, engineers, and farmers, because he wanted to modernise his country. His close contacts with the Christians, however, made him suspicious in the eyes of sultan Murad IV Ghazi who in 1635 had him beheaded.¹²⁸⁴ In Lebanon he is remembered even today as one of the first people to foster a feeling of national identity.¹²⁸⁵

6.1.2 Theatre plays in honour of other important guests

Apart from Fakhr ad-Din, there were of course many other important guests who visited Florence. Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger and Ottavio Rinuccini often wrote dramatic works to entertain them. In 1604, Rinuccini's opera *La Dafne* was performed in Palazzo Pitti, on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of Parma, Ranuccio I Farnese.¹²⁸⁶ One year later Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger wrote the melodrama *Il Natal d'Ercole*, which was performed in the Casino Mediceo, in honour of the visit of the Duchess Virginia d'Este and her

1282 Cited from the written version of the above cited talk, which was sent to me by Maria Alberti.

1283 Alberti 1997: 294.

1284 Ibid.: 300.

1285 'Fakhr ad-Din II'. In Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved August 6 2012 from: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/200611/Fakhr-ad-Din-II>

1286 Fabbri, Zorzi & Tofani 1975: 87.

sons Alfonso and Luigi d'Este from Modena.¹²⁸⁷ In November 1608, the play *Il giudizio di Paride* (The Judgement of Paris), written by Buonarroti the Younger on the occasion of the marriage between Cosimo II and Maria Maddalena of Austria (October 1608) was reprised in honour of the visit of the Duke of Mantua.¹²⁸⁸ In 1611, during Carnival, the Medici decided to repeat *La Dafne*, in the house of Don Giovanni de' Medici, this time in honour of the visit of Cardinal Gonzaga.¹²⁸⁹ For the same Cardinal they staged *La Tancia*, written by Buonarroti in 1611 and performed in the Casino of Don Antonio de' Medici.¹²⁹⁰ In 1613 there was a 'barriera' of three days in honour of the prince of Urbino, written by Alessandro Adimari, Giovanni Villifranchi, Ottavio Rinuccini, Andrea Salvadori and the young Giacinto Andrea Cicognini.¹²⁹¹

Sometimes not a theatre play, but a ballet was organized, for example on 10 October 1616, when a ballet was organised for Prince Federigo of Urbino. Niccolò dell'Antella was one of the masked knights who took part in the ballet.¹²⁹² For Carnival in 1618, the play *L'Andromeda liberata* by Jacopo Cicognini was organised in the city palace of the patrician Rinaldi family in honour of the visit of Archduke Leopold of Austria.¹²⁹³ Cosimo Lotti made the scenery and the play was recited by a group of patricians.¹²⁹⁴ Alessandro Adimari wrote an official description of this visit and the events organized around it.¹²⁹⁵ Finally, in 1634, Buonarroti the Younger wrote the melodrama *La Siringa*, in honour of the visit of Prince Alexander, the brother of the Polish King Ladislaus, which was performed in the Salone dei Cinquecento of Palazzo Vecchio.¹²⁹⁶

1287 Cole 2011: 198; Fabbri, Zorzi & Tofani 1975: 87.

1288 Blumenthal 1973: 98.

1289 Fabbri, Zorzi & Tofani 1975: 89. In 1613 there was a ball in the palace of the patrician Lorenzo Strozzi. It was called *Mascherata di Selvaggi* and was written by Ottavio Rinuccini. In the play a queen was taken prisn by wild humans and satyrs and asks to be liberated by the Grand Dukes. Apart from the Grand Ducal couple, many patricians danced in this play, like Ottavio Rinuccini himself, Agnolo Guicciardini, Lorenzo Strozzi, Alberto de' Bardi, Alessandro del Nero, Francesco Martelli & Tommaso Guadagni.

1290 Cole 2011: 274. The performance for Cardinal Gonzaga took place on 15 June 1611. The first performance took place on 25 May 1611, in the Casino of Don Antonio as well. Cole 2011: 272.

1291 Mamone 2003b: 283.

1292 Gargiulo 1999b: 72-74.

1293 Mamone 2003b: 217.

1294 Ibid.: 226.

1295 Ibid.: 283.

1296 Cole 2011: 344; Vliegenthart 1976: 11; Fabbri, Zorzi & Tofani 1975: 105. The play was performed on 29 February 1634.

6.2 The patricians' contribution to the organisation of memorial ceremonies

The memorial ceremonies of 1598, 1610, and 1612

In the sixteenth century the Medici had successfully strived for their recognition as Grand Dukes by other rulers, including the Pope and the Emperor. In the seventeenth century, the period discussed in this dissertation, Medici rule was recognized across all of Europe as well as by the patricians in Tuscany. Nevertheless, the Medici's political influence was decreasing and they invested considerable energy to retain their influence and demonstrate their power to other rulers. One way to impress other European princes and create the image of powerful rule was to organize large-scale cultural events, and many Florentine patricians contributed to these efforts.

Every ceremonial event was an opportunity for the Medici Grand Dukes to propagate their political messages and define their position in the international order. These ceremonies therefore had large importance. The fact that in 1598 Ferdinand I organised a funeral ceremony for Philip II was a demonstration of the loyalty of the Medici to the Spanish Kingdom.¹²⁹⁷ Officially, the Medici were vassals to the Spanish crown and therefore they were expected to pay homage to the deceased king.¹²⁹⁸ The official description of the memorial ceremony of Philip II, written by the patrician Vincenzo Pitti, was destined for a large public of Italian and foreign princes and rulers, some of whom were really looking forward to receiving the description. An agent from Milan for example, Alessandro Beccaria, wrote that Don Guglielmo di San Clemente (the Spanish ambassador at the Imperial Court) had asked him for the details of the ceremony. After the description was sent to Milan, Don Guglielmo wanted to show it to Margaret of Austria (the future bride of Philip III and future Queen of Spain) and to the Archduke.¹²⁹⁹ After that, many people in Milan wanted to read the description and plans were made to publish it there as well.¹³⁰⁰

The memorial ceremony in 1598 contained twenty-four *chiaroscuro* history paintings, painted in grisaille, under the artistic supervision of Lodovico Cardi, known as Cigoli.¹³⁰¹ The patrician Marcello Adriani delivered an oration during

¹²⁹⁷ Menicucci 1999: 43.

¹²⁹⁸ See Borsook 1969a: 92, 96. The ceremony was held at 12 November 1598.

¹²⁹⁹ The Archduke must be Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria from 1576 until 1612.

¹³⁰⁰ Menicucci 1999: 45, see appendix.

¹³⁰¹ Borsook 1969a: 95. Thirteen of the twenty-four scenes have survived.

the ceremony.¹³⁰² The façade of San Lorenzo was hung with black cloth and adorned with mourning figures and skeletons. Personifications of the four quarters of the globe were set at the sides of the façade.¹³⁰³ In the nave arcade there were twenty-two life-size skeletons that alternated with the painted canvases on which were represented scenes from the life of Philip II.¹³⁰⁴

The memorial ceremony glorified not the Spanish Kingdom, but the personal virtues and qualities of Philip II. This was a different policy than that followed in Naples, where the focus was on glorifying the kingdom.¹³⁰⁵ Of course Ferdinand I wanted to glorify his own Grand Duchy in some way and he did not want that to be overshadowed by another kingdom. Often the memorials had a double message, the commemoration of the deceased king, but also the glorification of the Medici Grand Duke, although this could not be too obvious.¹³⁰⁶

In the sixteenth century the Grand Dukes had chosen men from the higher ranks of the government or court iconographers like Vincenzo Borghini (1515-1580) to organise marriages and memorials.¹³⁰⁷ In the seventeenth century they chose courtiers and men of letters from the cultural academies like the patricians Lorenzo Strozzi, Jacopo Soldani, Lorenzo Magalotti, Pietro Vettori, Alessandro Adimari, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, Giovanbattista Doni, and Simone Berti.¹³⁰⁸ These men supervised the financial and artistic parts of the events, contracted artists, assisted at rehearsals, and were chiefly responsible for the iconographic programme.¹³⁰⁹

Seventeenth-century iconographers often followed the sixteenth-century examples of Borghini as models for the programmes and decorations.¹³¹⁰ In

1302 Other orations and descriptions that were written by patricians in the seventeenth century: Cosimo Minerbetti wrote orations in honour of Ferdinand I in 1609, Emperor Rudolf II in 1612 and Cosimo II in 1621. See Testaverde 1999b: 134. Niccolò Arrighetti wrote the official orations at the death of Cosimo II and Maria Magdalena of Austria. See Dolci 1962: 308-09. Ferdinando di Pietro Bardi (1610-1680) wrote a funeral oration for Francesco de' Medici (a son of Cosimo II) in 1634 and three years later he wrote the *descrizione* of the marriage of Ferdinand II Vittoria della Rovere. See Magini 2000: appendix.

1303 Borsook 1969a: 96.

1304 *Ibid.*: 97. The subjects of the canvases are described by Borsook 1969a on pages 101-105.

1305 Menicucci 1999: 46.

1306 Cappelletti 1999: 18-21.

1307 Borghini was the court iconographer of Cosimo I. His specialization was philology of antique texts and texts from the Italian Due- and Trecento. See Belloni 2002; Richardson 1994: 155-56.

1308 Testaverde 1999a: 77. Lorenzo Strozzi (1595-1671) was chamberlain of Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici and Lorenzo Magalotti was *gentiluomo di camera* of Grand Duke Ferdinand II.

1309 *Ibid.*

1310 Vincenzo Borghini and Giorgio Vasari organised together the commemoration ceremonies for Henry II of France (1559), Lucrezia d'Este (1561) and Michelangelo (1564). See Mamone 2003b: 112.

1574, Borghini invented the preparatory designs for the memorial of Cosimo I de' Medici.¹³¹¹ On these designs we see black curtains with the arms of Cosimo I and between them skeletons in four different poses - Grief, Mercilessness, Inevitability and Inescapableness of death - with their own epitaphs. Along the nave were placed medallions with the glorious deeds of Cosimo I.¹³¹² Borghini did not design the whole memorial programme for Cosimo I all'antica, he also based some aspects on the ceremony for Charles V in Brussels in 1558. There was a catafalque, a stepped pyramid with the Grand Ducal crown, a globe and a cross, all decorated with ephemeral paintings, sculptures and inscriptions.¹³¹³

The memorial ceremony for Henry IV in 1610 was organised by the patriicians Niccolò dell'Antella and Agnolo Niccolini, among others.¹³¹⁴ The supervisor of the decorations for the memorial ceremony was Giulio Parigi, who was chosen as 'Ingegnere et architetto'.¹³¹⁵ Twenty-six new canvases in chiaroscuro illustrating several events from the life of Henry IV were painted. Among the painters were Poccetti, Bilivert, Jacopo da Empoli, Matteo Rosselli, Giovanni Nigetti, and Nicodemo Ferrucci, although which artist was responsible for which painting is not clear for every canvas.¹³¹⁶ Sixteen of the canvases survived.¹³¹⁷ During the ceremony on 15 September, the San Lorenzo church was decorated with curtains to which these scenes from the life of Henry IV were attached.¹³¹⁸ This time Parigi invented skeletons of gigantic proportions to hang between the painted scenes (fig. 3).¹³¹⁹ Borsook suggests that these giant skeletons were a sign of the fantastic and bizarre characteristics of the art and theatre in the period of

1311 Belloni 2002: 97. The designs are in BNCF Filze Rinuccini 23.3, c. 73v.; *Disegno della cappella ardente San Lorenzo* BNCF Nuovi acquisti 1025, c15r.

1312 These were based on Borghini's 1566 designs for thirteen medals commemorating the Grand Duke's greatest achievements in the fields of public building, engineering and military works, and good government. It had been the largest glorification cycle of medals made since antiquity. On the obverse of these medals was the portrait of Cosimo I and they were all casted by Pier Paolo Galeotti in 1566. No other dukes or even popes did have such an elaborate glorifying cycle in medals at or before that moment since antiquity, but after Cosimo I many dukes used his medals as a model for their own glorification. See Van Veen 2006: 115-116; Belloni 2002: 73-77.

1313 Belloni 2002: 98, 102. The pilasters were decorated with pleurants (mourning figures), as was the case in the chapelle ardente in Brussels in 1558. On the chapelle ardente of Charles V as a model for future ceremonies see Schraven 2006.

1314 Borsook 1969b: 202.

1315 *Ibid.*: 204.

1316 *Ibid.*: 207.

1317 *Ibid.*

1318 Testaverde 1999a: 75; Acidini Luchinat 1999: 11-13. For a description of the painted scenes, see Borsook 1969b: 212-230. About the iconography of commemoration ceremonies: Schraven 2006.

1319 Borsook 1969b: 210.

Cosimo II's reign.¹³²⁰ Francesco Venturi delivered an oration.¹³²¹ Jacopo Soldani wrote about this ceremony to Buonarroto the Younger, who was then in Rome: "...il Signor Venturi orò con lode dell'universale e sodisfazione de' padroni, i quali sono restati ancora molto appagati delle nostre fatiche..."¹³²²

The decorations for marriage and memorial ceremonies differed from each other, in part because there was a lot more time to prepare the sceneries for marriages.¹³²³ With memorials they often had to improvise the decorations and create new things in a short time by commissioning many artists simultaneously. They recycled a lot of things – even clothes worn for marriage services were died dark for funerals. Furthermore there was a repository in Florence for stage designs and skeletons, which were used again and again. To complement these recycled objects with new things, they used many makeshift materials like plaster, wood and papier- mâché, which could be manufactured fast, were easy to modify and not so heavy to replace. Often they hired both well-known and lesser-known artists, because everything had to be finished in time and the message was more important than the artistic quality of the paintings. Because of the transient character of the decorations, those that are still extant are heavily damaged, because it was never the idea to preserve them for hundreds of years. Sometimes the painters had to paint with *tempera magra* as the first layer, without preparing the underlying layers and therefore the colours and representations on the paintings have often become faint. To store them they even folded the canvasses, therefore the creases are damaged the most. The temporary scenes for memorial ceremonies were often monochrome. The ones for the ceremony of Henry IV were painted not with *tempera magra*, but with oil paint and are therefore better preserved.

The official description for Henry IV's memorial was written by the patrician Giuliano Girdali and included many engraved illustrations by Alovio Rosaccio. This description was sent through the whole of Europe, for example to the Barberini in Rome, as we know from the accompanying letter of Girdali ("mi sono arrischiato a mandarle la descrizione dell'esequie fatte dal Granduca, al Re di Francia...[...] scusando l'imperfezione della scrittura, con la sua solita benignità voglia approvare, e ricever quello").¹³²⁴ Girdali's account and espe-

¹³²⁰ Ibid.: 231

¹³²¹ Bietti 2010: 18.

¹³²² Cited by Cole 2011: 529. 18 September 1610.

¹³²³ This paragraph is based on Bietti/Scudieri 1999: 16-17.

¹³²⁴ BAV Barb Lat. 6464, ff. 82-83 Letter of Giuliano Girdali to accompany his description when he sent it to the Barberini, 16 November 1610, see appendix.

cially the illustrations stimulated the taste for pictorial biographies at several European courts. It was an ideal mixture of history and apotheosis that served to glorify early modern rulers and helped to legitimize their power.¹³²⁵

In 1612 Giovanni Altoviti (see chapter 5, fig. 3) wrote the official description of the commemoration ceremony for Margherita of Austria, organised by Niccolò dell'Antella.¹³²⁶ Dell'Antella supervised the decorations together with his brother Donato dell'Antella. For the iconographic programme and the whole organisation they were assisted by Francesco Nori (later bishop of San Miniato al Tedesco) and the patrician Cosimo Minerbetti (see chapter 5, fig. 7).¹³²⁷ Cosimo II intentionally chose members of the cultural academies as supervisors, because this time the memorial ceremony was meant to honour a woman and they had to invent a new iconographic programme, which became the model for the glorifying of later women rulers like the Medici regents. The drawings were rendered by Antonio Tempesta, who came from Rome to make them. They were included in the description of Giovanni Altoviti. Tempesta took two assistants, Jacques Callot, who made the engravings of his drawings, and Raffaello Schiaminossi.¹³²⁸

6.3 The patricians' contribution to the organization of marriages

The marriages of 1600 and 1608

Ferdinand I was conscious of the fact that art, culture, politics, public events, and religion were all linked and that all had their ceremonial needs.¹³²⁹ But of course he could not organise all these events on his own. Like many of his successors he employed patricians to bring marriage ceremonies to a successful conclusion, but he was still hesitant to list them in the official recounts of the marriages.¹³³⁰ He was afraid it should seem too obvious that he needed their help to express his prestige.

¹³²⁵ Borsook 1969b: 231.

¹³²⁶ Gargiulo 1999b: 72-74. *Essequie della Sacra Cattolica e Real Maestà di Margherita Regina d. Margherita d'Austria Regina di Spagna Celebrate dal Serenissimo Don Cosimo II Gran Duca di Toscana. Descritte da Giovanni Altoviti, Florence 1612.*

¹³²⁷ Testaverde 1999b: 134. Minerbetti was archdeacon of the Florentine cathedral, who wrote orations after the death of Grand Duke Ferdinand I in 1609, Emperor Rudolf II in 1612 and Grand Duke Cosimo II in 1621.

¹³²⁸ Bietti 1999: 140-91.

¹³²⁹ Fantappie 2001: 203.

¹³³⁰ At the occasion of his marriage with Christina of Lorraine in 1589, Ferdinand I already involved several patricians in the organisation. Giovanni de' Bardi was responsible for the iconography of the decora-

In the seventeenth century, his first opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the Medici family was the marriage between Maria de' Medici (the daughter of Grand Duke Francesco I) and Henry IV of France (fig. 4).¹³³¹ On the occasion of that marriage, in 1600, one of the first operas in history was performed, *Euridice*, written by Ottavio Rinuccini and dedicated to his fellow patrician Jacopo Corsi.¹³³² Ferdinand I had allowed the patricians to stage such an innovative play because Corsi had financed part of the marriage festivities and the dowry of Maria de' Medici.¹³³³ This financial support was very important from a political viewpoint, because with this marriage of a Medici princess to a French King, Ferdinand I could liberate Florence from overbearing Spanish domination.¹³³⁴ Henry IV continually increased his demands for the dowry, so for Ferdinand I this marriage was a financial risk. Corsi led the group of wealthy patricians who helped underwrite the dowry; together they paid 350,000 scudi in cash to the French King.¹³³⁵

In October 1600, when *Euridice* was performed in the rooms of Don Antonio de' Medici in the Pitti Palace, all financed by Jacopo Corsi, Jacopo Peri's original score was replaced by a composition of Giulio Caccini.¹³³⁶ Rinuccini's opera was not the great success the patricians had hoped for. The sceneries had not been finished in time and the public felt that the spectacle compared poorly to that of theatre pieces of earlier years.¹³³⁷ The public did not see the innovative elements of the piece.¹³³⁸ Still, it was important that Ferdinand I had allowed the patricians to stage such an innovative play. For the patricians, with their love for cultural experiments at the academies, this was a step forward in the evolution of opera performances. The Medici themselves contributed to

tive programme (together with the architect and stage designer Bernardo Buontalenti), as well as for the intermedii. The machinery used during these intermedii was reused for the marriages in 1600 and 1608. Raffaello Gualterotti, the father of Francesco Maria Gualterotti (the poet of the dithyrambs in chapter 4), wrote the descrizione. The textile for the liveries was delivered by fabrics of the families Strozzi, Salviati, Rinuccini and Guicciardini. See Saslow 1996: 13, 23, 25, 50, 72, 182.

1331 King Henry IV converted in 1593 to catholicism, which was a necessary condition for this marriage.

1332 Carter 1982: 83.

1333 De Caro 2001a: 37.

1334 Cole 2011: 185.

1335 The total cost of the dowry was 600,000 scudi, but the French had still a debt of 250,000 with the Grand Duke, which he could deduct. See Cole 2011: 185. In 1617, to make possible the marriage between Princess Caterina de' Medici and Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga, some patricians, among them Antonio Salviati (the father of Vincenzo), were chosen as warrants for the payment of the dowry. See Biagioli 1992: 83.

1336 Cole 2011: 187-88; Carter 1978/79: 50.

1337 Carter 1980a: 127.

1338 De Caro 2001a: 37.

the festivities with the theatre piece *Il rapimento di Cefalo* written by Gabriello Chiabrera.¹³³⁹

Another patrician who financed part of the festivities was Riccardo Riccardi and by way of thanks he was allowed to organise masquerades in the garden of his palace with music composed by Piero Strozzi.¹³⁴⁰ Riccardi was a man of letters with a large collection of statues, paintings, and books.¹³⁴¹ The plays that were performed in the garden were written by himself, and among the more important members of the audience were the Grand Ducal couple, Vincenzo and Eleonora Gonzaga from Mantua, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini and his retinue of Roman gentlemen, a couple of foreign princes, and finally the whole Florentine and Tuscan patriciate.¹³⁴² Some of the sceneries can be seen on a cycle of frescoes in the Sala degli Stucchi of the actual Palazzo Giuntini. Although the quality of the frescoes is low, it gives a very lively image of how spectacular these festivities were (figs 5 and 6).

Riccardi described his plans for the festivities in a report, and from his account we know that first there was a ballet in the *cortile* (courtyard), which was decorated with ten antique statues and 150 antique marble busts placed on consoles. Underneath the consoles were planks with famous paintings from the past centuries and antique bas-reliefs and inscriptions. After ten o' clock p.m. they moved from that cortile to another cortile (the garden-cortile), which was also decorated with statues, paintings, and antique marble statuary and had a view of the garden. On the garden-cortile a balustrade was placed where the important guests could sit. In the garden was a forest divided by a long avenue with orange trees to one side and cypresses on the other. From behind the balustrade appeared twelve peasant sons and daughters who carried a cart with gilded baskets full of sweets in the form of fruits. The peasants danced

1339 Fantappie 2001: 209. During the reign of Ferdinand I the court enlarged and court diaries were kept up to date. The most famous of these diaries are the ones written by Cesare Tinghi, *aiutante di camera* of Ferdinand I, Cosimo II and Ferdinand II from 1600-1625. From the diaries we know a lot about matrimonial festivities and Carnival activities. The first diaries are anonymous (or maybe written by a certain Giovanni del Maestro) and dated 1589-1606, 1589-1612 and 1589-1619 (ASF Guardaroba medicea, Diari d'etichetta 1-3). After these follow the diaries of Cesare Tinghi: *Diario di Ferdinando I e Cosimo II gran duca di Toscana scritto da Cesare Tinghi, suo aiutante da camera da 22 luglio 1600 sino a 12 settembre 1615*. These can be found in the Codici Capponi of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. The diaries of the years after 1615 are anonymous and preserved in ASF Miscellanea Medicea. On Gabriello Chiabrera, see section 2.2.3.

1340 Carter 1982: 92.

1341 Cinti 1997: 275. The manuscripts Riccardi collected in Gualfonda were later replaced to Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Via Larga and belong nowadays to the Biblioteca Riccardiana.

1342 Ginori Lisci 1953: 13.

a ballet invented by Riccardi himself and the musicians were hidden in the bushes and between the trees. While dancing, the peasants handed out all the sweets to the queen, the princes, and the gentlewomen. After this, there was a chase in which dogs chased after foxes, hares, wild boars, and deer.¹³⁴³ On the frescoes, the antique statues and orange trees can be seen very clearly. Riccardi also published all the texts of the songs that were sung during the event.¹³⁴⁴ This garden festival of a patrician was a forerunner of later festivals organised by the Medici in the Boboli gardens, where singing, dancing, and a chase were combined.¹³⁴⁵

The fact that patricians paid for part of the marriage festivities was not uncommon. In 1584, for example, patricians had paid part of the festivities for the marriage of Eleonora de' Medici to Vincenzo Gonzaga, but in most official treatises of the festivities the contribution of the patricians was not noted. In 1600, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger had to write the official description and for the first time he was allowed to mention the patricians' contribution.¹³⁴⁶ It was maybe one of the first signs that Ferdinand I really needed the patricians if he wanted to impress other rulers on a European scale. He needed to show that he was surrounded by circle of confident courtiers with magnificent palaces and gardens where they could receive and entertain guests. But Buonarroti had to include the patricians' financial contribution in such a way that it seemed that the patricians were allowed to demonstrate their unanimous support of and participation in the marriage events thanks to Ferdinand I's generosity and not because of his need.¹³⁴⁷

Ferdinand I commissioned Buonarroti to devote most of the description to the Medici contribution to the marriage, namely Chiabrera's play. Buonarroti

1343 Minicucci 1983: 109. Archivio Buonarroti A.B. 88, c. 231: 'Progetto del festino da farsi da Riccardo Riccardi nel giardino del suo palazzo, scritto come pare da lui medesimo, con versi da cantarsi in esso composti da lui e messo in musica da Piero Strozzi', see appendix. The patrician composer Piero Strozzi (1550-1609), not to be confused with the papal secretary Piero Strozzi (1569-1625), belonged to the circles of the musical academies of Giovanni de' Bardi and Jacopo Corsi around 1600. Strozzi composed several madrigals and one opera, *La mascherata degli accecati*, written by Ottavio Rinuccini and performed at Carnival in 1595. See Chiarelli 2003.

1344 Rime cantate nel giardino del Sig. Riccardo Riccardi con l'occasione di una festa quivi per la regina di Francia Maria de' Medici. In Firenze, per Domenico Manzani, 1600.

1345 Strong 1984: 97.

1346 Vliegenthart 1976: 9. Descrizione delle felicissime nozze della Cristianissima Maestà di Madama Maria Medici, Regina di Francia e di Navarra (Florence, G. Marescotti, 1600).

1347 Carter 1985b: 97.

had to omit a lot of text and names in the patricians' part.¹³⁴⁸ So Ferdinand I tried to outshine the patricians' contribution with his own.¹³⁴⁹ Despite this fact, in reality the political importance of the patricians' support was of the utmost importance. Thanks to the financial support of the patricians Ferdinand I was able to forge an alliance with France and in this way could remain independent of Spain and the papal State. In the same period there were many republican sentiments among the elite in Rome and De Caro suggests that Ferdinand may have been afraid that these sentiments - as articulated in works like Battista Guarini's *Trattato della politica libertà* (1599) - would take root in Florence.¹³⁵⁰ De Caro suggests that Ferdinand I tried to undercut such sentiments by letting them contribute to the festivities, and in this way increase the patrician's feeling of civic engagement and pride.¹³⁵¹ At the same time, by censoring much of Buonarroti's original text about the patricians' contribution, he made sure that the patricians were not glorified too much. In the official description the event in the garden of the Riccardi's for example was described only in four lines.¹³⁵²

In 1608, this policy had changed a bit. The official description of the marriage of Cosimo II and Maria Maddalena of Austria contained a whole list of all the citizens who had participated in the festivities, among them many patricians.¹³⁵³ During this marriage there were banquets, balls, masquerades, tournaments, a mock naval battle, horse battles, and theatre performances. The most important play this year was *Il giudizio di Paride*, written by Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, with innovative *intermedi*.¹³⁵⁴ To be sure that in this year the sceneries should be finished on time and that all the festivities should go well, the Grand Duchess contracted the three patricians Gino Ginori, Pietro de' Bardi and Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger to supervise

1348 Cole 2011: 191. Buonarroti also had to cancel all the names of the composers in his final version. Of the total of 45 pages, 17 were dedicated to the Medici play and only one to Euridice.

1349 Carter 1985b: 90-91.

1350 De Caro 2001a: 38.

1351 De Caro 2001b: 41.

1352 Solerti 1905: 25-26. Descrizione delle felicissime nozze della Cristianissima Maestà di Madama Maria Medici, Regina di Francia e di Navarra (Florence, G. Marescotti, 1600): the description of the event in the garden of the Riccardi's: 'Adi 8 detto, in domenica, la Regina con tutte le Altezze et eccellenze et S.A. con tutti e principi et il Cardinale andarno allo orto overo giardino dei Sig.ri Riccardi, fiorentini, in Gualfonda, dove qiuvi si fece caccie d'animali, correre di pali, di cocchi, musiche et simile altri spassi con gran gusto'.

1353 Carter 1985b: 99.

1354 Carter 1983: 89. Carter writes that in the famous opera *Orfeo* of Monteverdi a connection can be seen with the intermedi of Michelangelo Buonarroti de Jongere.

the organisation and preparations of the play.¹³⁵⁵ The actors Buonarroti, Ginori and Bardi intended to select were young patricians who were educated enough to understand the verses they recited, when they played the roles of gods and nymphs.¹³⁵⁶

The *intermedi* of *Il giudizio di Paride* had different levels of signification and were written by the patricians Lorenzo Franceschi, Alessandro Adimari, Giovanni de' Bardi, Giovan Battista Strozzi, and Buonarroti.¹³⁵⁷ The themes represented were allegorical, mythological, or historical (for example, the travel of Amerigo Vespucci to the Indies), but contained many allusions to the Medici family.¹³⁵⁸ Virtues sang of a new golden age and Vulcanus fashioned armour for the young Prince Cosimo. The music was composed by Marco da Gagliano and Jacopo Peri and the sophisticated sceneries were made by Giulio Parigi (Cantagallina's etching of the *intermedio* about Vulcanus, designed by Parigi and written by Buonarroti, shows some parts of the underground machinery).¹³⁵⁹ The play was performed on 25 October 1608 in the Uffizi theatre. It started at eleven pm and took five hours. Five thousand spectators were present, including gentlemen, gentlewomen, princes, and cardinals.¹³⁶⁰

Although *Il giudizio di Paride* was a mythological piece, it was full of actual political allusions. To find a bride for his son Cosimo II, Ferdinand I had to choose between three superpowers, France, the Holy Roman Empire, and Spain.¹³⁶¹ His choice was very strategic, because Maria Maddalena of Austria was the daughter of the Habsburg Archduke Charles of Graz and the sister of the Queen of Spain, the wife of Philip III.¹³⁶²

As in 1600, so in 1608 a theatre play (*La conversione di Santa Maria Maddalena*) was performed in the Riccardi garden in honour of the new Grand Ducal couple.¹³⁶³ On the occasion of that marriage, Riccardi wrote poems that were sung during the dinner for the new Grand Ducal couple.¹³⁶⁴ These poems are fully included in the description of this marriage by the patrician Camillo

¹³⁵⁵ Ibid.: 92.

¹³⁵⁶ Cole 2011: 250-51.

¹³⁵⁷ Carter 1983: 94.

¹³⁵⁸ Strong 1984: 150.

¹³⁵⁹ Carter 1983: 99; Blumenthal 1973: 94.

¹³⁶⁰ Cole 2011: 258.

¹³⁶¹ Cole 1999: 169. *Il giudizio di Paride* was written originally for Ferdinando I Gonzaga, but according to Cole Michelangelo changed the text to make it suitable for Ferdinand I de' Medici.

¹³⁶² Strong 1984: 149.

¹³⁶³ Ginori Lisci 1953: 14.

¹³⁶⁴ The poems of Riccardi for the Grand Ducal couple are preserved in BNCF, Magl. Cl. IX.67, c. 1560.

Tommaso Rinuccini, which was published in Florence the same year.¹³⁶⁵ This illustrated description was produced in large numbers, because Ferdinand I wanted to publicize the event across Europe, and indeed the prints were used as models for sceneries of Stuart court masques and theatrical plays in Spain and Germany.¹³⁶⁶

Again the patricians provided a cultural contribution with far-reaching political significance. Michelangelo's knowledge of the historical and actual political situation let him write an appropriate mythological piece with political allusions, as in the case of *Il Passatempo*, written during the stay of Fakhr ad-Din. Riccardi received important guests in his magnificent garden and Rinuccini wrote the description, which was sent to many European courts and influenced the evolution of theatre there.

Descriptions of marriages and memorial ceremonies

Because of the sometimes veiled, but very specific political messages the treatises about marriage and funeral ceremonies written by several patricians give us insight into the political relations and ambitions of that time.¹³⁶⁷ There was always one message for the Florentine people and one intended for an international audience. The music, dance, and architecture were meant to impress the Florentine people while the iconographic programme was intended for Florentine and foreign men of letters and was circulated by means of the official descriptions.¹³⁶⁸ Often the political messages expressed were the mutual interests of the Medici and other important European rulers and focused on their alliances and relationships. The Medici wanted to underline that they belonged to the important European genealogies and had a long tradition of cultural patronage.¹³⁶⁹

The official descriptions offered details about the entry of important people, banquets, theatre pieces, or the decorations of memorial ceremonies. They included all the events the Medici intended to perform and listed all the important guests they had invited. In reality some events could have been cancelled, because of bad weather conditions, logistic problems, or lack of

¹³⁶⁵ Minicucci 1983: 112. Camillo Tommaso Rinuccini (1564-1649), *Descrizione delle Feste fatte nelle reali nozze de' Serenissimi principi di Toscana: D. Cosimo de' Medici e Maria Maddalena arciduchessa d'Austria*, Firenze, Giunti 1608.

¹³⁶⁶ Strong 1984: 151.

¹³⁶⁷ Acidini Luchinat 1999: 11-13.

¹³⁶⁸ Mamone 1999: 23.

¹³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 24.

time.¹³⁷⁰ It could also have happened that the plays or designs were poorly received or that important guests were absent, but these things were omitted in the descriptions, because they were intended essentially to glorify the ruling family.¹³⁷¹ The typical Florentine custom of documenting all these cultural and historical events (such direct descriptions were not made, for example, in Venice) was a form of propaganda, a way for the Medici to create their own success. An unintended consequence is that they are extremely useful for theatre historians nowadays.¹³⁷²

The marriages of 1637 and 1661

The patrician Ferdinando Bardi drafted the official description of the marriage between Vittoria della Rovere and Ferdinand II in 1637, while the patrician Francesco Rondinelli wrote a separate description of the theatre play.¹³⁷³ The libretto of the theatre piece performed on that occasion *Le nozze degli dei* was written by Giovan Carlo Coppola, the designs were made by Alfonso Parigi. Seven double-paged engravings accompanied the official description, made by Stefano della Bella.¹³⁷⁴ *Le nozze degli dei* was a mix between a tournament, a ballet, an opera, an *intermedio*, and a masquerade. The central message of dynastic legitimacy and continuity was expressed in the piece and the Grand Duke himself was glorified.¹³⁷⁵ Moreover, it was a sign of princely virtue to use the best singers and the latest technology for the special effects machines.¹³⁷⁶

The official description of the marriage of 1661 between Cosimo III and Margaret Louise of Orleans was written by the patrician Alessandro Segni.¹³⁷⁷ In the description were included Stefano della Bella's engravings for the cavalcade on the cortile of the Palazzo Pitti, *Il mondo festeggiante* (figs. 7 and 8) written by Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, as well as other engravings by Valerio Spada depicting the theatre piece *Ercole in Tebe* (*Hercules in Thebes*) (fig. 9), also written by Moniglia. The last play was performed in Teatro la Pergola by the Accademia degli Immobili. All the sceneries were designed by Ferdinando Tacca. The de-

¹³⁷⁰ Cole 2011: 190.

¹³⁷¹ Schraven 2006: 14.

¹³⁷² Zorzi 1980: 170.

¹³⁷³ Magini 2000: appendix.

¹³⁷⁴ Fenlon 2010: 117. Francesco Rondinelli, *Relazione delle nozze degli dei. Favola dell'abate Gio. Carlo Coppola rappresentata nelle nozze de' Serenissimi Gran Duchi di Toscana Ferdinando II e Vittoria Principessa d'Urbino*, in Firenze 1637.

¹³⁷⁵ Fenlon 2010: 119.

¹³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: 127-28.

¹³⁷⁷ Alessandri 2000: 144; ASF Mediceo del Principato 5538, c.24v.

scription of Alessandro Segni was sent to courts in the whole of Europe mainly by Prince Leopoldo de' Medici, together with the engravings.¹³⁷⁸ The representatives of the Medici anticipated receiving the descriptions. One correspondent from Brussels, G.B. Bolognetti, wrote for example that the inventors and stage designers of the marriage were already well-known, even before the prints arrived, and were considered the most talented in the whole of Europe.¹³⁷⁹

Leopoldo's uncle, Cardinal Carlo de' Medici, also distributed Segni's description to several important persons in Italy, France, and Spain. He sent the description and the engravings among others to Marco Buondelmonti, Torquato Montauti, and Paolo del Sera in Venice, to Cardinal Rossetti and the Duke of Sermoneta in Milan, and to Francesco Hennequin in Fontainebleau.¹³⁸⁰ In their answering letters these gentlemen were full of praise for the treatise of Segni and for Cardinal Carlo's kindness in sending it to them.

The treatises were mostly sent to the Florentine representatives of the Medici at the foreign courts, who were often patricians. Leopoldo sent the treatise to London on a war ship. The Florentine patrician Bernardo Guasconi, known as Sir Bernard Gascoigne in England, received the treatise and showed it to the British King Charles II. Guasconi wrote Leopoldo that the king discussed the prints of the description with his courtiers, because they did not believe they all had been made by Stefano della Bella. Leopoldo and Grand Duke Ferdinand II were probably very honoured by the king's interest in the Medici festivities. And the king was right, because the prints of the theatre play were made by Valerio Spada and not by Stefano della Bella.¹³⁸¹ Despite the success of the description, the marriage itself turned out to be a fiasco and the Grand Duke and his wife got a divorce in 1675.

Thanks to the patricians' treatises describing these events, many European kings could see the magnificence of the Florentine designs and of the Medici family. Their ceremonies in this way really became a model for similar ceremonies at other courts.¹³⁸² This cultural prestige was very important for the Medici, because politically and economically the Grand Duchy was not quite

¹³⁷⁸ Alessandri 2000: 144.

¹³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 143.

¹³⁸⁰ Vannini 2010: 157-158. See ASF 5247, c. 269, 16 July 1661 (for Buondelmonti, Montauti and Del Sera), ASF 5249, c. 313, 20 July 1661 (for Cardinal Rossetti and the Duke of Sermoneta) and ASF 5247, c. 795, 5 August 1661 (for Hennequin).

¹³⁸¹ ASF Mediceo del Principato 5538, c.24v, 23rd of Sept 1661, cited in Alessandri 2000: 144; Bernardo Guasconi to Leopoldo de' Medici, see appendix.

¹³⁸² Mamone 1999: 22.

flourishing in the seventeenth century.¹³⁸³ Charles II, who had just been restored as King of England after the royal family's long exile, was very interested in reviving theatrical life in England, because many theatres had been closed during the reign of Oliver Cromwell.¹³⁸⁴ Thanks in large part to the treatise written by Alessandro Segni and Guasconi's propagation of it in London, we can again see that patricians were important for the cultural representation of the Medici outside Florence.

Conclusion

The Medici-Grand Dukes of the seventeenth century (1600-1670) often used culture as an instrument to define and enlarge their social and political prestige and to create or consolidate political alliances. This was an effective strategy that could only be executed, however, with the help of the Florentine patricians, who were very well informed about the historical and actual political position of Tuscany in Italy and Europe. As members of cultural academies they played an essential role in the cultural success and the increase of social prestige of the Medici court in many ways.

Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger contributed significantly to the cultural events that were designed to persuade the emir Fakhr ad-Din of the importance of commercial and political cooperation between the Levant and Tuscany. This is an example of the patrician's cultural assistance that was of political interest to the Medici.

With their extensive patronage networks, the patricians assisted the Medici in organizing marriage and memorial ceremonies. As men of letters they supervised rehearsals and performances, and wrote theatre plays or funeral ceremonies rich with political allusions, and their reports about these events were sent to many European courts. Moreover, they entertained distinguished guests in their own palaces and gardens and paid for part of the festivities. They invented innovative operas and *intermedi* and contributed in this way to the success of these kinds of events. Their cultural contribution was of great political importance. Thanks to the patricians' help, the Medici could create political alliances with other rulers. Thanks to the descriptions, fame about the magnificence of the Medici spectacles spread to many European courts where

¹³⁸³ Ibid.

¹³⁸⁴ Central Washington University, website Department of Theatre Arts, 'The English theatre, 1642-1800': http://www.cwu.edu/~robinos/ppages/resources/Theatre_History/Theahis_10.html, seen in August 2012.

nobles eagerly anticipated receiving them and using the Florentine events as a model for their own celebrations. Florentine patricians with political functions at other courts actively diffused the descriptions of marriages and funerals to other rulers and men of letters. In this way, nobles across all of Europe could see the magnificence of the Medici manifestations. Over all, we can say that the patricians played a very important role in the cultural representation of the Medici in Florence as well as at other European courts such as Milan, Rome, Brussels, and London.

Figures – Chapter six



Figure 1: Fabrizio Boschi, Cosimo II receives emir Fakhr ad-Din al-Maan (on the right), 1621-23, Casino Mediceo, Florence. Reproduced in: Riccardo Spinelli, *Fabrizio Boschi (1572-1642) pittore barocco di "belle idee" e di "nobiltà di maniera"*, Florence 2006.



Figure 2: Florentine school (Jacob van Asselt) after a cartoon by Baccio del Bianco, *tapestry of La giostra del Saraceno in Via Larga*, early seventeenth century, Palazzo Pitti, Deposito Arazzi (Inv. 564108) Florence. Reproduced in: Janie Cole, *Music, spectacle and Cultural Brokerage in early modern Italy. Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane*, Florence 2011.

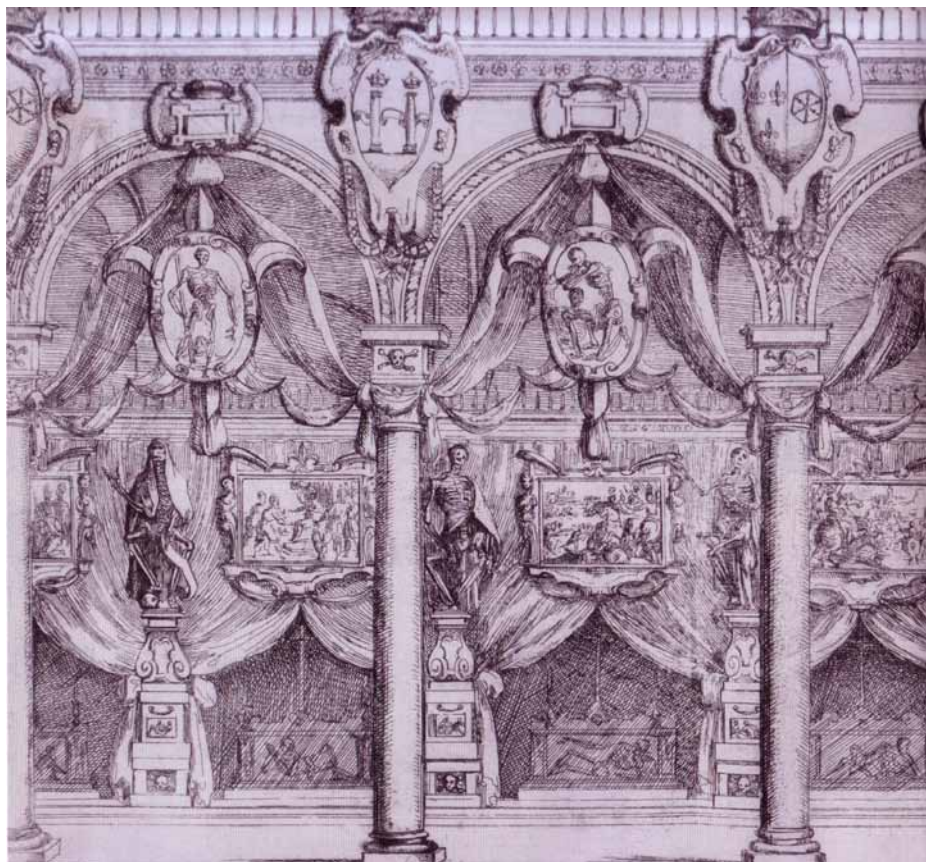


Figure 3: Ambito di Giulio Parigi, *Esequie di Enrico IV*, *Veduta di una navata laterale*, San Lorenzo, aquaforte, 1610, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 7.1, Florence.



Figure 4: G. Dupré, medallion with the marriage of Maria de' Medici and Henry IV of France, 1603.



Figure 5: The celebrations for the marriage of Maria de' Medici and Henry IV of France in the garden of the Riccardi palace Valfonda. Painter unknown.



Figure 6: The celebrations for the marriage of Maria de' Medici and Henry IV of France in the garden of the Riccardi palace Valfonda. 'La corsa delle bighe.' Painter unknown. Reproduced in: Leonardo Ginori Lisci, *Gualfonda. Un antico palazzo en un giardino scomparso*, Florence 1953.

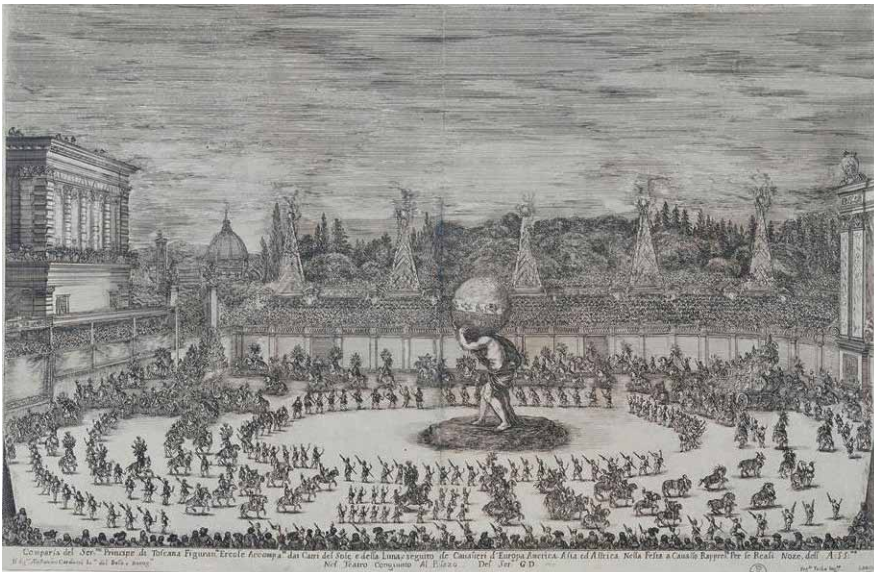


Figure 7: Stefano della Bella, *Il mondo festeggiante*, 1661. Designed by Ferdinando Tacca.

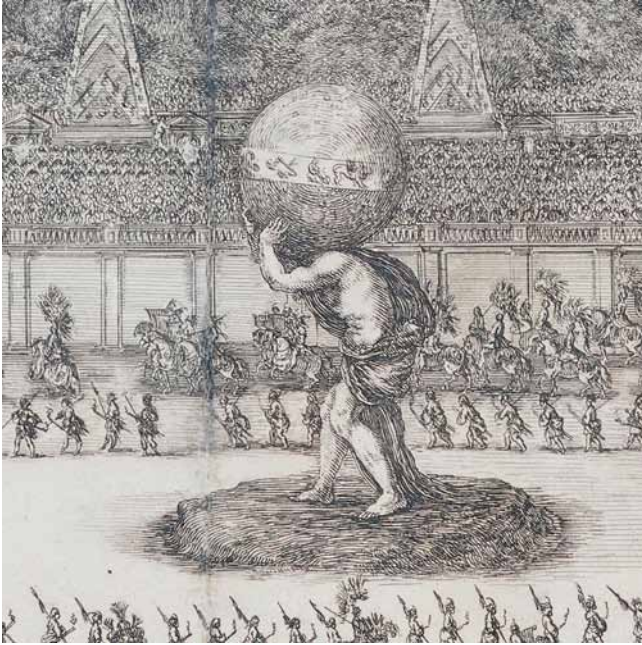


Figure 8: Stefano della Bella, *Il mondo festeggiante*, 1661 (detail), cavalcade on the cortile of Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

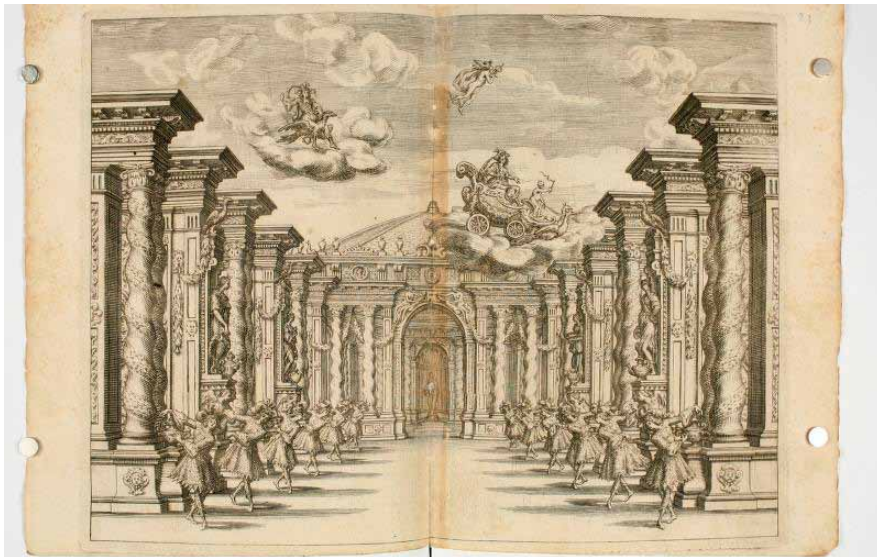


Figure 9: Valerio Spada, *Ercole in Tebe* (*Hercules in Thebes*), 1661, Teatro della Pergola, Florence. Designed by Ferdinando Tacca.



Figure 10: Baldassare Franceschini/Il Volterrano (attr.), *portrait of Cosimo III*, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence.