

**IMT Institute for Advanced Studies,  
Lucca, Italy**

**Gift Exchange at the Court of Cosimo I de'  
Medici (1537-1574)**

**PhD Program in the Management &  
Development of Cultural Heritage  
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“Fealty and Familiarity: Gifts of Food at the Court of Cosimo I de’ Medici” – Culinary Culture: Appetite and Ambition in Renaissance Florence, Florence University of the Arts, 13th November 2013.

“The Gifts of Others: Medici Intelligence Gathering and Diplomatic Gifts” – Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, New York, 28th March 2014.

“The Personal Diplomacy of Eleonora de Toledo, Duchess of Florence” – Translating cultures: The symbolic languages of diplomacy, Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, University of Durham, 31st January & 1st February 2014.

“Diplomacy and the Hunt at the court of Cosimo I de’ Medici – Early Modern Italian Diplomacy” British Institute of Florence, 1st December 2014.

“The Medici dominium versus the Habsburg imperium: Bartolomeo Concini at the Imperial Court, 1545-1549” Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, Berlin, 29th March 2015.

## DEDICA

Il più delle volte, coloro che desiderano entrare nelle grazie di un Principe son soliti presentarsi con quelle cose che reputano le più care fra le loro e che vedono piacere di più al Principe; per questo si vede molte volte che sono presentati cavalli, armi, drappi d'oro, pietre preziose e simili ornamenti degni della grandezza dei principi. Desiderando dunque io offrirvi alla vostra Magnificenza con qualche testimonianza della mia servitù verso voi, non ho trovato fra i miei beni una cosa che mi è più cara o che tanto io stimi quanto la conoscenza delle azioni dei grandi uomini da me imparata con una lunga riflessione sugli avvenimenti moderni e una continua lezione da parte di quelli antichi: e ora le mando a voi dopo averle con gran diligenza esaminate e meditate e raccolte in un piccolo volume.

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, *IL PRINCIPE*

## ABSTRACT

Objects are there to be used. Throughout history, the gifting of objects has been a universal activity. Anthropologists, sociologists, economists, philosophers, and historians (amongst others) have all grappled to define the role that gift-giving has played in diverse human societies. The act of gifting immediately modifies the value of an object, transfiguring it into a 'gift'. Once defined as a gift, both the object and its presentation contain particular meanings which resonate within the context of its exchange: the gift both communicates a message and a bond between sender and recipient. The resulting web of connections formed by gift exchanges are arguably the sinews of complex societies. The gift debits and credits, it obligates and liberates, it intimates and discriminates, not only between the one who gifts and the one who receives, but by those who view its exchange (who interpret the symbolism of a gift as indicative of a relationship or favour). In a society in which loyalty, gratitude, obligation, courtesy, personal conduct, and social standing matter acutely – for example, sixteenth-century Europe – the gift is a truly efficacious social tool. In the hands of someone who understands the communicative power of objects, particularly artworks, but not solely – for example, Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-1574) – then gifts, both those given and received, can force the actions of others, influence the perception of the audience, and effect the realisation of political objectives. As such, the Florentine court – famous for its magnificent collections of objects – represents an outstanding historical context in which to analyse the efficacy of gifts and the social and political world of material culture they inhabit. This thesis draws upon a vast trove of unpublished archival material to study the potency of gifts in the diplomacy of Cosimo I de' Medici, duke of Florence (from 1537), later Siena (from 1557), and finally, grand duke of Tuscany (from 1570). As well as portraying the social value of the gift in sixteenth-century Europe and tracing the influence of gifts and their presentation in the iconographic programme of the Palazzo Vecchio, this thesis also presents a diplomatic biography of Cosimo I through the gifts he sent and received.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNCF                      BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE CENTRALE DI FIRENZE

Magliab.                *Fondo Magliabechiano*

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ASF                      ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI FIRENZE

MAP                     *Mediceo avanti il Principato*

MdP                     *Mediceo del Principato*

GM                      *Guardaroba medicea*

MM                      *Miscellanea medicea*

CS                       *Carte strozziane*

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vol.                      volume/filza

ins.                      insert/inserto

fol.                      folio/foglio

MAP Doc ID#           BIA Database (The Medici Archive Project)

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O.S./N.S.               All dates have been given in the New Style (Gregorian calendar).  
Florence's traditional calendar year ended on March 24th, when this  
date has been preserved, it is indicated with O.S.

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Car.le	Cardinale
Ex. V. / V. Ex.	Eccellenza Vostra
Ill.mo	Illustrissimo
M.	Messer
M. V. / V. M.	Magnificenza Vostra
S.M.tà	Sua Maestà
S. S.	Sua Signoria
S. S.tà	Sua Santità
S. V.	Signoria Vostra
V. A.	Vostra Altezza
Ser.mo	Serenissimo

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Note on Transcriptions and Sources: The vast majority of sources used in this thesis are drawn from the Medici Archive Project's BIA database. This database of largely unpublished material is the product of two decades of transcription and research by dozens of scholars. The author owes a huge debt of gratitude to everyone who has been involved with the Medici Archive Project. Wherever possible, the author has proofed transcriptions, and whenever possible, double-checked transcriptions when digitised versions have been made available. As a result, the author takes full responsibility for any remaining errors, especially with regards translations, which have been rendered as close to the original Italian as possible while, on occasion, taking license to communicate to the English reader the spirit of the language.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 GIFTS IN 1563

On the 21 September 1563, the via Pisana was filled with curious Florentines gazing at a remarkable scene: a massive sixty-five tonne granite column quarried from the Baths of Caracalla in Rome being dragged on a wooden platform towards the Porta San Frediano.<sup>1</sup> This monumental stone had travelled down the Tiber and along the Tyrrhenian coast, up the Arno until Ponte a Signa, and was then winched onto the road to Florence along which it had taken all summer to arrive at the gates of the city. These endeavours and sacrifices had no doubt added to the allure of welcoming the column's arrival, not least because the logistics of manoeuvring the granite pillar through the narrow streets of the city and eventually onto its plinth in Piazza Santa Trinita – where it stands today as the *Colonna della Giustizia* – promised the Florentine crowd the sight of possible disaster or mechanical amazement. Many of the men and women gathered for the spectacle would also have known something else about Florence's newest monument, that it was a gift from Pope Pius IV to their duke, Cosimo I de' Medici.

In 1563, Cosimo received other gifts: figs and onions from Pandolfo Gaci<sup>2</sup>; from his brother-in-law, Don Garcia de Toledo, he was

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<sup>1</sup> The full story of this gift is recounted below, see pp. 258-264.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Pandolfo Gaci in Arezzo, 25 March 1563, ASF, MdP 219, fol. 77, MAP Doc ID# 16220.

sent six crossbows and six straw hats<sup>3</sup>; Cardinal Carlo Borromeo had dispatched some fine horses to join the ducal stables<sup>4</sup>; Guidobaldo II della Rovere, had gifted some female deer<sup>5</sup>; and Antonio Giannotti da Montagnana, bishop of Forlì, had sent a painting.<sup>6</sup> This thesis sets out to connect these diverse objects into a cohesive understanding of the role gifts played at the court of Cosimo I de' Medici. While seemingly disparate, this thesis will posit their study within the life of Cosimo I de' Medici, in particular, as part of his diplomatic strategies to secure his position as duke of Florence, expand the borders of his realm, and establish a solid foundation for his dynasty as rulers of Florence and Tuscany. In doing so, this thesis will present the connections that exist between the gifted straw hats and granite columns, the artworks and the crossbows, the figs and the horses in order to present the material world of Cosimo I and how he interacted through those objects with those around him.

The year 1563 should not be considered as exceptional. During every year of Cosimo's reign an incredible number of objects arrived at court and left the borders of Florence as diplomatic gifts. Whether great monuments or the first fruits of summer, these gifts punctuated the lives of everyone at court, none more than the duke himself. Yet, from amongst this cornucopia of objects, patterns and contexts emerge which this thesis presents in order to make sense of the material world of Cosimo I de' Medici, not only his ability to wield objects as part of his diplomatic endeavours, but how his own life was enriched by those who gifted to him, who, similarly, had their own reasons and agendas to interact with Cosimo through the bestowal of objects.

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<sup>3</sup> Letter from Garcia de Toledo in Barcelona to Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa, 4 May 1563, ASF, MdP 5027, not paginated, MAP Doc ID# 8129.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Carlo Borromeo in Rome, 5 July 1563, ASF, MdP 219, fol. 144, MAP Doc ID# 16245.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Guidobaldo II della Rovere in Urbino to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 5 July 1563, ASF, MdP 4050, fol. 489, MAP Doc ID# 22257.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Antonio Giannotti da Montagnana in Forlì, ASF, MdP 219, fol. 243, MAP Doc ID# 9266.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

This thesis presents research and findings from three years of doctoral study on the role of gifts in sixteenth-century Italian court society. The objective of research has been to combine various historical traditions and areas of scholarship – namely, material culture, including the history of collecting; court studies; and the histories of art, diplomacy, and politics – to understand the complex role played by gifts in each of the aforementioned fields of study. Set specifically within the context of the court of Cosimo I de' Medici (broadly speaking, from his election in 1537, to 1564, the year of his abdication), this thesis proceeds to answer three simple questions:

*How did Cosimo understand gifts and the act of gift-giving?*

This question will require an examination of the social world of sixteenth-century society, namely, Italian court societies in order to understand the importance of gifts and their gift exchange as recognised by the historical actors of the period. Establishing the level of historical cognisance of the particular values of the gifted object – as an aid to communication and social interaction – is an essential foundation for further discussions. Secondly, this thesis will seek to answer:

*How did Cosimo use gifts and gift-exchange over the course of his life?*

This will require a narrative of the life of Cosimo I de' Medici told through case studies of significant gifts. In doing so, it is hoped that the social and political use of gifts at both court and in foreign relations, will provide the key studies with which to trace the cultural, social, and political potency of Cosimo's use of gifts. Indeed, such a study cannot be done in isolation from the cultural traditions which influenced

Cosimo, and in turn, framed his cultural policies, thus necessitating the third question:

*How did Cosimo's gift exchanges relate to his other cultural practices?*

By offering answers to these questions, this thesis holds as its objective the advancement of our understanding of both the life of Cosimo I de' Medici and the use of gifts in early modern European diplomacy.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

This thesis was originally envisaged as a general study on the connection between the movement of objects and the creation of collections in early modern Europe. Finding few studies on how gifts were used in sixteenth-century diplomacy, this thesis has been envisaged as a trailblazer on the subject of gift exchange from the perspective of the early modern court, and thus provide a fuller historiographical foundation upon which to examine, at a later date, the museological legacy of gifted objects and their inclusion in royal collections. Initial research highlighted the importance of researching the historical contexts of objects, the study required a rich extant collection, a strong supporting scholarship, and accessible archival materials. All of this was provided by Florence and the collections of the Medici, namely during the life span (1519-1574) of the first grand duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici.

The success of the study was then dependent upon gathering a large enough data-set of archival sources to provide substantial case studies with which to trace patterns of typical gift use. The necessary archival research was expedited by joining the Medici Archive Project (MAP) as a Samuel Freeman Fellow (April-August 2013) and as a Junior Research Fellow (January-December 2014). The Medici Archive Project was founded in the early 1990s as a foundation to employ digital technologies for the preservation and curation of one of the most important archives of early modern material, the *Mediceo del Principato*. This archival collection of around four million letters contained in over six thousand volumes was also to be the principal source of research for this thesis. As an epistolary collection – supported by the subsidiary archival collections drawn from the historic Medici Archive: namely, the *Guardaroba Medicea* and the *Medicea Miscellanea* – no better source exists to trace both the movement and meaning of gift exchanges, whether through letters regarding presentation, written in gratitude, or discussing a certain gift's contextual significance. The *Mediceo del Principato* contains letters both to and from Cosimo himself, but also to and from his secretaries and other court officials, not to mention other members of his extended family, all of which add to a more complete picture of court life and the use of gifts within that society.

The fellowships with MAP not only afforded the author unparalleled access to this archival collection, but also to international experts, access to other archives, and a vibrant intellectual community with which to trial ideas, receive training in palaeography and research methods, and for a PhD student in an already busy field of research, and to receive generous support to attend and organise conferences. Most precious of all, the fellowships were spent in using and supporting the further development of the BIA platform, an online interactive webspace for research on the *Mediceo del Principato*. BIA allowed for a huge data-set of case studies of gift exchanges (over two thousand) around which the author could structure further research within the collection itself. By providing an example of a gift in a certain volume, that volume could be requested for consultation, resulting in the uncovering of whole chains of relevant correspondence. BIA also provides names, dates, and places relevant to each entry, allowing for searches, the identification of particular persons, and the indication of other archival volumes which cover the same time period. Being based at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze for nearly two years afforded ample to become not only well-acquainted with the *Mediceo del Principato* collection, but also the other constituent fondi of the historic Medici Archive, such as the inventories contained within the *Guardaroba Medicea*, or letters pertaining to events or persons of particular importance in the *Miscellanea Medicea* collection.

The dissertation has been further supported beyond research in secondary literature with meetings and interviews with leading historians in the field. Through the Medici Archive Project, the author was privileged to be able to organise two events pertaining to the thesis topic. The first, in June 2014, was an international conference on the life of Cosimo I, entitled "Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici: Magnus Etruriae Dux" and was held at the auditorium of the Archivio di Stato di Firenze. This conference presented many insightful papers which showcased current research approaches towards Cosimo and Medicean Tuscany. Second, in December 2014, the author organised a graduate workshop at the Harold Acton Library of the British Institute of Florence which brought together PhD students tackling similar research on the political aspects of early modern Italian material culture. The research, by nature diplomatic, has also hugely benefited from its



presentation at numerous conferences and seminars, the feedback offered by academics in attendance has guided the development of every aspect of this thesis.<sup>7</sup>

The spirit which has guided the author's research has been a methodology most ancient. In Seneca's *De beneficiis*, a methodology with which to approach the historical study of gift exchanges is provided. Far from trying to categorise the use of like objects, or finding false patterns, Seneca states:

Nothing is fitting for anyone in the abstract; it makes a difference who the giver is, who the recipient is, when, why, where, and so forth—all the factors necessary to think through an action properly.<sup>8</sup>

It is with this in mind that the author approached each individual context to every gift as foundation upon which to construct an understanding of the full meaning and significance of a gift's exchange. As a result, the author begs the reader's patience: the depth of detail provided in the various contexts of Medicean gift exchange is essential (perhaps even the crux) with which early modern gifts should be approached. Through micro-histories it is hoped that a macro-history of diplomatic gifts in Cosimo's life emerges. There are, though, two important historiographical guide-ropes with which to follow this thesis. The first is Henk van Veen's work on the self-representation of Cosimo, where Cosimo is viewed as a perpetuation of older traditions of cultural politics; the second is Alessandra Contini's conceptualisation of Medicean diplomacy, where diplomacy functions not only within the sphere of foreign affairs, but as an important tool within Cosimo's security apparatus. These scholars' works are discussed and elaborated throughout the thesis.

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<sup>7</sup> A full list of conference papers can be found in the *curriculum vitae* which precedes the thesis.

<sup>8</sup> Seneca, L., *On Benefits* [trans. Miriam Griffin & Brad Inwood] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 2.16.1, pp. 42-43.

## 1.4 STRUCTURE

Beyond the introduction and conclusion, the thesis is structured into three parts. Each part is introduced with a prologue and epilogue in order to set the tone of the following chapters and provide a running conclusion to answer the research questions posed above.

Part I provides the contexts in which the thesis is posited. This is composed of a study on the socio-anthropological role of the gift (including the gift in recent historiography, particularly on those studies pertaining to the sixteenth century); and a survey of scholarship in Medici studies, namely on Cosimo I, but also on Medicean diplomacy. To establish the historical context of the gift within the immediate life and times of Cosimo I, two ‘proofs’ are offered in the forms of a source study and a thematic study. The former investigates the mentioning of gift exchanges in the *avvisi* – news reports – sent from Venice to Florence. The intention of this study is to demonstrate that knowledge of contemporaneous gifts and their exchange were perceived to be highly valued political information. Second, the thematic study attempts to prove the significance of gift-exchange by presenting cases of gift rejection, the argument being that for a gift to be rejected (often with great difficulty) signifies and reinforces the gift object’s particular social status in early modern society.

With the context firmly established, part II presents a biography of Cosimo I (itself a rarely found narrative in modern scholarship) through his exchanges of gifts. Beyond the value of writing an updated life of Cosimo which draws upon the wealth of recently published books and articles which shed new light on various aspects of his court and on Tuscany under his rule, by focussing on his sending and receiving of gifts, one is provided with an important new perspective. Cosimo’s life and rise to power – his consolidation and expansion of Medici rule in Tuscany, his triumph and coronation as Grand Duke, and with his abdication to his son (who was then married to a Habsburg princess), the secure perpetuation of his dynasty – provide a rich and diverse narrative with which to study the efficacy of gifts. Indeed, as this thesis will evidence, all the events in Cosimo’s life are reflected in his gift exchanges. Perhaps most importantly, we can see how Cosimo

used gifts to forward his aims and realise his ambitions. The diverse use of gifts, their dispatch and receipt at court, the various mediators and agents involved, and especially the influence of other Medici family members, all help support a study of sufficient depth to comprehensively catalogue and contextualise the role of gifts and gift-exchange as a central element in the activity and control of an early modern court.

Supporting this hypothesis, part III provides three case studies; one typological, on the gifting of food; a second contextual, on the role of gifts in another courtly activity, hunting; and third, on the interplay between the political symbolism of gifts and Cosimo's iconographic programme. These case studies are drawn from rich seams of archival material, some of which are presented elsewhere, but which begged greater attention in the thesis than within the context of Cosimo's life, and thus are here given a deeper interpretation. Much as chapter I established context, chapter III, therefore, provides the consequences, particularly artistic, of the significant role gifts played in early modern society. While the study of gifts of food influenced an artistic programme conveying the bounty of Medicean rule, the symbolic lion, the *marzocco* of the republic, became itself a gift, an animal in Cosimo's possession with which he could freely dispose. While these actions affected the public sphere, gifts and hunting portray the inner world of the court society, the relationships between princely rulers, and the shared bond through the various manifestations of the hunt could be gifted between them.

The thesis's structure is intended to provide the reader with both an overview of the archival material studied and a broad appreciation of the thesis's two principal arguments: that the use of gifts was an essential social tool in the early modern world, and that Cosimo I de' Medici, beyond providing a rich and varied setting in which to study "gifts in action", demonstrates the efficacy of gifts as diplomatic stratagems.

PART I

GIFTS AND DIPLOMACY IN THE  
WORLD OF COSIMO I DE' MEDICI

## Prologue

In 1554, Benedetto Varchi dedicated his Italian translation of Seneca's *De beneficiis* to Eleonora de Toledo, duchess of Florence and wife of Cosimo I de' Medici.<sup>9</sup> In *De beneficiis*<sup>10</sup>, Seneca makes the claim:

We are to speak of benefits, and to define a matter which is the chief bond of human society; we are to lay down a rule of life, such that neither careless openhandedness may commend itself to us under the guise of goodness of heart, and yet that our circumspection, while it moderates, may not quench our generosity, a quality in which we ought neither to exceed nor to fall short. Men must be taught to be willing to give, willing to

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<sup>9</sup> Seneca, L., *Seneca de benifizzii, tradotto in volgar fiorentino da Messer B. Varchi* (Firenze: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1554). The original manuscript of Varchi's translation is preserved in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, *Mediceo Palatino* 113. The translation achieved a broad circulation, reprinted in Venice by Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari in 1564, and reprinted again in 1574 in Florence by Giunti. Varchi also translated Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*, published in 1551, and listed in the inventory of Cosimo's books made in 1553: ASF, GM 28, fol. 103v. Although preludeing the publication of Varchi's translation of *De beneficiis*, the list includes several works by Seneca, listed as: *Senecae tragoediae*, fols. 88r & 93v; *L. Senecae opera basileæ 1530* [likely the Basel (Basileæ) edition of *L. Annaei Senecae Cordubensis Tragoediae* printed in Augsburg in 1529], fol. 89r; and *Tragedie di seneca in fiorentino in carta buona*, fol. 103v. Note also, that while *beneficium* is often translated as "benefits", Seneca discusses gifts of objects, gifts of actions, and gifts of services, all under the term *beneficium*.

<sup>10</sup> Seneca's work is seminal to the study of gifts, quoted in contemporary historical studies nearly as often as the French socio-anthropologist Marcel Mauss, whose work was profoundly influenced by the Roman author, for a full consideration of Mauss on gifts, see below, pp. 22-32. In addition, for an attempt to apply Maussian categorisations to gifts in *De beneficiis*, see Griffe, M., "Don et contre-don dans le *De beneficiis* de Sénèque", in *Lalies* 14 (1994), pp. 233-247. To appreciate Seneca's full contribution to the anthropological field of gift exchanges, see Goux, J.-J., "Seneca against Derrida: Gift and Alterity" in Wyschogrod, E., Goux, J.-J., & Boynton, E. (eds.), *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), pp. 148-161. Seneca in the context of ancient Roman society is well expounded in Lentano, M., "Il dono e il debito. Verso un'antropologia del beneficio nella cultura romana", in Haltenhoff, A., Heil, A., & Mutschler, F.-H. (eds.), *Römische Werte als Gegenstand der Altertumswissenschaft*, (München: De Gruyter, 2005), pp. 125-142; and Griffin, M., "De Beneficiis and Roman Society," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 93 (2003), pp. 92-113.

receive, willing to return; and to place before themselves the high aim, not merely of equalling, but even of surpassing those to whom they are indebted, both in good offices and in good feeling; because the man whose duty it is to repay, can never do so unless he out-does his benefactor.<sup>11</sup>

This is the social world in which gifts were understood in a mid-sixteenth century court: benefits given, whether an object or a position, title, or honour, were deemed the chief bonds of human society.<sup>12</sup> To willingly receive and return gifts was understood to be the catalyst of organised human activity, the bonds of loyalty providing the foundation upon which a state could be constructed.<sup>13</sup> Yet, crucially, unlike a financial transaction, the exchange of benefits was an ascending cycle of mutual exchanges, each outdoing the last, the

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<sup>11</sup> Seneca, L., *L. Annaeus Seneca On Benefits* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1887), I.IV, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Admittedly, this was not a single understanding of what gifts meant, for example, Justus Lipsius later work (neo-stoicism) nuanced any reading of Seneca, see for example Oestreich, G., *Neo-stoicism and the Early Modern State*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). This being said, the high intellectual sophistication applied to understanding gifts and their meanings by person of the early modern world remains, even with a pre-Lipsian reading of Seneca.

<sup>13</sup> Seneca has been chosen to represent “the field” as a translated dedicated (gifted) to Eleonora de Toledo, duchess of Florence. Many of writers of the sixteenth century mention gifts: Niccolò Machiavelli; Giovanni della Casa, Baldassare Castiglione, and Anton Francesco Grazzini (some of whom are discussed below). It should be noted that no single study exists on the early modern intellectual framework to conceptualise gifts and their exchange. This chapter attempts at laying a foundation for such a study.

consequence of which was, theoretically, an ever stronger shared bond between the two individuals involved.<sup>14</sup>

The longest of any of his essays, Seneca's *De beneficiis* continues from his other works, namely *De clementia*, to outline his political thought on the nature of good government, social obligation, and political virtue, especially with regards rulership.<sup>15</sup> As Peter Stacey notes, while Senecan political thought is rarely seriously considered today, Seneca was one of the most influential political thinkers of the medieval and Renaissance ages.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Charles V's tutor, Desiderius Erasmus, valued Seneca only after Plutarch as the ancient author most

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<sup>14</sup> The first work to deal with *De beneficiis* as a serious work of social philosophy was Chaumartin, F.-R., *Le de beneficiis de Senèque, sa signification philosophique, politique et sociale* (Paris: Société d'édition Les Belles Lettres, 1985), who understood Seneca's intention with the work as a way to "restaure la confiance dans les rapports humains" (p. 261) just when the Augusto-Julian principate was transforming the nature of Roman society. Recent studies on the social and political implications of Seneca's ideas in *De beneficiis* are discussed in Damschen, G. & Heil, A., (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Seneca: Philosopher and Dramatist* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), see especially the contribution by Lentano, M., "De beneficiis", pp. 201-207. Recently, the most exhaustive study of the subject has been completed by Griffin, M., *Seneca on Society: A Guide to De beneficiis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Stacey, P., "Senecan Political Thought from the Middle Ages to Early Modernity" in Bartsch, S., & Schiesaro, A. (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 289-302. By the same writer, see Stacey, P. "The Sovereign Person in Senecan Political Theory" *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts*, 2 (2011), pp. 15-73. William Landon makes an interesting comparison with Seneca writing *De clementia* to curb the excesses of Nero with Lorenzo Strozzi's writing of the manuscript *Trattato della pazienza* dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici in 1537 in an attempt to have his brother Filippo pardoned for his involvement in the Republican attack on Cosimo that year, see Landon, W., *Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi and Niccolò Machiavelli: Patron, Client, and the Pistola fatta per la peste/an Epistle Written Concerning the Plague* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2013), p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289. As a playwright, Seneca's reception in the sixteenth century has been much better studied: Braden, G., *Renaissance tragedy and the Senecan tradition: anger's privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Miola, R., *Shakespeare and classical tragedy: the influence of Seneca* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and more recently, Winston, J., "Seneca in Early Elizabethan England" *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59 1 (2006), pp. 29-58. These studies also reference Seneca's use of gifts as dramatic devices.

instructive to a prince.<sup>17</sup> In *De beneficiis*, the princeling would read of the importance of how gifts can be used as tools with which to build relationships, but also, that the importance of the gift lay in the intention of the giver.<sup>18</sup> From this guidebook of gift-giving, the reader would understand who could give and to whom a gift could be given.<sup>19</sup> Beyond the details of the when, the what, and the wherefore in which a gift exchange could be made<sup>20</sup>, Seneca explains when a gift is given without obligations from the recipient, or even when a gift should be refused.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as both Francois-Regis Chaumartin and Miriam Griffin have shown, Seneca's objective in *De beneficiis* was to regulate power relationships, especially when those relationships were abused, as was the case, so Seneca thought, in the rapidly changing political

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<sup>17</sup> Erasmus, D., *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 62. Erasmus edited an edition of Seneca's works in 1515, Erasmus, D., *Lucubrationes* (Argent.: M. Schurerium, 1515). Erasmus's relationship with Seneca later changed as the Roman author was championed by Calvin, see Sellars, J., *Stoicism* (Chesham: Acumen, 2006), pp. 141-142; and for Calvin's reading of Seneca, see Battles, F. & Hugo, A., *Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

<sup>18</sup> "If benefits consisted in the things and not precisely in the intention of the benefactor, then the benefits would be greater to the extent that the things received are greater. But that is not the case. For often we are more obliged to the person who gave us a small gift in a grand manner, who "matched the wealth of kings with his intention," who gave little but did so freely, who ignored his own poverty while showing concern for mine, who was not just willing to help out but eager to do so, who felt like he was receiving a benefit because he was giving one, who gave as though he would <not> later receive and received as though he had not given, who watched for, even sought out, an opportunity to serve." Seneca, L., *On Benefits*, 1.7.1, pp. 24-25.

<sup>19</sup> "We must, of course, take great care to bestow benefits above all on people who will respond with gratitude; but even so, there are some benefits which we will confer even if we suspect that they may not turn out well, and which we will confer on others not only if we come to the conclusion that the recipients will be ungrateful but even if we know that they have been so in the past." Ibid., 1.10.5, p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 1.11.5-1.12.4, pp. 28-30.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 2.18.3-2.21.5., pp. 45-48.



landscape of first-century Rome.<sup>22</sup> Gifts and benefits could regulate relations between masters and slaves, emperors and citizens, and, when read in the context of the sixteenth century, between princes and their subjects.

The Varchi edition of *De beneficiis*, dedicated to Eleonora, was commissioned by her cousin, the poet and intellectual, Don Pedro de Toledo, and printed in September 1554 by the court printing press under Lorenzo Torrentino.<sup>23</sup> A month after the Florentine victory over the Franco-Sienese army at Scannagallo, the ducal couple were reaching the apogee of their power. Varchi's dedicatory essay, which introduces his translation, is our clearest evidence of how both Seneca's work and the practice of gift-giving was conceptualised in Cosimo's social world. Setting aside the ambitions of his flattery (tinged with his republican sentiment for how a constitutional prince ought to act: i.e., dispense benefits to those deserving of place and position: such as himself), for Varchi, Eleonora and Cosimo embodied the principles of good gift-giving and receiving:

Your Excellency will draw from this work (if I do not fail in my task) – I do not want to say bounty – but an almost incredible pleasure, if not for another, at least because it will remind one of your magnificence and liberality, such that the great and most grand DUKE COSIMO, your husband, and our Lordship, who

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<sup>22</sup> "Surely, after so many examples, there cannot be any doubt that there are times when a master can receive a benefit from his slave. Why should the social role degrade the deed, instead of the deed ennobling the social role of the agent? We are all made of the same elements and we all have the same origin. No one is more noble than anyone else, except the person with a character that is more upright and equipped with more good traits." Ibid., 3.28.1, p. 75.

<sup>23</sup> Some details about this Don Pedro de Toledo are given in Moreni, D., *Annali della tipografia fiorentina di Lorenzo Torrentino* (Firenze: N. Carli, 1811), pp. 141-142.

depicts, indeed, demonstrates, of all the great Princes, this divine Author[’s values][...]’<sup>24</sup>

If we trust in Varchi, by 1554, the liberality of Cosimo and Eleonora was well established. At least in the vain rhetoric of Varchi, they embodied the political virtues expounded by Seneca in knowing how to give gifts and how to receive them. Regardless, the dedication of *De beneficiis* evidences the sophistication by which gift exchanges were read. Cosimo and Eleonora had at hand a work studied as keenly today as it was five centuries ago: a seminal text in the broad-ranging power of the gift in society. Whether or not they read it, Seneca’s ideas infused elite society’s understanding of the political and social (mis)use and proper function of gifts.

This first part of the thesis attempts to further enhance our understanding of the gift in the world of the early modern Italian court beyond the parameters of the philosophical treatise. As such, the following three chapters should be taken as a response to two essential and sequential questions. The first, quite simply: what did a gift mean for Cosimo? The second, which follows from the latter: how powerful was a gift in Cosimo’s world? These questions will be approached in three ways. Chapter two, “Reading Gifts in the Life of Cosimo”, with Seneca as a gauge to the advanced conceptualisation of gifts in the sixteenth century, the necessary intellectual and historiographical framework of texts will be presented in order to bind together the various academic disciplines considered throughout this thesis. Chapter three, “Understanding the Gifts of Others in the Venetian *Avvisi*”, will study in depth one set of micro-histories drawn from a single source of news sheets coming from Venice within a narrow time period to demonstrate the high value of information concerning the gift exchanges of others (i.e., not involving Cosimo) as a tool of diplomatic intelligence. Finally, chapter 4, “Unwanted Gifts”, will draw together

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<sup>24</sup> “Ma in qualunque modo, V.E. trarrà di questa opera (s’io non m’inganno) non vo dire frutto, ma ben piacere quasi incredibile, se non per altro, almeno, perche riconoscerà in essa così la magnificenza, et propria liberalità sua, come quella dell’ottimo, et grandissimo DUCA COSIMO consorte suo, et Signore nostro, essere tale à punto, quale la dipigne, anzi desidera, et specialmente ne’ gran Principi, questo divino Autore[...]” Seneca, *Seneca de benefizii*, tradotto in volgar fiorentino da Messer B. Varchi, p. ii.

another set of micro-histories along a single theme, the rejection of diplomatic gifts over a much longer duration of time, to provide an overview of the social standing of gifts and their exchange as a form of bond and communication device between men and women across early modern Europe. Together, part I of the thesis will provide a definitive response to the most cynical reader who might doubt the seriousness of gift exchange as a social and political action which had a remarkable effect upon the Medici family in the sixteenth century. In so doing, part I will have laid the foundation for the serious discussion of gifts as instrumental tools, and influential historical actors in their own right, in the life, diplomacy, and cultural programme of Cosimo I de' Medici.

## 2. READING GIFTS IN THE LIFE OF COSIMO I

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of the gift in society is well-studied, richly endowed with formative works, many of which are the direct or indirect legacy of the anthropologist, Marcel Mauss, and his most famous publication of 1923-1924, *Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*.<sup>25</sup> Recent publications of collected essays, such as, *The Question of the Gift: Essays across Disciplines* in 2002, and *The Gift in Antiquity* in 2013, testify to the continued centrality of Mauss's thought in contemporary discourse.<sup>26</sup> Amongst this sociological and historiographical plethora, clear patterns emerge: namely, the primacy of social traditions and expectations governing what to give and when; and equally, the receiver's obligation to reciprocate, often through a sense of indebtedness. While perhaps less immediate, it is clear that such social dynamics are not immune from external influence or change.

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<sup>25</sup> Mauss, M., "Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques", *L'année sociologique* 1 (1923–1924), pp. 30–186. Read in English in Mauss, M. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* [Trans. by W. Halls.] (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Osteen, M. (ed.), *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines* (London: Routledge, 2002). Satlow, M., *The Gift in Antiquity* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Indeed, in each epoch, every social context, and any geographic location, facets of the gift and its exchange are nuanced and particular. What may seem obscure to us today, say the near apocryphal Native American potchlack example deployed by Marcel Mauss, is similarly obscure for Cosimo I de' Medici upon whom this study centres. Therefore, this chapter draws out some traces of the peculiarly sixteenth-century features of gift-exchange in early modern historical scholarship, expanding from the seminal work of Natalie Zamon Davis's, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*.<sup>27</sup> Davis's work is an essential comparative study with which to situate any new approach, especially if we are to follow Davis's use of gifts as a methodological tool with which to understand communication within, towards, and from, a sixteenth-century court society in Italy. Furthermore, any discussion of the gift in early modern society must posit itself within the remarkably diverse and stimulating field of early modern and Renaissance material culture, defined by historians such as Michelle O'Malley, Evelyn Welch and Paula Findlen.<sup>28</sup>

Following from these discussions on the sociological and historical value of the gift, the third historiographical study focuses on the context of the thesis: the society, politics, diplomacy, and material world of Florence and Europe during the rule of Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-1574). More particularly, as this thesis has set out to present a life of Cosimo I through his own gift-exchanges and of those around him, it is essential to present the state-of-the-field in sixteenth-century Medici studies, and also, to familiarise the reader with the complex literary legacy of the first Grand Duke of Tuscany in Italian historical scholarship. Indeed, while voluminous studies on Florence, Tuscany, and the ducal court during the period of his reign (1537-1574) abound, there exists significant lacunae in up-to-date biographies on so important a figure in European history. This thesis hopes to begin to address this vacuum.

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<sup>27</sup> Davis, N., *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> O'Malley, M. & Welch, E. (eds.), *The Material Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Findlen, P. (ed.), *Early Modern Things* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

This literature review thus serves three purposes. Beyond explicating the state-of-the-field, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the novelty of approach with which this thesis joins the growing historical corpus of works examining early modern gift exchange, namely, by following the use of gifts through the course of Cosimo I's lifetime. As well-known as Cosimo's political ambitions are to historians, the enriching of this narrative with Cosimo's use of gifts will make a significant contribution to both Medici studies and the historical understanding of the political and diplomatic power of the gift in early modern Europe. The final purpose of this literature review is to account for the significance of the gift in early modern society, a fact well-evidenced by the aforementioned voluminous scholarship on the topic, and most neatly embodied in Varchi's edition of Seneca's *De beneficiis*, dedicated to Eleonora de Toledo, duchess of Florence, in 1546.

## 2.2 THE SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE GIFT

### *What is a gift?*

Though Marcel Mauss is credited as the first social scientist to approach the study of the gift, discussion on gifts in human society long predates the early twentieth century. Seneca, writing in the first century CE in his treatise, *De beneficiis*, presents the centrality of gifts in his society, “people must be taught to give gifts freely, receive them freely, and return them freely.”<sup>29</sup> Gifts, though, were no mercantile transaction, equatable to the mutual exchange of goods, services, and currency. As Seneca elaborates, “Donors must be taught not to keep accounts; recipients must be taught that they owe even *more* than they have received.”<sup>30</sup> In sum, unlike in commerce, a gift was not simply a ‘quid pro quo’ between participants, but the exchange of something with a human or social value as opposed to something with a strictly financial quantification (price). This conceptualisation of the gift strikes us as familiar. As the classicist Michael Satlow rightly perceives when discussing the above quotations, “much of Seneca’s advice could in fact easily be transferred to modern social relations.”<sup>31</sup> Crucially, Satlow qualifies his statement: much but not all of Seneca’s observations can be transferred to today. That deficit in our understanding can only be remedied by first studying individual contexts, as Seneca himself suggests:

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<sup>29</sup> Seneca, *On Benefits*, 1.4.3, p. 22. Contrast this with the concept of the gift as a contract, and vice versa, as forwarded by Bourdieu, P., *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 172. Seneca himself was following an older tradition where gifts and favours were understood to be the bond which forges society, see: Theophrastus, *On Gratitude*; Epicurus, *On Gifts and Gratitude*; and Chrysippus, *On Duties and On Favours*. In *De amicitia*, Cicero plays little attention to gifts, for him, gifts (in the terms of *beneficium*) denoted a distinct relationship from true friendship, see Wilcox, A., *The Gift of Correspondence in Classical Rome: Friendship in Cicero’s Ad familiares and Seneca’s Moral Epistles* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Seneca, *On Benefits*, 1.4.3 (italics my own).

<sup>31</sup> Satlow, *The Gift in Antiquity*, p. 2.

We have to take account of the recipient's social role. For some gifts are too small to come from important men; others are too big for the recipient. So compare the role of each and assess in that context the gift you plan to give, to see if it is too great or too small for the giver or whether, on the other hand, the prospective recipient might either turn up his nose at it or not be able to handle it.<sup>32</sup>

Seneca's advice, to study each person and the context keenly before judging a gift exchange, guides the research methodology presented in this thesis. Elaborating Seneca's advice, our understanding of gift exchanges can only be completed when we have an adequate number of case studies with which to trace patterns of behaviour typical of that historical period and place. Seneca's discussion of the etiquette of exchange, whether relevant or not to sixteenth-century Italy, will only be seen in due course. Seneca does, though, highlight an important methodological approach beyond the simple question of working out what the giver wants from the receiver, what one might call the "transactional model of gift-exchange". As Seneca states, "some gifts are too small to come from important men." This keen observation is particularly pertinent when trying to understand the role of a ruler or prince in cycles of gift-giving.

A pre-Mauss view of gift exchanges in European society inevitably draws more from Christian theology than from Seneca. Beyond antique references to the gifting of virtue through the Three Graces, or the importance of sacrifice as a gift to the gods or God, for a study of courtly gifts and their divine connotations, there can be no stronger starting point than the gifts of the Magi to the infant Christ:

And when they [the Magi] were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Seneca, *On Benefits*, 2.15.3, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup> King James Version, Matthew 2.11.



The Magi – the three wise men – most often represented as three kings, Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar, have been immortalised in western art through depictions of their journey from the East to Bethlehem, but most of all, in their Adoration of Christ.<sup>34</sup> Such a juxtaposition of the adoration of kings to a newborn babe in a lowly cave, stable, or cattle-shed, established in Christianity the model in which the presentation of gifts, in this case, royal and sacred, could represent the worldly recognition of Christ's power and divinity. The adoration of the Magi is, to all intents and purposes, Christ's earthly coronation. The Magi's supplication is a recognition of Jesus's uniqueness as the Son of God, but through the gifts themselves, he is further anointed and accredited as a prince. Indeed, the tableau which has echoed through two millennia of Christian art as the adoration of the Magi, has all the hallmarks and features of a medieval, Renaissance, or early modern court receiving ambassadors.

Christianity contributes more than symbolism to the theory of gift-giving. Christian theology has at its core a threefold use of gifts: the role of sacrifice as a gift to God, most importantly, the sacrifice of Christ himself; the gift of grace – as conceived of as the gifts and Beatitudes of the Holy Spirit – as the nature of the relationship between the individual believer as sinner and the divine as forgiver; and the cardinal virtue of charity, the gifting to both Church and to those in need, as a form of self-sacrifice in the mould of Christ, and as a way to demonstrate worthiness to receive God's grace, and thus, heavenly salvation. Seneca's writing resonates with this Christian conceptualisation of gifts and gift-giving. Gifts are placed by both philosophical systems as central features of daily life; both view the recipient as in greater debt to the giver, and both distinguish a gift from a financial transaction. Should we be in any doubt as to the Christian conception of the gift transcending commerce, we need but read the Book of Acts, where Simon Magus seeks to purchase his own admittance into the apostolic succession of the Holy Spirit, only to be chastised, "Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with

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<sup>34</sup> Trexler, R., *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

money.”<sup>35</sup> Importantly, the resulting sin of simony – the buying of clerical office and of grace – was of central importance to religious discourse in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

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Marcel Mauss’s own approach to the field of gift-giving was first framed in his essay, written with Henri Hubert and published in 1899.<sup>36</sup> For Mauss, the practice of sacrifice was part of a self-sustaining cycle to mutually support both worshippers and worshipped entity. As Mary Douglas elaborated on this point in her foreword to the 1990 edition of *The Gift*: “sacrifice is a gift that compels the deity to make a return: *Do ut des*; I give so that you may give.”<sup>37</sup> Such a sentiment was developed by Marcel Mauss into an entire economic and legal system of exchange and trust:

The system that we propose to call the system of ‘total services’, from clan to clan – the system in which individuals and groups exchange everything with one another – constitutes the most ancient system of economy and law that we can find or of which we can conceive. It forms the base from which the morality of the exchange-through-gift has flowed.<sup>38</sup>

By placing faith in the exchange one placed value in the object in the exchange. In the classical anthropological tradition, this mutual understanding is the basis of currency-based transaction over that of barter-based exchange. In the social world of gifts, Mauss found, in reference to Brahminic culture in the sub-continent, that the social value of this exchange lay at the heart of Indo-European society and culture:

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<sup>35</sup> KJV Acts, 8:20

<sup>36</sup>Hubert, H. & Mauss, M., “Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice”, *Année Sociologique*, 2 (1899), pp. 29–138. English translation by Halls, W., *Sacrifice: its Nature and Function, with a Foreword by Edward Evans-Pritchard*, (Routledge: London, 1964).

<sup>37</sup> Mauss, M., [trans. W. Halls], *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. xii.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

The gift of it once made enriches both giver and recipient with these same products. All such juridico-economic theology is developed in infinitely magnificent phrases, in innumerable *centos* of verse, and neither legal codes nor epics cease to harp upon this theme.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, as Mauss continues, the role of gifts in a society undergoing deep political, cultural, religious, and economic transitions, could use the bonds formed by networks of mutual exchange and reciprocity as a stable element upon which the flux of the society was anchored.

In *The Question of the Gift*, Mark Osteen edits a volume of essays covering the full spectrum of issues arising from gift exchange.<sup>40</sup> The essays beg many pertinent anthropological, social, historical, and economical problems, such as the difference between a gift, a transaction and a bribe; the social role of the gift; and the principals behind the obligations to reciprocate. Osteen's own contribution challenges the concern many anthropologists place on estimating the power of reciprocity in economic terms. Instead, Osteen makes a compelling case for the randomness and altruistic backgrounds to some gift exchanges: countering the dogma neatly encapsulated in Mary Douglas's oft-quoted quip of "no free gifts."<sup>41</sup> Osteen's contribution to the field represents the divergence of approaches to the theory of gift exchange in recent years, and in particular, the revisionist argument that gifts need not essentially provide the bond in society deemed so fundamental to the Maussian system. This leads us to wonder, if gifts can be exchanged between those external to a social system, or members of different social systems (perhaps as a result of cultural, linguistic, and political differences, or even just the difference of physical distance), such as the exchange of gifts in diplomacy, if any societal bond can exist? In other words, do gifts between societies – i.e., diplomatic gifts – conform to the Maussian system of gift exchange?

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>40</sup> Osteen, *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines*. The same questions are tackled in Dei, F. & Aria, M. (eds.), *Culture del dono* (Roma: Meltemi Editore, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, p. i.

Seeking an alternative to the social-bond theory forwarded by Mauss and others, stands a groundbreaking study on gifts in human society by Aafke Komter in which she brings together the “sociological theory on solidarity and anthropological theory on gift exchange.”<sup>42</sup> Komter, an expert on power relations within society, understands the gift not simply as a bond within society (the classical anthropological model explained above), but as an instigator of social solidarity. Solidarity is distinct from social identity. While social identity can exist between enemies – a Republican and a pro-Medicean can both still be Florentines – solidarity can only exist between those whose interests are mutually aligned. While the idea of solidarity is often couched within Marxist social theory or nineteenth century Roman Catholic social teaching (that society was entrusted with the earth and civilisation as gifts from God), solidarity can be a useful concept in understanding premodern gift exchange. Thus, this dissertation will draw upon the role of the gift in mid sixteenth-century Tuscan society as an agent of solidarity, used within a society already well defined, as a tool with which Cosimo I de’ Medici solidified his own position as head of his court, city, state, and through diplomatic gifts, within the political system of Italy and Europe and the Mediterranean.

### *The Legacy of Mauss for Historians*

While Mauss forms part of the classical anthropological canon, for sociologists, economists, and historians, in particular the latter, integrating into their studies a theory with an already strong pre-existing framework of literature borrowed from another academic field is still relatively new. The reluctance to readily accept established conceptualisations of gift exchange as an activity following traceable practice and patterns has proved especially uncomfortable for those historians educated within strong empiricist traditions. Archeologists and historians of the ancient world have led traditional humanist disciplines in seeing a theoretical framework as a help rather than a hindrance to furthering interpretations of their respective fields.

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<sup>42</sup> Komter, A., *Social Solidarity and the Gift* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Lynette Mitchell applied theories of gift exchange to her study of ancient Greece.<sup>43</sup> For Mitchell, the ancient Aegean provides the perfect testing ground for theories of gift exchange:

[...] since each society has its own repertoire of exchanges, the interpretation of exchange is therefore open to ambiguity and manipulation. Persians, Thracians and Macedonians, for example, did not necessarily have the same view of exchange-relationships or the same repertoire of exchanges as Greeks.<sup>44</sup>

Mitchell's model draws from Mauss by viewing society as a web of exchange-relationships. There the similarity stops. Mauss, and the anthropological school of gift-exchange is sunk by the empirical example Mitchell provides in Euripedes's *Orestes*: "Orestes sees this as his right, for he claims the gift remains the possession of the giver, and he would only be receiving back what is his own already."<sup>45</sup> In this way, Mitchell believes she finds a contrast to the Maussian concept of the obligation to reciprocate which she frames as the giver and their gift merging in such a way that the donor's participation in the exchange cannot, like the gift itself, be retracted.<sup>46</sup> Instead, Mitchell follows Ian Morris in "discarding the anthropological notion of the gift as an extension of the person in the Greek context."<sup>47</sup>

If we follow Mitchell's and Morris's critique of the nature of gift exchange in the Greek world as gifts not acting as extensions of the donor, we might find another element in the sociology of gifts drawn from the ancient world. Phoebe Bowditch's investigation into the works of Horace attempts to understand the role of gift and patronage as both

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<sup>43</sup> Mitchell, L., *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435-323 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5, n. 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

a stimulus and style for Latin literature. This is particularly significant for this thesis, as Horace was well-known to Cosimo I.<sup>48</sup>

Building from the *quid pro quo* of Mauss and Bourdieu's understanding of a contractual economy hidden beneath a veneer of altruistic gift-giving, Bowditch finds that the imagined or applied definition of an exchange as a *gift* exchange was an essential "way in which the gift of [material and intellectual] property is represented by these authors not only in terms of obligation but also as a source of aesthetic pleasure."<sup>49</sup> In this way, some forms of contractual obligation needed to be elevated to a plane of gift exchange. True cultural patronage needed to imbue the artist with a sense of creative freedom (a contract would stymie such liberty).<sup>50</sup> We could interpret this an open-ended contract: an obligation exists, but how the reciprocation is realised has yet to be decided. Until that time, the donor has a credit over the receiver.

As a giver of a gift, this undefined credit with the receiver could be extremely useful for a Renaissance prince, who may have recourse to a bank of goodwill to be drawn upon in times of need. Indeed, while Machiavelli cautions against generosity (*il principe* is

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<sup>48</sup> Bowditch, P., *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For Cosimo I's collection of Horace, see ASF, GM 28, for the listed works: *Horatius cum Macrone et porfirio*, *Horatius cum commento Mancinelli*, fol. 88r; *Horatius per alium*, *Horatii opera cum Macrone*, fol. 94r; *Horatius parisiis 1543*, *Horatius 1545*, *Horatius 1546*, [all likely the Basileae press editions from Augsburg] fol. 96v; *Horatius in carta buona in quarto*, fol. 102v. Horace was well-known in the Renaissance, his many influences are well described in McGann, M., "The reception of Horace in the Renaissance", in Harrison, S., *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 305-317. Appropriately, the poet, Gabriele Simeoni, gifted a copy of Horace's poetry along with some of his own works while trying to win Cosimo's patronage in 1549, see Letter from Gabriello Simeoni in France to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 24 August 1549, ASF, MdP 1175, ins. 5, fol. 6, MAP Doc ID# 526.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>50</sup> Compare this to origins of artistic freedom in the early modern court as argued in Warnke, M., *The Court Artist. On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist* [trans. by David McIntock] (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

another book in Cosimo's collection<sup>51</sup>), Machiavelli says that, "there is nothing that is so self-consuming as generosity: the more you practise it, the less you will be able to continue to practise it."<sup>52</sup> Machiavelli also remarked, just in such a way as Horace's works demonstrate, that, "a shrewd ruler, therefore, must try to ensure that his citizens, whatever the situation may be, will always be dependent on the government and on him; and then they will always be loyal to him."<sup>53</sup> Machiavelli's model thus nuances the classical: gifts are a form of contract.

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Historians of the early modern period and after have been most effected by Mauss's dictum that the efficacy of the gift-exchange system he identified in 'archaic' societies would lessen, and even disappear in societies dominated by markets and self-interest.<sup>54</sup> Countering such a claim, while the studies above have approached gift-exchange more theoretically, early modern historians have tended to take a more empirical approach supported by the wealth of archival and material evidence available to their studies.

Two works on early modern northern Europe employ this methodology: Irma Thoen's *Strategic Affection: Gift Exchange in Seventeenth Century Holland* (2008) and Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos's *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (2008). Both, by deploying a taxonomical structure in their

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<sup>51</sup> ASE, GM 28, fol. 101v. The work is listed as, *Il Principe del Machiavello in penna*, and marked with an asterisk. The folio is headed with title, "Sequitano alcuni libri di diverse sorti di quelli dell'Illustrissima Casa de Medici o indiritti a Sua Eccellenza". The manuscript copy of *Il Principe* in Cosimo's possession could therefore be the original, or a presentation version that someone had gone to the trouble to transcribing by hand.

<sup>52</sup> Machiavelli, N., *The Prince* [Skinner, Q. & Price, R., eds. & trans.], (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), XV, p. 57.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, p. 37.

<sup>54</sup> Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, pp. 91-100. A strong counter case is made by Carrier, J., *Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism Since 1700* (London: Routledge, 1995), which is discussed below.

studies, dissect the very similar societies which they seek to understand. As thematically based studies, the focus lies away from the particularities of context, such as an Horatian poem or an Euripidean play, which led scholars of the ancient world in approaching the study of gifts, and is instead replaced with an attention on the identification of the “general rules” governing gift exchange. As Irma Thoen states:

[...] this research deals with all those objects and activities that are offered within a (possible) pattern of reciprocity not as an economic transaction but as a means to establish or maintain social ties.<sup>55</sup>

A sentiment echoed by Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, whose book

[...] pursues a set of distinctive practices that encouraged and emboldened patterns of support and exchange during this period, including more specific forms of gift-giving (New Year’s gifts, for example), feasting and commensality, practices of appeal as well as commemoration of giving and support.<sup>56</sup>

These patterns can then be focussed upon the contexts of the exchanges. Krausman Ben-Amos is especially strong in delineating her narrative through the various gift-exchange networks in existence in early modern England; household and familial, state and civic, economic and legal.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, these patterns can be nuanced by the typology of the gift itself, either as an object or a service.<sup>58</sup> This division between various worlds or economies of gift-exchange do not seem to reflect the

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<sup>55</sup> Thoen, I., *Strategic Affection?: Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Ben-Amos, I., *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ben-Amos gives a particularly valuable account of gifts in Protestant literature, see *Ibid.*, pp. 255-255.

<sup>58</sup> Irma Thoen makes a particularly engaging argument for the role of cooking pot wedding-gifts as objects not actually used for their purpose, but instead re-categorised as a gift-object instead of a utensil: see Thoen, *Strategic Affection?: Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, pp. 98-116.



situation of a ruler traversing all divisions of his or her state: in early modern Tuscany all estates of society gifted to Cosimo.

By richly supplying their studies with case studies and examples, early modern historians have successfully countered the argument that gift exchange systems declined as society became more market orientated. James Carrier makes this point most aptly in his study on gifts from 1700 to the modern day where he found that instead of applying a Marxist theory to the materialism of gift exchange, "I could make sense of them only if I saw society as containing a capitalist sphere, a sphere of Maussian commodity exchange, existing together with a non-capitalist sphere, a sphere of Maussian gift exchange."<sup>59</sup>

This theoretical framework may seem far from the world of Cosimo I de' Medici, but two important points emerge from this survey of the social anthropological and classical literary approaches to gifts. One, that the ritualisation of gift-giving (birthday gifts, christmas gifts, etc.) can rob the gift of some of its power, and therefore, more spontaneous gifts, such as diplomatic gifts given for a particular purpose, may be more valuable with regards the scope of this thesis. And second, this latterly mentioned idea of 'spheres' outlined by James Carrier, suggests that the exchange of gifts is a form of economy, and therefore, the gift exchange (the transaction) can have only a simple value (price). As such, given the archival approach to this study, we must ask: does everyone who corresponds with either Cosimo, his family, or his secretaries provide a defined sphere of interaction? If so, does the exchange of gifts within this sphere denote an informal social economy of a commodity market, or is there still an element, Maussian or not, of gift exchange? Without doubt, these questions can only be answered by appreciating Renaissance material culture and the particular social values objects and their exchange held for the subjects under study in this thesis.

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<sup>59</sup> Carrier, *Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism Since 1700*, p. ix.

## 2.3 THE GIFT IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

### *The Material Renaissance*

One of the strongest trends in the last three decades of premodern history has been the amalgamation of interests from scholars in diverse fields finding common ground in the study of material culture.<sup>60</sup> The study of material culture has had the greatest impact on Renaissance and early modern studies. In her important work of 1996, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance*, Lisa Jardine elevates the study of objects as an alternative approach to the literature-led understanding of the Renaissance.<sup>61</sup> Rather than focussing on textual analysis, or indeed, stylistic analysis, Jardine reconstructs the early modern world through studying the use and appreciation of objects. The numerous examples from which she draws provides patterns of use and meaning across Europe – especially in the highest echelons of society – that together convey a rare unity to the Renaissance world, including the world outside of Europe's borders.<sup>62</sup> Jardine's study, for all its novelty of approach, does not make grandiose claims for the study of material culture. This is perhaps the inevitable consequence of attempting to cover such a broad plain, and instead, the concepts which became the keywords of Renaissance material culture – exchange, imitation, circulation – are best illustrated in narrower case

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<sup>60</sup> See in particular, Goldthwaite, R., *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

<sup>61</sup> Jardine, L., *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996) On the backcover, Antony Pagden comments, "*Worldly Goods* is a remarkable achievement. Most previous attempts to explain the Renaissance, and they are many, have concentrated on the fashioning of a new cultural identity. Jardine is concerned with that, too, but her approach is via the material culture of the period. By looking at commodities, which range from pictures to printed books, from maps to jewelled helmets, at who these were for and by whom, Lisa Jardine offers the reader not only a lively and sometimes startling vision of a world in transition, but also an entirely new approach to the Renaissance."

<sup>62</sup> Jardine also deals with gifts, which she views as, "For the the rich and powerful, lavish gift-giving was part of a highly codified way of establishing networks of personal indebtedness which could be called upon in times of need." Ibid., pp. 420-421.

studies. As such, *The Material Renaissance*, edited by Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch is of particular value.

The idea of a material-driven Renaissance builds on the work of Richard Goldthwaite.<sup>63</sup> Goldthwaite's argument was that the Renaissance was consumer-led, namely that demand for objects (art, luxury, consumables) and architecture was stimulated by an economy awash with liquid capital (in the form of bullion), and society's movement away from sumptuary laws. *The Material Renaissance* continues and advances Goldthwaite's ideas by transposing them to individual case studies, all the while seeking an understanding to one element of the consumer-led Renaissance that Goldthwaite had not countered: the social dimension of economic transactions. As the editors of the volume outline in their introduction, their intention is to "look at networks of exchange that relied not only on money but also on credit, payment in kind and gift-giving."<sup>64</sup>

The social meaning of a "currency-less transaction", especially that of gifts, draws heavily from the work of Mary Douglas and her ideas on the "anthropology of consumption".<sup>65</sup> Regarding gifts, the approach in *The Material Renaissance* and its preceding four-year research project, was dominated by the magnificence of display as a catalyst to the supply and demand of gifted objects.<sup>66</sup> While usefully providing a breadth of case studies unavailable to Goldthwaite, and while coupled with the enriching research trajectory of the socio-anthropological dimension to material exchange, nowhere in *The Material Renaissance* does the inclusion of the gift's price as part of the exchange, a frequent attribute to early modern gift-giving, find an

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<sup>63</sup> Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600*; see also *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

<sup>64</sup> O'Malley & Welch, *The Material Renaissance*, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Douglas, M. & Isherwood, B., *The World of Goods Towards an Anthropology of Consumption: With a New Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 37.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p. 5. In the same volume, see in particular, Hollingsworth, M., "Coins, cloaks and candlesticks: the economic of extravagance", pp. 260-288.

answer.<sup>67</sup> As a result, objects become divorced from their wider role and purposes.

### *The Lives of Objects*

Countering this dislocation, As the material world and the system(s) of material exchange have increased in historical importance, so too, more recently, have scholars reevaluated the historical value in understanding the stories of the objects themselves. Two edited volumes in particular have sought to account for why historians must pay attention to the lives of objects: *The Biography of the Object in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy* edited by Roberta Olson, Patricia Reilly and Rupert Shepherd, and *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500-1800*, edited by Paula Findlen.

The former volume is mainly notable for its foreword by Nicholas Penny, former Director of the National Gallery, London. Penny's brief but important contribution wittily presents the bejewelled toothpick in its moment of fashion in European society in the first decades of the sixteenth century. To understand the object, it is not enough, he says, to rely on the prosaic inventory-entry to which the object pertains. Instead, when an object is viewed from multiple perspectives, its depiction in art, its description in literature, ideally gaged through the eyes and words of contemporaries, can we then fully comprehend an object's biography:

[...] in understanding the meaning of things in Europe four or five hundred years ago, we should always be looking out for new types of evidence, and above all for the rare contemporary witness who make explicit or implicit reference to the meaning

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<sup>67</sup> Lisa Jardine casually refers to Galeazzo Sforza's inclusion of 1000 scudi as the value of antiquities given to Isabella d'Este as a way to emphasise the obligation of the receiver to reciprocate. Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance*, p. 430. This reluctance to deal with the role and significance of prices is perhaps justified, see Hamilton, E., "Use and Misuse of Price History", *Journal of Economic History*, 4 (1944), pp. 47-60.

invested in material objects or the symbolic uses to which they might be put.<sup>68</sup>

This approach is well-adopted in the essays which follow Penny's broad methodological statement. Moreover, one essay deals with gifts in a most interesting way. Tessa Storey on the gifting of jewellery to prostitutes in early modern Rome draws from a remarkable breadth of sources to make a case for the myriad of significances regarding gifted-jewellery: to make a payment; to create a symbolic bond; to display to love-rivals; and to even evoke protection.<sup>69</sup>

One of the most important aspects of object biographies (and indeed, by object in this sense, one tends to mean artefacts, but this is not necessarily the case: a title or honour could be an object, the licence to trade could be an object, one's freedom could be an "object") is when objects move, or rather, are transferred into the possession of another. By moving, whether as a payment, gift, or purchased merchandise, the object influences the owner, depending on how he keeps and displays the object, as much as he uses, and even thinks, about the object. Objects in motion is the theme of Paula Findlen's introduction to her volume on objects and their histories. Findlen makes no overarching approach to the subject. Instead, her argument is that the serious study of objects reveals a vast amount of historical information that we would otherwise not see by:

[...] consider[ing] the benefits of social, economic, and cultural perspectives as well as insights from the history of science, technology, and medicine in understanding material culture.<sup>70</sup>

Regardless of one's methodological or disciplinary perspective, the centrality of the object as an active agent of communication is undisputed. As such, like Findlen, this thesis chooses to echo the words

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<sup>68</sup> Olson, R., Reilly, P., & Shepherd, R. (eds.), *The Biography of the Object in Late Mediaeval and Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Storey, T., "Jewellery belonging to prostitutes in early-modern Rome", in *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74.

<sup>70</sup> Findlen, *Early Modern Things*, p. 6.

of Giorgio Riello, that only by connecting objects and narratives is it possible to write a new history of the early modern.<sup>71</sup>

### *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century Europe*

So far, the studies presented have covered broad periods of time, and latterly, the early modern period as an age stretching from the high Renaissance to the dawn of the industrial revolution. Where, we must ask, does the sixteenth century fit into this narrative of material culture? To what extent should we be aware of the particularities of the age in regard to the exchange of gifts?

One of the most frequently cited historical studies on early modern gift-exchange is Natalie Zamon Davis's *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*.<sup>72</sup> Does this indicate some unique features to studying material gifts between 1500 and 1600? To this, Davis answers:

Sixteenth-century people were evaluating gifts all the time, their own gifts and those of others, deciding what was at stake, and judging whether it was a good gift or a bad gift of even a gift at all.<sup>73</sup>

Certainly the sixteenth century was an age preoccupied by the use and abuse of gifts (to borrow a phrase from Susanne Butters, see below), but was it somehow a unique age in the history of gift-exchange which arguable stretches as far back as human history? Did the fifteenth century, or any other society, not value objects as highly as the sixteenth? For anthropologists, any such age of exceptionalism would be difficult to countenance, even for Mauss's predication that only pre-market (i.e., pre-monetary price) societies allowed for the full efficacy of the gift, yet the sixteenth century does seem to host conditions particularly conducive to understanding the gift. As Davis

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<sup>71</sup> Riello, G., "Things That Shape History: Material Culture and Historical Narratives," in Harvey, K. (ed.), *History and Material Culture* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 36.

<sup>72</sup> Davis, N., *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

notes by dissecting French society, from the King in Paris to the Gascon peasant, gifts feature in every form of private and public act of communication, whether a festivity such as a marriage or the celebration of a saint's day, or indeed, as a means of transforming an otherwise socially uncomfortable action for a sixteenth-century man or woman, such as asking a favour or even just transforming business into a more palatable and courteous exchange.

Davis's methodology of supplying numerous examples indicates another sixteenth-century peculiarity. Unlike ages before, the wealth of archival material to be found on middling and lower social classes furnishes the historian with a new horizon of investigation.<sup>74</sup> Archival sources also provide rare case studies of the gifting activities of single person, in Davis's case, a Norman seigneur, Gilles de Gouberville.<sup>75</sup> Davis's archival acumen should be mirrored by any scholar of gift exchange as the only means with which to approach the subject.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, by providing well-chosen examples of a variety of sources, for example, to describe the Catholic church's understanding of the gift, Davis deploys archival material illustrating the opinions of a Parisian doctor of theology, the nuns of Montmartre, and the

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<sup>74</sup> Davis is even able to provide a discussion of gifts exchanged between classes, especially important in the gift-giving habits of Cosimo I, *Ibid.*, pp. 68-72.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>76</sup> For Davis's early modern archival research, see Davis, N., *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987). For more case studies applying this archive-led methodology, see Algazi, G., Groebner, V., & Jussen, B., (eds.) *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); Butters, S., "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici (1549-1609)", *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance*, 11 (2007), pp. 243-354.; Büttner, B., "Past Presents: New Year's Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca. 1400", *Art Bulletin*, 83 (2001), pp. 598-625; Cropper, E., (ed.) *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 2000); Masson, G., "Papal Gifts and Roman Entertainments in Honour of Queen Christina's Arrival," in von Platen, M. (ed.), *Queen Christina of Sweden: Documents and Studies* (Stockholm: Analecta reginensia, 1966), pp. 244-261; Jansson, M., "Measured reciprocity: English ambassadorial gift exchange in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9 (2005), pp. 348-370.

choirmaster of Saint Paul's Cathedral in Lyon.<sup>77</sup> With such a strong source-led foundation, it is then little wonder than Davis' conclusion has been at the heart of every other study and monograph involving gift-exchange:

Gifts marked the times of year and of the life cycle; they sustained connections among friends, neighbours, kin, and co-workers at all levels of society; they softened oppressive relations across lines of class and status. They brought added confidence and trust to trade arrangements, and were everywhere present to ease the way in social advancement and political transaction.<sup>78</sup>

Another important aspect of sixteenth-century history, that of religious and intellectual transitions – covered in Davis's book with regards Protestantism in France – has likewise been the focus of much scholarly attention. Janet Cox-Rearick identified another transition in the gifts sent from Leo X to Francis I of France on the eve of the Medici-de La Tour d'Auvergne marriage in 1518 and in the following years.<sup>79</sup> This transition, that she notes as sacred to profane, as the Medici family, although holding the papacy, chose to represent itself with artistic gifts not always with a religious theme. For Francis's queen, Claude, Leo sent Raphael's *Holy Family* (1518) and Bandinelli's copy of the *Laocoon*

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<sup>77</sup> Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>79</sup> Cox-Rearick, J., "Sacred to Profane: Diplomatic Gifts of the Medici to Francis I", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 24 2 (1994), pp. 239-258.



group (1520s) for Francis himself.<sup>80</sup> One need not concur with Cox-Rearick's interpretation of this sacred-profane transition as indicative of humanist cultural trends in order to appreciate broader ideas which this gift exchange represents: namely, the commissioning of high-value symbolic art-objects at considerable cost to be used as diplomatic gifts.

### *The Gift at Court*

Unsurprisingly, the sphere of courts and diplomacy in the sixteenth century has richly provided many examples of gift-exchange to early modern scholars. Evelyn Korsh has provided a magnificently detailed account of the gifts between Henry III of France and the Venetian government and nobility during the King's visit to the city in 1574.<sup>81</sup> Korsh's study of an important state visit evidences, thanks to extensive archival research (which she presents well in her appendices), the many ways gifts were used as part of political strategies: the new French monarch in seeking to secure his role as a European potentate worthy of alliances, and the Venetians to emphasise their role as defenders of Christendom. Interestingly, Korsh ably catalogs the gifts from each party to demonstrate the differences in type – Henry gifted honours, Venice gifted merchandise – which communicated to the audience of the Venetian public and the French court the mutual benefits afforded by their cordial relations.<sup>82</sup> Korsh interprets the gifted-

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<sup>80</sup> This is the so-called *Laocoonte* of Bandinelli, never sent to Francis, and entered the Medici collections and is currently housed in the Uffizi, inv. 1914 n. 284. The Laocoon was much copied, and clearly a worthy gift for a king, see Settis, S., "Laocoonte de bronzo, Laocoonte de marmo," in *Il Cortile delle Statue: Der Stauenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan* (Mainz, 1998), pp. 128-160. For other gifts of art-objects see: Baker-Bates, P., "Beyond Rome: Sebastiano Del Piombo as a Painter of Diplomatic Gifts", *Renaissance Studies*, (2011), and most recently, von Bernstorff, M. & Kubersky-Piredda, S., *L'arte del dono. Scambi artistici e diplomazia tra Italia e Spagna 1550–1650: Contributi in occasione della giornata internazionale di studi, 14-15 gennaio 2008*, (Roma: Bibliotheca Hertziana, Istituto Max Planck per la Storia dell'Arte, 2013).

<sup>81</sup> Korsch, E., "Diplomatic Gifts on Henri III's Visit to Venice in 1574", *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 15 (2007), pp. 83-113.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

object and the month-long visit as a gift from the Venetian republic, indeed, that “the entire program of Venetian festivities for Henry must be understood as tribute to the French king.”<sup>83</sup> Following Korsh’s conceptualisation of the visit as a gift, the entire cost, some 100,000 ducats, was justified by the Serenissima: “Thus Henry’s visit was regarded as a gift from God, even if it had cost the Venetian exchequer the equivalent of a military campaign.”<sup>84</sup> In 1573, Venice could thus feel secure that by winning Henry’s gratitude with their departure from the Holy League (the Papacy, Spain, Venice, the Republic of Genoa, the Duchy of Savoy, and the Knights of Malta: the alliance that defeated the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto in 1571), they could make separate peace with the Turks knowing that it would not necessarily mean their diplomatic isolation from Christendom.

One final study serves to fully establish the field of gift exchange in early modern Italy, Diana Carrió-Invernizzi’s recent work on seventeenth-century gift-exchange in Spanish Italy – Cosimo’s imperial alliance being the forerunner of the Spanish dominium over Italy.<sup>85</sup> In dealing with strictly diplomatic gifts, there are no other studies which have been so comprehensive as Carrió-Invernizzi in studying gift-exchange between allied and hostile states (or indeed, accepting that such exchanges even happened). Likewise, the gifting between different states, between the Habsburg dynasty and the Medici of Florence, had to take into account the vastly different statuses afforded respectively to both dynasties. Very often, a gift to a senior partner was put under no such obligation to reciprocate as for a gift between equals or to an inferior: as a recent article has challenged, an emperor cannot be compelled to act by gifts, as any offering is

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>85</sup> Carrió-Invernizzi, D., “Gift and Diplomacy in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Italy”, *The Historical Journal*, 51 4 (2008), pp. 881-899.

considered an expression of fealty.<sup>86</sup> Most importantly, Carrió-Invernizzi identifies the origins of later Spanish Habsburg gift-giving as having been externally influenced: “The customs of the Spanish changed thanks to their careful observation of the practices of Italian princes, such as those of the grand duke of Tuscany.”<sup>87</sup> The origins of this influence, and indeed, innovation on the part of the grand duke of Tuscany on the use of diplomatic gifts, is the purpose of this thesis.

It will now be clear that the study of gifts is wedded to strong empirical investigation. Whilst in anthropology this has necessitated studies of gift-giving from Amazonia to New Guinea, for historians this has necessitated vast amounts of archival research. This archival exploration has been inherently different from many other approaches to mining primary material for relevant information. For example, when writing a biography or charting the course of an event, the traditional scientific organisation of an archive affords the scholar the physical parameters with which to narrow the scope of research, such as a set of chronological- or biographical-bound volumes. The profuse and scattered nature of gift-exchange, and the occasional nature of gift-lists, etc., has often meant that research in this field has been both labour-intensive and time-consuming. As such, while in many historical topics it would be redundant, for the history of early modern gift-exchange, books of collated sources are still valuable additions to scholarship. One recent example in this trend has been the exhaustive work of Jane Lawson on the New Years’ Gift Lists of the Tudor court.<sup>88</sup> Lawson has located and transcribed every extant list of gifts made on occasion of the New Years’ gift ceremony at the Tudor court, long dispersed to collections around the world. One would expect that

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<sup>86</sup> Flaig, E., “Is Loyalty a Favor? or: Why Gifts cannot oblige an Emperor” in Algazi, G., Groebner, V., & Jussen, B. (eds.), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange*, pp. 29-61.

<sup>87</sup> Carrió-Invernizzi, op. cit., p. 899.

<sup>88</sup> Lawson, J., *The Elizabethan New Year’s Gift Exchanges, 1559-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), for an antecedent of the Tudor court’s gift exchanges, see Buettner, B., “Past Presents: New Year’s Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca. 1400”, *Art Bulletin*, 84 (2001), pp. 568-625.

annual exchanges of gifts may lack the meaning and value of gifts given in response to particular events, yet, what Lawson's source book provides is that even in the formalised annual tradition of gift-giving, personal agendas and ambitions can be communicated and affected by the choice of gifts given to Elizabeth I and those received in return.<sup>89</sup>

The English court – courts being such a particular strata within early modern society – has provided the setting for a literary-based study of the use of gifts for self-promotion at court.<sup>90</sup> This leads us to wonder, following from Lawson's exploration of the nuanced meaning of gifts in the formalised setting of the court, of what considerations one should make when dealing with gifts in a court society. Alison Scott's *Selfish Gifts: The Politics of Exchange and English Courtly Literature, 1580–1628* laudably tackles this very question. Scott's argument is that the classical ideals which had governed courtly gift-exchange (gifts out of duty, respect; an honour exchange) in both the Elizabethan court and the Stuart court, should be set with the economic context where "inflation had sent prices spiralling, the notion of a financial market was beginning to emerge, and gift exchange was increasingly detached from classical ideals and unfortunately aligned with bribery and corruption."<sup>91</sup> Scott elaborates this idea of competition, juxtaposing the ossified system of gift and reward under the last years of the late queen, with the arrival of the Stuart royal family – king, queen, and heir – providing parallel court networks where ambitious courtiers, starved of reward under Elizabeth, could fully pursue honours and rewards. That the structure of the court could stimulate gift-exchange could be particularly illuminating for the case-study at hand, the court of Cosimo I de' Medici. Neither Florentine elite society nor his predecessor, Duke Alessandro, had existed in any sort of court society where 'getting ahead' was partly founded on one's ability to deploy gifts to one's advantage (this is not to say gifts were not used within

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-10.

<sup>90</sup> Scott, A., *Selfish Gifts: The Politics of Exchange and English Courtly Literature, 1580-1628* (Madison, [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 2006).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

familial patronage networks<sup>92</sup>). That being said, the mercantile nature of Florentine society may well precede the abandonment of the 'classical' system that Scott argues was in decline in England at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Certainly from the Italian perspective, Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano* and Giovanni della Casa's *Il Galateo* are well-studied exemplars of the formalised ideal of court life.<sup>93</sup> For Castiglione, the gift represented three things; gifts of divine grace, bestowing virtues such as learning and beauty; divine gifts, such as liberty; and physical gifted artefacts. The latter being the focus of this thesis, it is worth dealing with how Castiglione mentions the use of these types of gifts. The first of two ways in which Castiglione discusses gift-objects is in courtship: the acceptance of a gift by the courted-maiden as signifying a reciprocation of affection, and thus, a public sign of amorous attentions from the suitor being well-received, such that it could near equal, or at least preceded, a legal betrothal.<sup>94</sup> The second, gifts of art, is cited as an object beyond value, "some painters who gave their works as gifts, esteeming gold and silver inadequate to pay for them."<sup>95</sup> The ability for gifted art to transcend monetary value will be a recurrent theme of discussion throughout the thesis.

The Florentine Giovanni della Casa's work on etiquette, *Il Galateo, ovvero de' costumi*, deals with the habits in practice, rather than the ideal behaviour as described by Castiglione, mentions gifts

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<sup>92</sup> Although gifts are rarely mentions, see the discussion of *favore* and *gratia/grazia* in McLean, P., *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham [N.C.], Duke University Press, 2007), ad passim.

<sup>93</sup> Castiglione, B., *Il libro del cortegiano* (Firenze: per li heredi di Philipppo di Giunta, 1528); della Casa, G., *Trattato di messer Giovanni della Casa, nel quale sotto la persona d'un vecchio idiota ammaestrante un suo giovanetto, si ragiona de modi, che si debbono o tenere, o schifare nella comune conversatione, cognominato Galatheo overo de costumi* (Firenza: appresso Iacopo e Bernardo Giunti, 1561).

<sup>94</sup> Castiglione, B., (trans. Leonard Eckstein Opdycke), *The Book of the Courtier* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 65-66, 207. See also Chapter 4: Unwanted Gifts.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

sparingly. One example concerns a young nobleman staying with the the Bishop of Verona, Galateo's master, who though displaying excellent virtues and manners, lacks in but one aspect: his eating habits. Not wanting to leave the young count to continue his tour with this flaw, the bishop dispatched Galateo to escort the man someway out of the city before, in the politest of terms, acquainting the nobleman with his error. Interestingly, Galateo refers to this advice as a 'dono', a gift. The count responds most gratefully, saying: "Say to the Bishop that if such were all the gifts men made for one another such as the type he has made me, then all would be all the richer for it."<sup>96</sup> While we are dealing with an intangible gift of knowledge (one might call it a gift of virtue), the comparison the young count makes – that such gifts would enrich society – suggest that many gifts do not enrich society. Indeed, as briefly mentioned in Castiglione's gifts during courtship regarding the necessity for the young woman to reject such advances lest she compromise her own virtue, Giovanni della Casa seems to imply that gifts do *not* tend to enrich society. This leads us to conclude: far from virtuous actions, gifts were already conceived of as hard-headed tools of socio-political power by sixteenth-century Italian courtiers.

### *The Gift in Grand Ducal Medici Studies*

The formation of this thesis can be anchored to the work of Suzanne Butters, as presented in her article on the use and abuse of gifts by Ferdinando I de' Medici.<sup>97</sup> Butters' account of gift-exchange is amongst the most well-researched of any study. While intimidating as it might be to seek to provide the preceding context to her work, and, it is hoped, provide a necessary, if not richer, Medici-focussed case study through the "use and abuse of gifts" by Ferdinando's father and role model, Cosimo I de' Medici. For Butters, the study of gifts is a

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<sup>96</sup> "Direte al Vescovo che, se tali fossero tutti i doni che gli uomini si fanno infra di loro, quale il suo è, eglino troppo più ricchi sarebbono che essi non sono." Della Casa, *Galateo, ovvero, de' costumi*, IV, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> Butters, S., "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici (1549-1609)", pp. 243-354.

methodology unto itself in understanding social relations in the early modern world:

The layered meanings ascribed to the forms, materials and cultural overtones of *doni* allowed contemporaries to deduce a good deal about their donors and recipients, and to gauge the relative position of each in whatever context seemed most appropriate at the time.<sup>98</sup>

Butters lists in great detail and to great effect the sheer number of gifts exchanged, of all types and values, to and from Ferdinando. As Butters notes, “Gifts were seldom disinterested, even in religious contexts.”<sup>99</sup> As such, each gift has a particular story or context which enriches our understanding of both the exchange and the Medici court, though as Butters cautions, “Most [gifts] stand out for their ordinariness, however, and for their monotonous frequency with which they were given.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, Butters’s contribution is two-fold, at one level we must understand the system of gifts at court in the general sense, to therefore, on the second level, identify gifts which stand out from the norm and deserve greater attention.

Butters’s presentation of the courtly system is exhaustive. She identifies the particular role of women, especially the Grand Duchess Christine de Lorraine, as an important influence upon the flows of gifts.<sup>101</sup> Likewise, that gifts were often idiosyncratic, highly personalised to the tastes and interests of the receiver. Perhaps most importantly, Butters makes an excellent case for the public nature of gifts stimulating gossip and rumour as a popular subject for discussion and interpretation within court circles:

Ferdinando and his contemporaries are bound to have scrutinised and judged acts of gift-giving [...] monitoring with

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 247-248.

their advisors and household officials the degree to which conventions governing *doni* were observed, stretched or breached by others, in order to position more effectively their own gestures in this domain.<sup>102</sup>

The public nature of gifts impacted upon the choice of gifts that people like Ferdinando had to make to those they did not like, such as his elder brother's mistress and second wife, Bianca Cappello.<sup>103</sup> Butters, though, does not tend to draw clear distinctions between social diplomacy (the interaction between courtiers, or courtiers and the prince and princess), transnational diplomacy, or indeed, the city-contado diplomacy required of the Grand Duke in order to govern the disparate provincial nobilities to be found in Tuscany. Likewise, Butters posits some exchanges, such as the gifts given by Don Luigi Garzia de Toledo to Ferdinando, without adequate reference to the long history of Medici-Toledo exchange inaugurated by Ferdinando's mother, Eleonora de Toledo's marriage to Cosimo, and thereafter, the complex politicking of the Naples-Florence axis at the papal curia and imperial court.<sup>104</sup> Thus, what Butters account lacks is a strong political narrative – arguably, the most important undercurrent which governed many gift-exchanges both internal and external to the Medici court – and which this thesis seeks to address.

It therefore follows that we must always remember that Ferdinando, unlike his father, inherited a realm secure and prosperous, he had neither grand dynastic ambitions nor any strong desires to expand his territory. His one diplomatic manoeuvre, the significant shift from the Spanish to French orbits, was not the subject of Butters's research, had it been, she would likely have been able to detect a clear shift in the direction of gifts in the years immediately before and after 1589 when he married Christine de Lorraine. The gift exchanges to and from Ferdinando are therefore representative of a well-established prince. As Marcello Fantoni observes, it is “in 95% of cases [of gift

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 273-274.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 269.



exchange], it is the Grand Duke who holds the role of donor.”<sup>105</sup> Butters elaborates on this point, by including that many of the receivers of gifts are well-down the social scale from the court: Ferdinando’s role as a donor, then, is much more as a patron and benefactor of his state than as an ambitious prince courting the favour of Europe’s great and powerful.<sup>106</sup>

It is worth finishing the treatment of Butters’s article with a valuable anecdote:

It was a fact born of pragmatism that European rulers bestowed gifts in order to maintain their political power. In the thirteenth century, Henry III of England had the walls of his palaces and the border of his chess-board inscribed with the motto, “He who does not give what he has, will not get what he wants”, a reminder that the two chief duties of a ruler were to confer benefits and dispense justice.<sup>107</sup>

Another recent contribution situated in the same period as Butters’s work and later, is the 2009 doctoral thesis of Sarah Bercusson on the gift-giving practices of three Austrian duchesses: Joanna, grand duchess of Tuscany; Barbara, duchess of Ferrara; and Eleonora, duchess of Mantua.<sup>108</sup> Bercusson has pursued much the same methodology of Butters of compiling lists of gift-exchanges before categorising them according to the context of the exchange or the typology of gift, whichever seems to offer the more interesting contribution to understanding the role of gifts from the female perspective at court, which, she argues,

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<sup>105</sup> “[...] nel 95% di casi è il granduca a ricoprire il ruolo di donatore” Fantoni, M., *La corte del granduca. Forma e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1994), p. 98. This is quite clearly an impossible statistic, borne out neither in Butters’s work or any other study on early modern gifts, including this thesis.

<sup>106</sup> Butters, op. cit., pp. 277-278.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

<sup>108</sup> Bercusson, S., *Gift-giving, consumption and the female court in sixteenth-century Italy*, Ph.D. Thesis, Queen Mary University, London, 2009.

[from the] sociopolitical context where the male ruler drew his authority from his designation as sovereign, while the female consort was forced to rely on a variety of shifting, less formal factors to exert influence.<sup>109</sup>

While drawing interesting parallels patterns of behaviour between the three Habsburg sisters, her account of Joanna von Habsburg's gift-giving and luxury consumption, the first wife of Francesco I de' Medici, Cosimo's heir and successor, is especially illuminating for this thesis.

Joanna's arrival in Florence in 1565 required a substantial enlargement of the Medici court which had, until then, been relatively small. Indeed, the year before Cosimo's court had 168 servants and retainers – and thus representing a much smaller pool of supported courtiers with whom courtly gifts could be exchanged – but would grow to 258 members under Francesco's rule.<sup>110</sup> Unlike the wife of Cosimo, Eleonora de Toledo, Joanna did not have her own income, only an allowance granted to her by Francesco.<sup>111</sup> Like her sisters in Ferrara and Mantua, Joanna promoted the interests of her circle, especially in the arranging of advantageous marriages for her ladies-in-waiting.<sup>112</sup> This was part of Joanna's integration into court, a strategy supported by the gifting of gifts, but a pattern of activity radically changed when Francesco's affair with the Venetian noblewomen, Bianca Cappello, became common knowledge in around 1573.<sup>113</sup> This shift is well evidenced by Joanna's shift from patronising her Italian courtiers, to promoting mainly the interests of her German-Austrian ladies-in-waiting and noblemen in Florence. Indeed, this may not have been Joanna's decision, as Bianca Cappello's status as the Duke's mistress

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>110</sup> Fantoni, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>111</sup> Bercusson, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102

<sup>112</sup> Bercusson provides a table of Joanna's matches, pp. 107-108.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

had afforded her a standing in Tuscan society, diverting much of the attention (and gifts) of the Florentine nobility.<sup>114</sup>

While clearly explaining the respective differences between the sisters as ducal consorts, Bercusson's conclusion on the use of gifts is much in line with the argument already established, that gifts were a social tool, in particular, given the restrictions placed on the life of women:

[...] in certain areas in which the female consort enjoyed a degree of freedom, objects could be used to make socioeconomics and political statements and to construct visible networks with courtiers, key political figures, and the wider populace.<sup>115</sup>

Indeed, for Joanna, keen to assert her status as a Habsburg princess, as well as Grand Duchess of Tuscany, whilst competing with Bianca Cappello, gifts were one of the only means she had to interact with the world, especially to maintain her position in both Florentine society and the broader European court system. Gifts and the bestowing of largess was also an important element in her portrayal of virtue, especially during her pilgrimage to Loreto in 1573, the year in which she suffered the humiliation of Bianca Cappello's status as Francesco's mistress officially recognised.

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 223-224.

## 2.4 COSIMO I AND HIS HISTORIANS

### *Historical Approaches to Cosimo I*

The artistic, architectural, cultural, intellectual, and political legacies of Cosimo I de' Medici remain undimmed over five-hundred years after his death. The cities of Tuscany, above all Florence, are host to numerous monuments to his rule. Museums around the world hold in their collections artworks once part of his collections. The social fabric of Tuscany, and to a lesser extent, all of Italy, still carries some of his influence, for example, one might think of the resonances still today of Cosimo's conquest of Siena and control of Piombino and Elba in defining the borders of the modern region of Tuscany.<sup>116</sup> For any student of the Medici ducal dynasty, or of early modern Italy, or indeed, of early modern Europe in general, and more broadly, a political scientist or philosopher tracing an idea of 'modernity' and the state, a biography of Cosimo would be essential reading. Alas, no modern biography exists, yet more remarkably, of the numerous *vitae* written in the centuries since Cosimo's death, all have been wanting in one respect or another.<sup>117</sup>

In 1578, the first biographies of Cosimo I de' Medici were published in Florence by Baccio Baldini and Sebastiano Sanleolini.<sup>118</sup> (The former was the late duke's physician, but Baldini was more than an archiater.<sup>119</sup>) A confidant to Cosimo, Baldini had taken on the role of

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<sup>116</sup> At least this is the legacy with which Eric Cochrane ends his study, Cochrane, E., *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973), pp. 505-508.

<sup>117</sup> The most up-to-date biography of Cosimo is probably his entry in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* - Volume 30 (1984): Fasano Guarini, E., "Cosimo I de' Medici, duca di Firenze, granduca di Toscana".

<sup>118</sup> Baldini, B., *Vita di Cosimo Medici, primo gran duca di Toscana* [Followed By] *Panegirico della clemenza*. (Firenze, 1578); *Serenissimi Cosmi Medicis primi Hetruriae magni ducis actiones Sebastiano Sanleolino florentino auctore*. (Florentiae: typis Georgii Marescoti, 1578).

<sup>119</sup> Not to be confused with the fifteenth-century engraver. Baldini explains at length his life and career while introducing his work on Cosimo.

librarian of the Biblioteca Laurenziana and had lectured at the Studio di Pisa. Sanleolini was a prolific writer who sought patronage and profit, and whose most noted work before *Actiones*, had been an exhortation to the princes of Europe to battle the Turks.<sup>120</sup> His life of Cosimo, written in Latin verse, follows the pattern of much of the funeral orations published at the time of Cosimo's death.<sup>121</sup> One of those orations was by Baccio Baldini, who in 1577 was writing an update of his eulogy as a panegyric on Cosimo's virtues.<sup>122</sup> The decision of the doctor to expand his panegyric into a full life may have been as a response to Sanleolini's intention to claim the honour of the first publication.<sup>123</sup>

Though the first to enter circulation, neither Baldini nor Sanleolini were the official biographies. Indeed, history writing at the court of Cosimo I de' Medici had been an official position, with men of letters charged with the continuation of the comprehensive history of Florence as tackled by men such as Francesco Guicciardini (who wrote a history of Florence until 1534) and Benedetto Varchi (whose history

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<sup>120</sup> Sanleolini, S., *Ad principes christianos carmina: quibus eos ad bellum a sacri foederis socijs aduersus Turcas communes hostes susceptum ab omnibus unanimiter conficiendum exhortatur*, etc. (Firenze: Giunti, 1572).

<sup>121</sup> Menchini, C., *Panegirici e vite di Cosimo I de' Medici: tra storia e propaganda* (Firenze: Olschki, 2005).

<sup>122</sup> The original oration was published as, *Orazione fatta nella Accademia Fiorentina, in lode del serenissimo sig. Cosimo Medici gran duca di Toscana, gloriosa memoria. Da m. Baccio Baldini suo protomedico* (Firenze: Bartolomeo Sermartelli, 1574).

<sup>123</sup> Supporting this claim are the introductory sections of both vitae. Sanleolini includes a letter of privilege from Francesco's secretary, Paolo Vinta, dated 23 December 1577. Both, as one would expect, are dedicated to Francesco I, but while the frontispiece of Sanleolini follows the standard announcement of, "Autore cum privilegi," Baldini is keen to state is personal and expert perspective from which to write a biography of his late patron, announcing, "scitto da M. Baccio Baldini, suo protomedico, con licenzia, et privilegi".

covers 1527 to 1538).<sup>124</sup> Such an interest in the recording of history also influenced Cosimo's friendship and patronage of the greatest historian of the sixteenth century, Paolo Giovio, who retired to Tuscany at Cosimo's invitation, and finished his *Istorie* in 1555.<sup>125</sup> Cosimo's support for Giovio was to ensure his depiction as a virtuous ruler, and clearly, the writing of history as a political tool was wielded by Cosimo who compelled former anti-Medicean partisan, Bernardino Segni, to write an obsequious history of his times, the manuscript of which was read by his successor as court historian, Giovanni Battista Adriani, who wrote *Istoria dei suoi tempi* (1536-1574), a history of Cosimo's rule, published post-mortem by his son in 1583.<sup>126</sup>

The first life of Cosimo to be written outside of the immediate ambit of the Medici court was Aldo Manuzio il Giovane's *Vita di Cosimo*

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<sup>124</sup> These were secret histories, neither lived to see their writings in print: Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* was published in 1561, Varchi's *Storia fiorentina* was not published until 1721. See Moyer, A., "'Without Passion or Partisanship': Florentine Historical Writing in the Age of Cosimo I" in Rudolph, J., (ed.), *History and Nation* (Bucknell University Press, 2006), 45-69; Moyer, A., "Historians and Antiquarians in Sixteenth-Century Florence" in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64.2 (2003), pp. 177-193; Fasano Guarini, E., "Committenza del principe e storiografia pubblica: Benedetto Varchi e Giovan Battista Adriani" in Fasano Guarini, E. & Angiolini, F. (eds.), *La pratica della storia in Toscana: continuità e mutamenti tra la fine del '400 e la fine del '700* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2009), pp. 79-100; and also Cochrane, E., *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

<sup>125</sup> Giovio dedicated his magnum opus to Cosimo. See Price Zimmermann, T., *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 258-259.

<sup>126</sup> Adriani, G.-B., *Istoria de' suoi tempi di Giouambatista Adriani gentilluomo fiorentino. Diuisa in libri ventidue Di nuouo mandata in luce. Con li sommarii, e tauola delle cose piu notabili* (Firenze: Giunti, 1583). For contextual details see the introduction to the joint edition, *Storie di Bernardo Segni e di Giovambatista Adriani*, 2 vols., (Milano, Nicolò Bettoni e Comp., 1834), vol. I, pp. ix-x. Segni's history was first published as, Segni, B., *Storie fiorentine di messer Bernardo Segni, gentiluomo fiorentino, dall'anno 1527 al 1555. Colla vita di Niccolò Capponi, gonfaloniere della repubblica di Firenze, descritta dal medesimo Segni suo nipote* (Augusta: David Raimondo Mertz, e Gio. Jacopo Majer, 1723).

*de Medici primo gran duca di Toscana*, published in Bologna in 1586.<sup>127</sup> Dedicated to Philip II of Spain, illustrated by Agostino Carracci, engraved by Melchior Maier, provided with a map of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany by the Venetian draughtsman Giacomo Franco, and with a foreword in latin by Francesco I's chief diplomat, Francesco Vinta, Aldo Manuzio il Giovane's life is arguably one of the impressive works of biography in the early modern period, both as a text and as a printed book.<sup>128</sup> Aldo Manuzio il Giovane, sometimes known as Aldo Mannucci, was the son of Paolo Manuzio, and thus a member of the illustrious family of printers and intellectuals based in Venice. Educated in the highest of the classical traditions in Venice and Rome, his commentaries on the works of Cicero and Caesar well prepared him for his later work on the lives of great Italians.<sup>129</sup> In 1577, he commenced work on a biography of Cosimo I,<sup>130</sup> completing the work in 1586, for which he was rewarded with a *cattedra* at the Studio di Pisa and with

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<sup>127</sup> Manuzio, A., *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici, primo gran duca di Toscana* (Bologna: Alessandro Benacci, 1586).

<sup>128</sup> For other biographies of Cosimo written under Ferdinando I de' Medici, see Saltini, G., "Intorno al alcune Vite di Cosimo I de' Medici, lettere di Bastiane Sanleolini, del cardinale Ferdinando de' Medici, di Vincenzio Borghini, di Andrea Albertini e di Aldo Manuzio" *Giornale Storico degli archivi Toscani*, 6 (1862), pp. 52-60. For the context of early modern biographical writing, see Mayer, T., & Woolf, D. (eds.), *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), consider especially Price Zimmermann, T., "Paolo Giovio and the Rhetoric of Individuality" and his opinion that humanists viewed biographical as "a natural outgrowth" of historical writing in *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe*, p. 40.

<sup>129</sup> *Lettere di Paolo Manuzio copiate sugli autografi esistenti nella biblioteca ambrosiana* (Paris: Renouard, 1834), p. 53. The historiography of the Aldine Press is copious. For a brief background to the Manuzio family and the Aldine Press, see Fletcher, H., *New Aldine Studies: Documentary essays on life and work of Aldus Manutius*, (San Francisco: Rosenthal, 1988), pp. 68-71.

<sup>130</sup> Bramanti, V., "Per la genesi di due biografie di Cosimo I: Filippo Cavriani e Aldo Manuzio il Giovane" *Rinascimento*, 32 (1992), pp. 291-309.

his oration in praise of Francesco himself in 1587, was made a knight of the Order of Santo Stefano.<sup>131</sup>

Understandably, Manuzio's biography, though shorn of the restrictions imposed by writers under the direct supervision of the Medici court, was not entirely free from needing to appease Florentine interests, or indeed, win their patronage. Only with the fall of the House of Medici with the extinction of the Grand Ducal line in 1743 could histories of the family be written without the patronage of the interested family. The task, from 1781, of organising the Medici Archive and writing the first comprehensive history of the Medici Grand Duchy was Jacopo Riguccio Galluzzi.<sup>132</sup> Galluzzi's legacy upon the field of Medici studies has been profound. Beyond his archival division of the Medici Archive, in particular, the creation of a sub-collection, now known as the *Miscellanea medicea*, Galluzzi used primary documents to construct a warts-and-all history of the Medici Grand Duchy. With regards Cosimo, Galluzzi is the first major Italian historian to include Cosimo's murder of his favourite courtier and cameriere, Sforza Almeni.<sup>133</sup> Galluzzi also discusses freely one of the most serious events in Cosimo's life – and one perhaps indicative of broader hostility to his rule, otherwise portrayed as a model of stability – the Pucci conspiracy of 1560 where a group of important Florentine nobles planned Cosimo's assassination, Galluzzi does not demonise their actions as writers had under the Medici.<sup>134</sup> Galluzzi's comprehensive work is what we would

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<sup>131</sup> Gasparrini Leporace, T., "Le "provanze" di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane per essere ammesso nell'ordine dei cavalieri di S. Stefano" in *Contributi alla storia del libro italiano. Miscellanea in onore di Lamberto Donati* (Firenze: Olschki, 1969), pp. 165-186.

<sup>132</sup> Galluzzi, J. R., *Istoria del granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici* (Firenze: Nella stamperia di R. del Vivo, 1781).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 82.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 5-6, and see op. cit. for continued Pucci opposition to Francesco I in 1575, pp. 248-258. See also Trevisani, C., *La congiura di Pandolfo Pucci* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1852).



now call interdisciplinary in its handling of all manners of topic and sources.<sup>135</sup>

### *Recent Scholarship on Cosimo I de' Medici*

The most important biography of Cosimo I de' Medici remains Lorenzo Cantini's work of 1805.<sup>136</sup> This is despite the first and only biography in English of Cosimo I by Cecily Booth in 1921.<sup>137</sup> Booth declared her intention to counter "the impression that, after the fall of the Republic, there is not a good word to be said for the rulers of Florence, and I am tempted to protest that Cosimo, in spite of many defects, was a reformer, and on the whole a better governor than Florence deserved."<sup>138</sup> The next significant attempt to write a biography of Cosimo was by Roberto Cantagalli, who built on his early work on the Florentine-Sienese War (1552-1559) and published his life of Cosimo in 1985.<sup>139</sup> Cantagalli's other historical work had been on the roots of

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<sup>135</sup> As the twentieth-century historian, Eric Cochrane,, observes, "The result was one of the best historical works of the age, a work that might receive the recognition it deserves from historians of historiography today were its subject Sweden or Louis XIV instead of *The History of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany under the House of the Medici.*" Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, p. 461.

<sup>136</sup> Cantini, L., *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana* (Firenze: Albizzini, 1805). While an excellent account of the life of Cosimo I, as one would expect, it lacks any modern citation, though Cantini used, without doubt, archival documents to write a new life of Cosimo beyond the traditional narrative in the panegyric lives written under Medici patronage in the sixteenth through to the mid-eighteenth centuries.

<sup>137</sup> Booth, C., *Cosimo I, Duke of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921),

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii. Her pro-Cosimo agenda is clear throughout, an early review of her book found, "Miss Booth's careful biography, which is well illustrated, is avowedly intended to show that Cosimo was by no means so black as his enemies painted him." *The Spectator*, 5 February 1921, p. 21.

<sup>139</sup> Cantagalli, R., *La Guerra di Siena, 1552-1559: i termini della questione senese nella lotta tra Francia e Absburgo nel '500 e il suo risolversi nell'ambito del principato mediceo* (Siena: Accademia senese degli Intronati, 1962); Cantagalli, R., *Cosimo I de' Medici, granduca di Toscana* (Milano: Mursia, 1985).

Italian fascism, the struggle for liberation, and indeed, the struggle for liberty more generally in Italy, for example, in the years after the French Revolution,<sup>140</sup> and for some recent scholars Cantagalli's sober and concise story of the duke of Florence's reign has been misconstrued as an attempt to represent Cosimo as a link in the chain between Machiavelli and Mussolini: the incarnation of the thoroughbred political animal.<sup>141</sup> The modern biography of Cosimo – no easy task given the profusion of secondary literature and the still largely unexplored corpus of archival documents – has yet to be written.

More balance has been found in the work of Giorgio Spini. Spini's studies of how Cosimo steered his state during the first decade of his rule remains the seminal work on the early Medicean principate.<sup>142</sup> Remarkably, Cosimo was able to balance a confrontational policy with the Habsburg imperium, seeking a restoration of his full control over Tuscany's fortresses (including the great citadel, the Fortezza di San Giovanni Battista, known as the Fortezza da Basso, in Florence) and an expansion into other Tuscan imperial fiefs outside of the Florentine dominium, all the while cultivating highly cordial relations with the Empire, and moreover, presenting himself as the stable imperial bulwark for all Italy.<sup>143</sup> An essential part of this strategy was to create the apparatus of state: administrative, judicial, cultural, security, economic, and infrastructure. Understanding the Tuscan state has been the focus of many studies, including Elena Fasano Guerini's

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<sup>140</sup> Cantagalli, R., *Storia del Fascismo Fiorentino, 1919-1925* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1972); and, *A proposito del triennio rivoluzionario 1796-99 in Toscana* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1961).

<sup>141</sup> Murry, G., *The Medici Succession* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 262.

<sup>142</sup> Spini, G., *Cosimo I de' Medici e la indipendenza del principato mediceo* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1945) and by the same historian, "Il Principato dei Medici e il sistema degli stati europei del Cinquecento" in *Firenze e La Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500*, (Firenze: Olschki, 1983), pp. 177-216.

<sup>143</sup> The role of fortresses is discussed in: Spini, G., *Architettura e politica da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I* (Firenze: Olschki, 1976). The politics of the Tuscan coastline are discussed in Spini, op. cit.; Livi, G., *La Corsica e Cosimo I de' Medici: Studio Storico* (Firenze: Fratelli Bencini, 1885); and more recently, Fasano Guarini, E., & Volpini, P., *Frontiere di terra, frontiere di mare. La Toscana moderna nello spazio mediterraneo* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2008).

*Lo Stato mediceo di Cosimo I*; Furio Diaz's *Il Granducato di Toscana*; Antonio Anzilotti's *La costituzione interna dello Stato Fiorentino sotto il duca Cosimo I de' Medici*; and Arnaldo D'Addario's *La formazione dello Stato moderno in Toscana: da Cosimo il Vecchio a Cosimo I de' Medici*.<sup>144</sup> The breadth of these studies is indicative of the wealth of material available for the scholarly exploration, which, along with a multitude of research trajectories all demonstrating significant changes and innovations in European statecraft, means that a comprehensive study of Cosimo's reign has so far proved impossible. As a result of this, the full spectrum of pertinent subjects are well served by a multitude of specialists in the fields of intellectual, artistic, political, and economic history, etc., which have only come together in conferences and collective book projects. The publication of their proceedings provide a precious overview of the many extant and ongoing studies that fall under the ambit of early modern ducal Tuscany.<sup>145</sup>

Historiography in English has attempted to replicate the broad brushstrokes of Italian studies. Eric Cochrane's work, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800* does much more than redress the apparent bias in favour of fifteenth-century Florence, by tracing a single narrative from the oscillating path of Florentine history under the grand ducal Medici family.<sup>146</sup> Likewise, anglophone scholarship, under the auspices of Konrad Eisenbichler, have provided two edited volumes: *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* and *The*

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<sup>144</sup> Fasano Guarini, E., *Lo Stato Mediceo Di Cosimo I* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1973); Diaz, F., *Il Granducato Di Toscana* (Torino: UTET, 1976); Anzilotti, A., *La costituzione interna dello Stato Fiorentino sotto il duca Cosimo I de' Medici*, (Firenze: Francesco Lumachi, 1910); d'Addario, A., *La Formazione dello Stato Moderno in Toscana: Da Cosimo il Vecchio a Cosimo I de' Medici* (Lecce: Adriatica editrice salentina, 1976).

<sup>145</sup> See *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del'500*, 3 vols; and Lotti, L. (ed.), *La storia della civiltà toscana: il principato mediceo*, vol. III, (Milano: Mondadori, 2003).

<sup>146</sup> Cochrane, E., *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973).

*Cultural World of Eleanora de Toledo, Duchess of Florence and Siena*.<sup>147</sup> Yet, neither essays in English nor Italian (or any other language), have addressed the subject of gift-giving at Cosimo and Eleonora's court. Instead, the pattern of approach, if one is to be discerned, has been on the way self-representation through the artistic and intellectual works of the age fashioned the ducal couple into unchallengeable possessors of their state and unassailable holders of their high position. Indeed, the political power of culture has been the rostrum from which grand ducal Tuscany has been defined, as represented in the work of Marcello Fantoni on the symbols and culture of the Medici court from the mid-sixteenth century through to the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>148</sup>

Within this corpus, the most impressive of recent studies on this subject has undoubtedly been Henk van Veen's work, recently translated into English, *Cosimo I de' Medici and His Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*.<sup>149</sup> In his study, van Veen identifies that the artistic and architectural programme commissioned by Cosimo does not follow the expected narrative: that Cosimo's projects become

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<sup>147</sup> Eisenbichler, K., *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); and Eisenbichler, K., *The Cultural World of Eleanora de Toledo, Duchess of Florence and Siena* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>148</sup> Fantoni, M., *La Corte del Granduca: forma e simboli del potere mediceo fra cinque e seicento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1994).

<sup>149</sup> van Veen, H., *Cosimo I de' Medici and His Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

increasingly regal as his own power grew.<sup>150</sup> Instead, van Veen shows that the representation of Cosimo oscillates, at first presenting himself as a dynastic and feudal master, when in reality his power was limited, then second, after the final annexation of Siena and Montalcino in 1559, he instead presented himself as a leading citizen, albeit at the height of his power, and third, with his grand ducal coronation in 1569, as *pater patriae*. As a consequence, Henk van Veen argues for a complete reconsideration of Cosimo's cultural policy as, "not only Cosimo's commissions but also, in a more general sense, the cultural policy of his regime, which his patronage was part of and which has never properly understood either, reflect these shifts in tenor."<sup>151</sup> This thesis seeks to trace this same pattern in Cosimo's use of gifts.

Most recently, while maintaining the theme of continuity between the republic and the principate, focus has shifted from Cosimo I himself to those around him, in particular the Florentine nobility, and how they reacted to this shift in political power. Two studies stand as neat partners. Nicholas Scott Baker's *The Fruit of Liberty* and Gregory Murry's *The Medicean Succession*.<sup>152</sup> Both studies seek to account for Cosimo's status as a prince in the wake of such adamant and turbulent

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<sup>150</sup> The representation of Cosimo is pervades almost every work on duke of Florence. Particular mention should be made here of Richelson, P., *Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I De' Medici, Duke of Florence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980); Cox-Rearick, J., *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Starn, R., & Partridge, L., *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). As this thesis will expand in great detail, the role of the Palazzo Vecchio is key, as expressed in van Veen, H., "Circles of Sovereignty. The Tondi of the Sala Grande in Palazzo Vecchio and the Medici Crown," in Jacks, P. (ed.), *Vasari's Florence. Artists and Literati at the Medicean Court*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 204-217. On the Palazzo Vecchio, see in particular: Cecchi, A., & Allegri, E., *Palazzo Vecchio e i Medici: Guida Storica* (Firenze: S.P.E.S., 1980).

<sup>151</sup> van Veen, *Cosimo I de' Medici and his Self-representation*, p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> Baker, N., *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); and Murry, Gregory, *The Medicean Succession: Monarchy and Sacral Politics in Duke Cosimo dei Medici's Florence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

republicanism which gripped Florence in the first three decades of the sixteenth century, finding far more similarity in the style of Cosimo's rule than suppression of the Republican past.<sup>153</sup> The question they ask, then, is how Cosimo was able to ascend from the bitter division and instability of the early decades of the century. While Baker finds that Cosimo was able to transform (relatively easily) the "office-holding class" from a potential threat into a willing participant in the principate, Murry argues that Cosimo was able to develop a divine right to rule that could not be challenged, even by the old Republican nobility.<sup>154</sup> This thesis will attempt to unite both strands through the gifting of gifts.

### *Medicean Diplomacy*

As a small state within the concert of Europe, grand ducal Tuscany has never been the focus of research on early modern diplomacy. The seminal book in the field, Garret Mattingley, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, certainly gives credit to the fifteenth century Medici, to Lorenzo "il Magnifico" in particular, for his brinkmanship during the

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<sup>153</sup> Albertini, R., *Firenze dalla repubblica al principato: storia e coscienza politica* (Einaudi, 1995), see also, Litchfield, R., *Dalla Repubblica al Granducato: il nuovo assetto socio-spaziale di Firenze, 1551-1632* (Firenze: University of Florence Press, 1991).

<sup>154</sup> Baker surmises, "They [the office-holding class] sacrificed the internal political freedoms of the republic for the external freedom from foreign rule guaranteed by the Medici principality, which would preserve the social and economic predominance of the office-holding class.", Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty*, p. 232. Murry states his intention as, "to fill in some gaps in the political narrative by situating the study of political culture more fully within a revised view of religion's place in Renaissance Florentine society, arguing that Cosimo's political propaganda tapped into existing religious assumptions and impulses as a way to establish continuity with Florence's Renaissance past." Murry, *The Medicean Succession*, p. 14.

Pazzi War and his embassy to Naples in 1480.<sup>155</sup> Yet neither Lorenzo nor Cosimo il Vecchio ever achieved what their kinsman, Cosimo I de' Medici, would be able to do through diplomatic guile alone.

Beyond the work of Giorgio Spini, who long-defined the field of Medicean diplomacy, a thorough appreciation of Cosimo I's diplomatic acumen has come only relatively recently.<sup>156</sup> Alessandra Contini's work in this field has been definitive. A colleague of Elena Fasano Guarini, Contini builds on Spini's work, arguing that diplomacy was the pillar of Medici power in the mid-sixteenth century:

Cosimo's ability to gain protection without being forced into subservience, to shuttle, in the Europe of the Reformation, among the Empire, France, and the Papacy and, after 1559,

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<sup>155</sup> Mattingly, G., *Renaissance Diplomacy* [First printed in 1955](London: Cosimo, 2008), p. 102. For Medicean diplomacy in the fifteenth century, see also Fubini, R., *Italia quattrocentesca. Politica e diplomazia nell'età di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1994); Fubini, R., "Diplomacy and Government in the Italian City-States of the Fifteenth Century (Florence and Venice)" in Frigo, D., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 25-48; Rubinstein, N., 'Introduzione' to Fubini, R., *Lettere di Lorenzo de' Medici* (Florence: Giunti, 1977), vol. 1, pp. v-xiv; Bullard, M., "The Language of Diplomacy in the Renaissance" in Toscani, B. (ed.), *Lorenzo de' Medici. New Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 263-278.

<sup>156</sup> Beyond Spini, G., *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1980), see also, Spini, G., "Il Principato dei Medici e il sistema degli stati europei del Cinquecento" in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del'500*, pp. 177-216. The popularity of Italian diplomacy in the sixteenth century waxes and wanes. Important studies include: Prodi, P., *Diplomazia del cinquecento: istituzioni e prassi* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1963); Frigo, D., *Ambasciatori e nunzi. Figure della diplomazia in età moderna* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1999); Frigo, D., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*; and most recently, Sabbatini, R., & Volpini, P. (eds.), *Sulla diplomazia in età moderna. Politica, economia, religione* (Milano: FrancoAngelo, 2011).

Philip II's Spain, was made possible by the efficiency of an extraordinary device: diplomacy.<sup>157</sup>

Contini goes further by placing Cosimo himself at the centre of the diplomatic apparatus, as the 'spider king', she borrows from Fernand Braudel his description of Philip II as a man at the centre of a vast international apparatus.<sup>158</sup> While Philip II's web was considerably larger, Cosimo was able to direct, sometimes to the minutest of details, the actions of his ambassadors<sup>159</sup>, in particular, because of the Medicean diplomatic service's innovation of highly professional secretaries who could manage an unbroken stream of correspondence

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<sup>157</sup> Contini, A., "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century" in Frigo, *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, p. 59. On the origins of this diplomatic environment, see Rubinstein, N., "Firenze e il problema della politica imperiale in Italia al tempo di Massimiliano", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 116 (1958), pp. 5-35 and pp. 147-177.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 61; citing Braudel, F., *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell'età di Filippo II* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), vol. II, p. 712.

<sup>159</sup> While comprehensive contextual studies of Medici ambassadors are yet to be written, several volumes of composed sources and catalogues of names, these are: Del Piazzo, M. (ed.), *Gli ambasciatori toscani del Principato: 1537-1737* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1953); Canestrini, G. (ed.), *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori ambasciatore di Cosimo I a Carlo V e in corte di Rome (1537-1568)*, (Florence: Le Monnier, 1853); and Contini, A., & Volpini, P. (eds.), *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell' "Italia spagnola" (1536-1648) - I 1536-1586* (Roma: Ministero per Beni e le Attività Culturali. Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, 2007); and Martello, F., & Galasso, C. (eds.), *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell' Italia spagnola" (1536-1648) - II 1586-1648* (Roma: Ministero per Beni e le Attività Culturali. Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, 2007). Franco-Tuscan relations are well documented in *Négotiations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane. Documents recueillis par Giuseppe et publiés par Abel Desjardin*, 4 vols., (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1859-1886); and Saitta, A., *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra la Francia, il granducato di Toscana e il ducato di Lucca* (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1960); and with Austria, some key documents can be found in Filipuzzi, A., *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra l'Austria e il granducato di Toscana* (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1966); and most recently, Domenichini, I., "Alle origini del principato cosimiano: il ruolo dei segretari attraverso l'analisi e la descrizione dei documenti dell'Archivio Mediceo del Principato (1542-1559)" [unpublished thesis], Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Università degli Studi di Pisa, 2006.



between the legation and the court in Tuscany.<sup>160</sup> This advanced information network, while external to Florence, was very much part of security apparatus, informing Cosimo of any potential threat from Tuscans living abroad.<sup>161</sup>

Contini's work draws heavily from the *Mediceo del Principato* archival collection at the Archivio di Stato in Florence, which she remarks as likely the most valuable archival collection in the world for the student of early modern European diplomacy.<sup>162</sup> Her compilation and editing of the diplomatic instructions of the Medici ambassadors to France from 1536 to 1586 is an important edition of primary sources. This research was carried out with Paola Volpini, who has been passed the baton to champion the study of early modern diplomatic practice from the perspective of Grand Ducal Tuscany and its most important

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<sup>160</sup> On Medici secretaries, see Pansini, G., "Le segretarie del Principato mediceo" in Bellinazzi, A., & Lamioni, C. (eds.), *Carteggio universale di Cosimo I de' Medici: Archivio di Stato di Firenze: Inventario* (Firenze: Giunta regionale toscana La Nuova Italia, 1982), vol. 1, pp. ix-xlix; and Angiolini, F., "Dai segretari alle 'segretari'. Uomini ed apparati di governo nella Toscana Medicea (metà XVI-metà XVII secolo)", *Società e Storia*, 15 (1992), pp. 701-20. On the Medici postal system, see Chieppi, S., *I servizi postali dei Medici dal 1500 al 1737* (San Giovanni Valdarno, Ar[ezzo]: Servizio editoriale fiesolano, 1997).

<sup>161</sup> Contini cites Aldo Manuzio's biography of Cosimo to eloquently make this point: "He employed men adept at understanding the secrets and thoughts of his vassals, above all those of the Florentine nation, who, by trading outside their homeland in various parts of Europe, might more easily, in those frail beginnings of his dominion, plot against him. Thus he was kept abreast of every matter, however insignificant, and speedily so; and once he was versed in the thoughts and dealings of his adversaries, he could, to his great advantage, thwart and shun them." Manuzio, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici, primo gran duca di Toscana*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>162</sup> Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century", p. 61.

diplomatic relationship in the age of Cosimo, with Habsburg Spain.<sup>163</sup> This so-called age of Spanish Italy, usually termed as stretching from the coronation of Charles V in Bologna in 1530 to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, has also been an busy area of research and publications in the last couple of years.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup>Volpini, P., “Toscana y España” in Martínez Millán, J. & Visceglia, M., *La Monarquía De Felipe III: Los Reinos* (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, Instituto de Cultura, 2007), pp. 1133-1149; Volpini, P., “Razón dinástica, razón política e intereses personales. La presencia de miembros de la dinastía Medici en la Corte de España en el siglo XVI”, in J. Martínez Millán, J., & Rivero Rodríguez, M. (eds.), *Centros de Poder italianos en la Monarquía hispánica (XV-XVIII)* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2010), pp. 207-226. Volpini, P., “L’information politique aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles. Orazio della Rena, diplomate médicéen en Espagne”, in Perez, B. (ed.), *Ambassadeurs, apprentis espions et maîtres comploteurs. Les systèmes de renseignement en Espagne à l’époque moderne*, (Paris, PUPS, 2010), pp. 313-332. See also, di Stefano, G., Fasano Guarini, E., & Martinengo, A. (eds.), *Italia non spagnola e monarchia spagnola tra ‘500 e ‘600. Politica, cultura e letteratura* (Firenze: Olschki, 2009).

<sup>164</sup> Dandele, T. & Marino, J. (eds.), *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), in particular the essay, Hernando Sánchez, C., “Naples and Florence in Charles V’s Italy: Family, Court, and Government in the Toledo-Medici Alliance”, pp. 135-181; and, most recently, Baker-Bates, P. & Pattenden, M. (eds.), *The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Images of Iberia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015).

## 2.5. CONCLUSION

This literature review has attempted to bind together a single conceptual framework for the study of gifts at the court of Cosimo I de' Medici. Albeit lengthy, this overview is essential. The dedication of Varchi's translation of Seneca's *De beneficiis* establishes the sophistication with which gifts were understood in the sixteenth century, and consequently, any such approach to this subject must mirror this advanced understanding of the social and political use of objects. The social anthropology of the gift cannot be taken lightly. The exchange of material, whether currency or goods, lies at the foundation of western civilisation, and the work of Mauss, Bourdieu, Ben-Amos, and Carrier all attest to the continued significance of understanding these flows of objects. The idea of gift-systems or gift-economies certainly provides a basis for understanding quotidian exchanges in non-monetised pre-industrial societies, or the familial societies of the western Pacific, but it does not provide a sufficient model for an early modern court.

This literature review has outlined the thesis's parameters in the early modern world. This study is focussed upon the elite of society and the elite use of objects. In this way, it continues much of the 'Senecan' tradition of O'Malley, Jardine, Thornton, Berccuson, et. al., and less so the approach of Natalie Zamon Davies (perhaps less so too, Richard Goldthwaite) who conforms far more to the 'Maussian school' of tracing an entire system of a gift-based economy in her work. The point of divergence is important. At the heart of this thesis is the role of diplomacy, which, following Alessandra Contini's definition with regards the rule of Cosimo I, does not clearly delineate between diplomacy with a foreign state and diplomacy within Tuscany, nor indeed, whether one can speak of foreign and domestic policies whatsoever when the sole *raison d'être* of Cosimo's political programme – as Spini too presents – is the preservation of his independence as an autonomous authoritarian ruler. As a working hypothesis, Cosimo's use of gifts have a particular purpose in securing his rule and developing his state.

Therefore, given this synthesis of diplomatic history with material culture, and this thesis's focus on the now broadly defined 'diplomatic gift' as a tool, there leaves but one task remaining: that of attempting an approach on the life of Cosimo I de' Medici. Indeed, this literature review provides the foundation of this threefold approach of showing how Cosimo used gifts throughout his reign to forward his political goals through diplomacy within and without the borders of his realm. This allows us to move onto two in-depth explorations of gifts in early modern Europe: the gifts of others (i.e., the discussion of gifts in news sheets of the time) and unwanted gifts (i.e., the refusal of gifts to avoid obligation) which both keenly demonstrate the social potency of the gift in the world of Cosimo I de' Medici.

## 3. THE GIFTS OF OTHERS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the groundbreaking work of the Early Modern News Networks project, recent scholarly attention has increasingly focussed upon the importance of news and information in the early modern period. By connecting researchers around the world in an inherently collaborative field of news history, Early Modern News Networks and other similar initiatives have built on recent publications, such as Brendan Dooley and Sabrina Baron's collection of essays, *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* in 2001, and stimulated several more in a field still promising fresh research, as seen in 2014 with another collated volume, *News in Early Modern Europe – Currents and Connections*, edited by Simon Davies and Puck Fletcher.<sup>165</sup>

News, whether presented as reports, gazettes, corantos, or in Italy, as *avvisi*, was first disseminated in manuscript form and later, from the sixteenth century, in print (though manuscript *avvisi*

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<sup>165</sup> Davies, S., & Fletcher, P. (eds.), *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Dooley, B., & Baron, S. (eds.), *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001); Dooley, B., *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Salman, J., Harms, R., & Joad, R. (eds.), *Not Dead Things: The Dissemination of Popular Print in England and Wales, Italy, and the Low Countries, 1500-1820* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

continued well into the seventeenth century).<sup>166</sup> The information they provide to the modern historian is rich and varied, providing ready digests of pertinent historical information regarding the happenings of early modern Europe. As a documentary typology, their prevalence in large numbers numbers in European archives is still only just beginning to be appreciated by scholars, no small part in thanks to the recent increase in networks, conferences, and publications which have encouraged discussion on a source used by many, but previously understood by few.

Given the vital factual content these news sheets seem to provide, especially when seeking to sketch out an historical narrative, less attention has been placed on the particularities of using news as an historical source. Indeed, when one reads a letter in an archive, what one seeks is an understanding of an otherwise lost historical world; a world onto which we apply our own priorities and interpretations based upon the information we pursue. When one reads the news from a historical period, what one would hope to read is that society's prioritisation of information, in other words, how historical agents sought to understand the world in which they existed. As such, through reading historical news, the historian should be afforded a rare opportunity to understand the thinking of the times they study.<sup>167</sup> At least this is what one would hope, but such suppositions are strongly challenged by Brendan Dooley who cautions our reading of news in such a way.

With accounts of contemporary criticism of public news sheets in the seventeenth century, Dooley builds a persuasive case.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> de Vivo, F., *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 80-81.

<sup>167</sup> One is reminded of Collingwood on the deck of HMS Victory, Collingwood, R. G., *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 205-231. For Collingwood's conceptualisation of history from the point-of-view of historical actors, see Dray, W., *History as Re-Enactment: R. G. Collingwood's Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>168</sup> Dooley, B., "News and doubt in early modern culture: or, are we having a public sphere yet?" in Dooley & Baron, *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 275-295.

Certainly, news could then, as it does now, be falsely reported: information could be included as it was entertaining rather than useful, and governments could choose to circulate false information. As Dooley notes, quoting through the voice of a seventeenth-century educated reader of the news:

At times, suspicions about the defects of the press extended to the sinister political influences that might have tainted the news. 'Now, what difference does it make to the people of France to know that the emperor held a dance for the dames?' complained Gregorio Leti, a Milanese expatriate living in Switzerland, citing a typical story.<sup>169</sup>

Far from being a serious source of information, early modern news sheets, at least by the seventeenth century, were so filled with apparently "useless information" – stories of the weird and wonderful – that the reader then, as the historian today, must be careful to trust what one reads in the news. This news may have been included to distract the reader, a propagandist tool frequently used in both the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries. Yet, as Leti continued, this information, at first seemingly frivolous, could disguise far more pertinent truths, as Dooley notes:

Furthermore, "What need do the Germans have to know that the Most Christian King was or was not at the hunt? What effect will it make upon the Roman people, to know that the king of Spain went to see a bull fight? [...]" According to Leti, intelligent readers could see through stories that were evidently intended to busy their minds with matters of little importance while more sinister dealings were going on behind their backs.<sup>170</sup>

It is on this last point – that seemingly useless information could be read intelligently – that this section approaches the historical value of studying the description of gifts and their exchange being mentioned in the *avvisi* sent to the court of Cosimo I de' Medici.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>170</sup> Dooley, loc. cit.

## *The Development of News in Florence to 1560*

The study of early modern news in Italy has been led by the work of Mario Infelise, whose approach to news originated in the study of how political and military news was disseminated in the seventeenth century.<sup>171</sup> In recent contributions to edited volumes on news networks, Infelise has presented a compelling narrative of the Italian origins of news from pan-European trading and banking activities in the fourteenth century, when Italians who were sent to trade centres as agents for their respective companies would write back to their headquarters, not only with financial updates, but the news of their localities and the wider world.<sup>172</sup> Given Tuscany's pivotal role in these fields of business, it is unsurprising that some of the earliest examples of news writing can be found in Florence's and Prato's archives.<sup>173</sup> Indeed, nor is it surprising that one of the first politicised uses of news as a propaganda can be traced to a Florentine, Benedetto Dei, who, in the late fifteenth century supported Florence's war effort against Venice by selecting and propagating beneficial information about his own city and damaging stories about their enemy.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Infelise, M., *Prima Dei Giornali: Alle Origini Della Pubblica Informazione, Secoli XVI e XVII* (Roma: Laterza, 2002).

<sup>172</sup> Infelise, M., "La circolazione dell'informazione commerciale," in Franceschi, F., Goldthwaite, R., & Mueller, R. (eds.), *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa, IV: Commercio e cultura mercantile* (Treviso–Costabissara: Fondazione Cassamarca, Angelo Colla, 2007), pp. 499–522.

<sup>173</sup> Indeed, the importance of reporting news to inland cities, such as Florence and Prato, over maritime cities such as Venice and Genoa, could be that while ports, as hubs for thousands of people on the move, would be awash with the latest information, special effort was required for news to be sent into the interior.

<sup>174</sup> Dei, B., *La cronica dall'anno 1400 all'anno 1500*. [Barducci, R., ed.]. (Florence: F. Papafava, 1985). See also Balducci, R., "Benedetto Dei" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 36 (Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1988) pp. 252–3; Romby, G., *Descrizioni e rappresentazioni della città di Firenze nel XV secolo* (Firenze: Libreria editrice fiorentina, 1976), pp. 43–53.



With the Medici papacies of Leo X (1513-1521) and Clement VII (1523-1534), the news from Rome inevitably became far more important for Florentine affairs than any other source information arriving in the city. Any survey of the *Mediceo avanti del Principato* archival collection at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze will reveal that Medici correspondence was dominated, from 1496, by exchanges between Rome and Florence.<sup>175</sup> Given the political situation, this is not surprising; yet, given the volume and frequency of the correspondence between the two cities, one must also appreciate the advanced mail system already developed. That a letter could be securely sent and received (oftentimes with remarkable speed) was an essential feature in diplomacy (then, as it is today, the information contained in ambassadorial correspondence was highly sensitive), and the infrastructure required to communicate important information necessitated vast expense, for example, Charles V's postal network initiated in 1520s.<sup>176</sup> The effect of the fast movement of information meant that the role of diplomatic representatives changed from representing and acting on behalf of the state or prince, to collecting and reporting information.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, by the seventeenth century, compiling news had become a profession.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> See Morandini, F. & d'Addario A. (eds.), *Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato. Inventario*, vols. 4, (Roma: Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, 1951-1963).

<sup>176</sup> See Chieppi, S., *I Servizi Postali dei Medici dal 1500 al 1737* (San Giovanni Valdarno, Ar[ezzo]: Servizio Editoriale Fiesolano, 1997). Charles V's domains were spread across Europe, necessitating an advanced postal service, a role entrusted to the Tassis family, who made a fortune in the process. See Borreguero Beltrán, C., "Philip of Spain: The Spider's Web of News and Information" in Dooley, *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 23-51.

<sup>177</sup> The transition is the role of the ambassador from representing his sovereign to becoming a resident agent has long been discussed, for example: Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, ad passim.

<sup>178</sup> The news writer as a profession was first established in the Low Countries. See: Harline, C., *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic*, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), pp. 97-99; and Lankhorst, O., "Newspapers in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century", *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, pp.151-159 (p.154).

The archival fondo, the *Mediceo del Principato*, the epistolary collection of the Medici Dukes of Florence (from 1532) and Grand Dukes of Tuscany (1569 to 1743), reflects this change in foreign policy: the centre, in this case, the ducal court, was able to receive, process, and act upon information received from agents and representatives across Europe without necessarily ceding to those agents the power of autonomous action on behalf of the ducal government. At the heart of this communication was the sending of information, either within the body of a letter, or as became increasingly common, as an enclosed attachment, best described as a news digest, the *avvisi*, which are easily identified by their heading listing the date and place of the *avviso*'s creation. The information itself was diverse: rumour, gossip, private letters, public reports and other *avvisi*, were all copied into the *avvisi* in the *Mediceo del Principato* which had been diligently compiled and dispatched regularly by the Medici agent, as often as weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, depending on the speed at which events were unfolding or rather, the speed at which news, carried by the courier, arrived in the agent's hands.<sup>179</sup> The importance of timeliness and breadth of information obviously meant that cities with a higher traffic of persons, from the presence of an important court or as a trading centre, acted as nodes of news. With this in mind, one city in particular allowed for Florence to be kept abreast of world affairs like no other: Venice.

### *The Value of Venice*

In Filippo de Vivo's 2007 study of Venice as a node of news, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, he states, "Venice's *avvisi* provided much of the news which foreign printed periodicals were likely to reproduce."<sup>180</sup> Venice had obvious advantages, geographically equidistant between east and west,

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<sup>179</sup> Barker, S., "'Secret and Uncertain': A History of Avvisi at the Court of the Medici Grand Dukes," in Raymond, J., & Moxham, N. (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden: Brill [forthcoming, 2015]).

<sup>180</sup> Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, p. 81.

but also, between the flow of information from the Habsburg courts north of the Alps and the Italian states, not least to the papacy, especially during the Council of Trent. The commercial network of Venice, though not the empire it had been in centuries before, remained in the sixteenth century unrivalled, at least in number of trading contacts.<sup>181</sup> The control of information and communication was a central function of the republican government.<sup>182</sup> As a bustling maritime cosmopolis, home to merchants, diplomats, spies, and political exiles, Venice was the fulcrum of news networks and likewise, the rostrum of early modern Italy (though Rome too could make that claim). To Venice came information from across the continent – Paris, London, Milan, Augsburg, Antwerp, and Danzig – and from across Mediterranean; as one would expect, to Florence came news of Constantinople. So rich were these Venetian digests of news that they also included dispatches from Madrid, Messina, Krakow, Warsaw, Ferrara, Frankfurt, Prague, Vienna, and Corfu.<sup>183</sup> Unsurprisingly, by the mid-sixteenth century, the activity of news writing in Venice had grown into a commercial venture. Individuals could subscribe or employ agents who, through their networks and contacts, would collate digests of information to be sent to the customer who had paid in advance for the service.<sup>184</sup>

It was from one of these Venetian *reportisti* that the court of Cosimo I was kept informed of the news arriving in Venice. The earliest avvisi in the *Mediceo del Principato* from Venice were authored by

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<sup>181</sup> Pullan, B., *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Methuen, 1968), particularly the essay by Domenico Sella, "Crisis and Transformation in Venetian Trade," pp. 88-106.

<sup>182</sup> Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, p.7.

<sup>183</sup> Burke, P., "Early modern Venice as a center of information and communication," in Martin, J., & Romano, D. (eds), *Venice Reconsidered*, (Baltimore: Baltimore University Press, 2000), pp. 389-517.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Giovanni de' Rossi.<sup>185</sup> While at first it seemed little historical footprint had been left by Giovanni de' Rossi, it quickly became apparent that far from a mere *reportista*, Cosimo's court had in its employ a man of letters. Benedetto Varchi dedicated his 1548 lecture, *Della generazione de' mostri*, later published by Giunti in Florence in 1560, to Giovanni de' Rossi and Giovan Battista Guidacci.<sup>186</sup> In the dedication, Varchi describes Giovanni de' Rossi in affectionate terms, demonstrating both Rossi's intellectual standing and his network:

[...] most certainly, how much it would contribute to have your judgement [on my work] of my beliefs and my opinions that you would both bring to me, as far as my merits gave it, as much wanting to grow in that affection and benevolence that I take of your virtue and your many rare and not small courtesies (since many years); To your health and healthiness, in my name and the two, Ubaldini and Poggino, you live happily [...].<sup>187</sup>

To give some further sense of the literary circle in which Rossi moved, Giovan Batista Guidacci, was the dedicatee of *De cane* by Cosimo Bartoli, who would, from 1560, succeed Rossi as the main writer of *avvisi* from Venice.<sup>188</sup> Not only was Rossi a man of letters in theory, but also in practice, as a printer of books, including the second edition translations of Paolo Giovio made by Ludovico Domenichi, who was,

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<sup>185</sup> The first *avviso* signed by "Giovanni de' Rossi Venetiani" is dated 1551, ASE, MdP 3079, fol. 4.

<sup>186</sup>Varchi, B., "Della generazione de' mostri" in *La prima [-seconda] parte delle lezioni di m. Benedetto Varchi nella quale si tratta della natura, della generazione del corpo humano, e de' mostri. Lette da lui pubblicamente nella Accademia Fiorentina. Nuouamente stampate*, (Giunti: Firenze, 1560), pp. 92-140. See Bertolini, L., Coppini, D., and Marisco, C., *Nel cantiere degli umanisti per Mariangela Religiosi*, (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2014), p. 123, n. 23.

<sup>187</sup>"[...] certissimo, che quanto ella fusse per inscenare[?] appresso il giudizio vostra di quella credenza, & opinione, che portate di me ambedue, assai di là da' meriti miei, tanto dovesse accrescere di quella affezione, & benivolenza, ch'io porto della virtù, & cortesie vostre (gia sono piu anni) non meno grande, che singolare; State sani, & salutando à mio nome i duoi Ubaldini, et il Poggino, vivete felici [...]" Varchi, B., *Della generazione de' mostri*, p. 93.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

interestingly, the named recipient at the Medici court for the *avvisi* sent by both Rossi and Bartoli.<sup>189</sup> Ludovico Domenichi was not only a translator, but a court historian, employed by Cosimo at two hundred scudi a year.<sup>190</sup> Indeed, one might wonder if news (*avvisi*) had been a source of his 1556 work, *Historia di M. Lodovico Domenichi de' detti, e fatti notabili di diversi Principi, et Huomini privati moderni*.<sup>191</sup>

Bartoli, who was the Medici agent in Venice for a number of years, has commanded great interest from historians seeking to understand the life and thought of one of the sixteenth century's greatest polymaths and architectural historians, well known for his mathematical investigations, philological discourses, and astute translations.<sup>192</sup> From 1561, Bartoli took over the task of news collection as part of his role as Medici agent in Venice. The mix of calligraphic

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<sup>189</sup> Books from the press of Giovanni de Rossi include a reprint (from Lorenzo Torrentino's printing in Florence in 1549) of Domenichi's translation of Giovio, P., *Le Vite di Leone X, e di Adriano VI Pontefici, e del Cardinale Pompeo Colonna, scritte per Paolo Giovio Vescovo di Nocera, e tradotte da Lodovico Domenichi*, (ristampa Venezia, Giovanni de' Rossi 1557). Rossi also printed books dealing with contemporary affairs, such as might be considered a type of news, for example, Giralaldi, G. B. *Commentario delle cose di Ferrara, et de' principi da Este. Tratto dall' Epitome di Gregorio Giralaldi*, (Venezia, appresso Giovanni Rossi, 1556).

<sup>190</sup> Moreni, D., *Annali della tipografia fiorentina di Lorenzo Torrentino* (Firenze: N. Carli, 1811), pp. 278-279. Domenichi is more famous for his heresy, and indeed, the interventions of Renee of France (Ferrara) and Cosimo I de' Medici. His religious views did not stop him from working on a translation of Boethius which Cosimo commissioned as a gift for Charles V.

<sup>191</sup> Domenichi, L., *Historia di M. Lodovico Domenichi de' detti, e fatti notabili di diversi Principi, et Huomini privati moderni, divisa in Libri XII*, (Venezia: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1556). Research is still to be done on whether or not the *avvisi* sent to Ludovico Domenichi from 1556 to 1562 may well have influenced some of his later publication: *Detti, et fatti di diversi Signori, et persone private, i quali communemente si chiamano Facetie, Motti, et Burle, raccolti per M. Lodouico Domenichi*, (Firenze: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1562).

<sup>192</sup> Bryce, J., *Cosimo Bartoli (1503-1572): The Career of a Florentine Polymath* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1983); Fiore, F., & Lamberini, D. (eds.), *Cosimo Bartoli (1503-1572): Atti Del Convegno Internazionale: Mantova, 18-19 Novembre-Firenze, 20 Novembre 2009* (Firenze: Olschki, 2011).

styles (none of which are Giovanni de' Rossi's) suggests that Bartoli may well have had scribes or at least one assistant in his employ.

Thus, the *avvisi* from Venice were not compiled by literary hacks, but by some of the most intelligent men associated with the Medicean court. This should have a profound impact upon how we view the *avvisi* they write. As one would expect, the information is well presented, the location from which the news originates is clearly stated, as is the origin of the information, for example, that the source is from a courier or a rumour from the marketplace. When contradictory reports of the same story occur, both are given in the dispatch, when important letters are intercepted, verbatim copies are likewise sent back to Florence. The rigour imposed upon news collections means that the information received by the Medici court from Venice represents information that intelligent minds have decided is relevant and important. The *avvisi* from Venice necessarily represent a closed elite view on the world. Giovanni de' Rossi, as an entrepreneurial printer, and a native Venetian, had a broad mercantile network in the city, which is revealed in his accompanying letters with the *avvisi* he sent to Domenichi.<sup>193</sup> As such, this study of *avvisi* cannot be taken as representative of *avvisi* as a whole. Bartoli, and to a lesser extent, Rossi, were able to fashion *avvisi* attune to the interests of Cosimo and his court: significantly, gifts are frequently mentioned.

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<sup>193</sup> Giovanni de' Rossi's mercantile connections are often mentioned in his letter to Ludovico Domenichi.

### 3.2 WHY ARE GIFTS INCLUDED IN THE AVVISI?

Given the importance of *avvisi* in general, the particular importance of the news from Venice, and the highly intelligent compilers of *avvisi* in that city for the court of Cosimo I de' Medici, a study of one decade of news is presented below as regards the mentioning of gifts (roughly from 1555 to early 1563, though especially from April 1560 to March 1562). Far from viewing gifts as a frivolous inclusion, this study seeks to show, in the words of Leti and Dooley, how an intelligent reader could understand the movement and dynamics of a court through the description of gifts and their exchange. Indeed, it should always be remembered that these *avvisi* from Venice in the period under study were compiled by court agents for a court society and a ducal court government of secretaries. As such, these were men deeply concerned about the standing of individuals, especially rivals.<sup>194</sup> Thus the questions they would ask – who are the main people involved? where are they going? and how is their mood and health? – are all pertinent to their devising of Florentine foreign policy.

The answers to these questions can also be discovered relatively easily, given the public nature of court society; this information can be gathered simply from observations. It is, for all intents and purposes, what someone on the street would discover from simply observing the activities at court, in other words, the information commonly known. It would follow that an *avviso* from Brussels might say, "The Emperor moves from Brussels to Antwerp, accompanied by several notable personages, listing them, but the Duke of Sessa does not follow as he is unwell." Even such a simple statement could afford Florence with important information (had they not already known), of the Emperor's location, but also of the possible decline of an important imperial retainer like the duke of Sessa, with whom Cosimo had long personally corresponded (speaking hypothetically).

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<sup>194</sup> The status of Medici ambassadors in the order of precedence caused a long running and deeply bitter dispute with the Estense ambassadors. See Mondaini, G., *La questione di precedenza tra il duca Cosimo I de' Medici e Alfonso II d'Este* (Florence, 1898); and Osborne, T., "The surrogate war between the Savoyes and the Medici: sovereignty and precedence in early modern Italy", *International History Review*, 29 (2007), pp. 1-21.

In these years of the Italian Wars, as the great struggle with the Ottomans raged, and France was increasingly destabilised by the Wars of Religion, military matters were frequently detailed. Again, observables are an important aspect of how intelligence was gleaned from *avvisi*. Indeed, by counting horses and artillery – war matériel expensive to deploy – a general's intentions for a campaign could be gauged. Likewise, the reporter in Augsburg, for example, would count the number of horses accompanying an arriving lord or ambassador as an indicator of the importance of their mission.

The role of Giovanni de' Rossi and Cosimo Bartoli was to digest this information into a single dispatch. Information already digested and filtered by the many hands through which it could have passed before reaching the desk of the Florentine agent.<sup>195</sup> Thus, the *avvisi* arriving in Florence provided a condensed version of the events of the time, with only the information (albeit many times filtered) deemed important enough for the court included. One such important piece of information in the *avvisi* was the activity of gift-giving, in diplomacy and at court, diet, or consistory. This inclusion denotes that knowledge of gift-giving was considered to be highly valuable information. Having established the importance of the *avvisi* from Venice during Cosimo I's rule, the remainder of this section will demonstrate how the knowledge of gift exchanges was used by the intelligent readers as a means with which to understand contemporary events.

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<sup>195</sup> To give an example of the filtration of information, see the diagram showing the movement of news from Constantinople through difference channels in Dooley, *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, p. 15.



### 4.3 GIFTS IN THE AVVISI

In May 1560 dispatch of *avvisi* from Venice, we read an *avviso* from Brussels dated 26 of May:

The Madame of Parma has left with the court from Antwerp [...] the city gifted to them eight pieces of tapestry of gold and the most beautiful silk. Beyond the first presentation of tapestries, the rest is valued at 4000 scudi. And in the gift made to Malines [Mechelen], they presented six cups beautifully decorated, and today it was the solemn festival of this city and for them (the people) there was held a most superb banquet for the Lords of the City.<sup>196</sup>

Descriptions of such ceremonials could be dismissed as politically unimportant, yet the involvement of someone like Margaret of Austria, Charles V's illegitimate daughter, and, since her brother, Philip II's departure in 1559 from the Low Countries, regent of the Spanish Netherlands, should instantly pique our interest.<sup>197</sup> There was good reason for these gifts beyond demonstrating the city's gratitude for the visit of a member of the house of Habsburg. Antwerp was the great city of northern Europe, it had been at the centre for the distribution of Spain's South American bullion trade; and was in 1559 experiencing a boom in the textiles trade. Crucially, these "Lords of the Cities" were also creditors to Philip, whose number of creditors had substantially

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<sup>196</sup> "[...]Madama di Parma con la Corte ad'Anversa, alla cui partita gli donarono otto pezzi di tappezzerie d'oro, et di seta bellissima oltre il primo presente, li quali passano 4 mila scudi di valuta. Et nel passare che fece a Malines, gli furono presentate sei tazze d'argento dorate molto belle. et hoggi che è stata la festa solenne di questa Città gli é stato fatto un superbissimo banchetto da quei Signori della Città." *Avvisi da Bruxelles di 26 di Maggio 1560*, ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 126r.

<sup>197</sup> Steen, C., *Margaret of Parma: A Life* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p.83.

increased during his visit to the Spanish Netherlands the year before.<sup>198</sup> Given this context, gifting to Margaret gifts is significant. While Philip II was unpopular for having sewn the seeds of the Dutch Revolt with his reorganisation of the bishoprics of the Netherlands (Malines had been raised to an Archbishopric).<sup>199</sup> In order to endow these new bishoprics, abbeys were put under diocesan control. Problematically, these abbeys held votes in the States General. Bishops, appointed by the king, would now have undue influence at the expense of the local office-holding class: the Lords of the City.<sup>200</sup> These gifts to Margaret from Antwerp and Malines are therefore much more interesting, clearly, Margaret's conciliatory policy with the Dutch was still holding. Perhaps, by showing such good will to Margaret, both Antwerp (concerned about losing its loans) and Malines (concerned about losing its new status) were using gifts to curry favour. These details were all known to Cosimo in Florence: the gift would have fallen immediately into place.

Given this context, well known to the compiler of the *avvisi*, this gift presentation was evidently important enough to be included. In this case, how Margaret was still receiving goodwill towards her regency.<sup>201</sup> Understandably, for the intelligent reader of *avvisi*, gifts could be key indicators of goodwill. For example, for good services to a

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<sup>198</sup> To maintain his credit, not least to fund his military presence in the Low Countries, Philip II took out significant loans from the city of Antwerp: "To get the balance of what was needed for the coming campaign season, they [the States General] would raise 2,400,000 pounds at once, through sales of provincial *renten*. To pay off this loan, and to provide a further 300,000 pounds per year for garrison troops, they would raise annual subsidies of 800,000 for eight years, starting in 1559." Tracy, J., *The Founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572-1588* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 40.

<sup>199</sup> Tracy, *loc. cit.*

<sup>200</sup> For this dispute, see Koenigsberger, H, "Orange, Granvelle and Philip II" in *Low Countries Historical Review*, 99 4 (1984), pp. 573-595.

<sup>201</sup> Margaret's more conciliatory approach in the Low Countries is well known, see Steen, *Margaret of Parma: A Life*, pp. 80-83; Duke, A., *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: Hambledon, 1990), pp. 152-175.

prince. Of obvious value to the duke of Florence in March 1556 was news of the French ambassador complaining to the Emperor of Florence's continued presence in Sienese territory, officially Spanish since the Republic's fall the year before.<sup>202</sup> In the same *avviso*, we read of the gifts given to the duke of Somma, Giovanni Bernadino Sanseverino.<sup>203</sup> The *avviso* details:

The French ambassador on Sunday went to protest to the Imperial ambassador that the Duke of Florence does not retract his motions by not leaving the country free, such that he intends the truce to be broken with the said Duke: and to him he sends similar protests [...] From the Court of France there is news that the Lord Duke of Somma returns to Italy, having been gifted by the King 1000 scudi for this journey and two territories in Tuscany: Castel Ottieri and Montorio, been made a Knight of the Order [unspecified], promoted to the rank of General of the Infantry in both Piemonte and in Tuscany.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Cantagalli, *La guerra di Siena, 1552-1559; i termini della questione senese nella lotta tra Francia e Absburgo nel '500 e il suo risolversi nell'ambito del principato mediceo* (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1962).

<sup>203</sup> Giovanni Bernardo [also Giambernardo] Sanseverino was a leading Neapolitan exile in French service, cousin of Ferrante, prince of Salerno. For biographical details on the family during their French exile, see Esposito, G., "Ferrante Sanseverino Principe di Salerno. Alcune considerazioni sul periodo francese (1551 - 1567)", in Del Regno, M. (ed.), *Studi in onore di P. Gabriele Cuomo o.f.m.*, (Napoli: Centro di documentazione per la storia di Mercato S. Severino, 2005). Understandably, his return to Italy was well noted in news circulating around Europe, see "A Memorandum on Pope Paul IV's doings (written) in October 1556", in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, 1554-1558*, [ed. Tyler, R.] (London, 1954), vol. 13, p. 285.

<sup>204</sup> "L'Ambascitori di Francia, dominica mando a protestar all'Ambasciatore Cesaereano che de'l Duca di Firenze non ritirasse le sue geste; et non lasciava la campagna libera, intendeva che la tregua fosse rotta col detto Duca: et a lui similmente mando a far l'istessa protesta [...] Dalle Corte di Francia intendo esserci aviso del Signor Duca di Somma se ne ritornava in Italia, donato dal Re di 1000 scudi per suo viaggio, et di due terre in Toscana, cioe Castel Ottieri et Montorio, fatto Cavallier dell'Ordine, et honorato del grado Generale di Fantaria, tanto in Piemonte, quanto in Toscana, che se cio è vero, come è vero e è l'aviso, Sua Maesta Christianissima gli ha fatto una bella dimostrazione di benevolenza." "Da Roma da 21 detto [Marzo 1556]" ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 31r.

The writer of the *avviso* continues: “And if this is true, as true as is the news, His Most Christian Majesty has made a beautiful demonstration of his benevolence.”<sup>205</sup> True, Sanseverino had served the French King well, but such largess had a political message to convey. Giving away Tuscan territories, albeit close to Montalcino, the last remnant of the Sienese Republic, was a symbolic action to demonstrate the continued presence of French royal authority. In the case of the duke of Somma, his return to Italy was presaged by the peace of Vaucelles in 1556, an agreement to which he was bitterly opposed.<sup>206</sup> The gifts could thus be interpreted as both compensation and as a message that Italians who served well the French crown would be generously rewarded. Keeping such an able condottiere and virulent anti-Habsburg onside proved valuable as the Valois-Habsburg Wars recommenced a year later: the duke of Somma, with the Florentine exile, Leone Strozzi, led attacks on the coast of Lazio in 1557.<sup>207</sup>

The receipt of gifts from a foreign ruler could be particularly difficult for a diplomatic agent based at court. Questions would be asked at the home court as to why such gifts had been received. Had their agent compromised his position and done some service to the host court? Such was Venetian anxiety over the loyalty of their agents that they banned their envoys from accepting any gifts.<sup>208</sup> Gaspard II de Coligny was under no such prohibition when negotiating the Truce of

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<sup>205</sup> “A Memorandum on Pope Paul IV’s doings (written) in October 1556”, loc. cit.

<sup>206</sup> Wistreich, R., *Warrior, Courtier, Singer: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 54-61.

<sup>207</sup> Brown, R., Brown, H., & Hinds, A. (eds.), *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1206-[1674]* (Burlington: Tanner Ritchie Publishing in collaboration with the Library and Information Services of the University of St Andrews, 2005), p. 935.

<sup>208</sup> Fletcher, C., “Those who give are not all generous”: *Tips and Bribes at the Sixteenth-Century Papal Court*, [unpublished: EUI Working Paper 2011], p.10; see also Biow, D., *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 105, and Korsch, *Diplomatic Gifts on Henri III’s Visit to Venice in 1574*, pp. 93-94.

Vaucelles in March 1556.<sup>209</sup> The *avviso* describes how the Admiral of France (the highest title he held) and the ambassadors arrived with three hundred horses (we recall the importance of counting horses as “observables”). Interestingly, the *avviso* goes on to describe how:

[...] the Admiral of France has taken license from the King, the Queen, and Duke of Savoy and has had gifts from His Imperial Majesty a silver credenza, and to the many gentleman who came with him, the Emperor has given golden chains, said to be of a total value of 12000 scudi. The Count of Feria, Captain of the King’s Guard, has given to the said Admiral two beautiful horses.<sup>210</sup>

There is no description of gifts from France, and one may wonder, given that France broke the peace only eight months later, if they were more reluctant to sign the treaty. In any case, it was a treaty far more in the interests of Charles, desiring to retire, and for his son, Philip, managing his newly acquired kingdom, England.<sup>211</sup> The generous gifts from the imperial court, both from the Emperor and on behalf of Philip, indicates their greater enthusiasm for the agreement.

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<sup>209</sup> Whitehead, A., *Gaspard De Coligny, Admiral of France* (London: Methuen, 1904), pp. 50-53; Shimizu, J., *Conflict of Loyalties, Politics and Religion in the Career of Gaspard de Coligny: Admiral of France, 1519-1572* (Genève: Droz, 1970), pp. 18-26. On the role the significance of material objects during the negotiations, see Campbell, T., Ainsworth, M., & White, B. (eds.), *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence* (New York London: Metropolitan Museum of Art Yale University Press, 2002), p. 326.

<sup>210</sup> “L’Armiraglio di Francia ha preso licenza dal Re, dalle Regina, et dal Duca di Savoia [fol. 40v] et ha havuto in dono da Sua Maestà Cesarea una credenza d’argento; et a molti gentilhuomini venuti seco, ha dato delle catene d’oro, che dicesi esser in tutto il valor di 12 mila scudi. Il Conte di Feria [Gómez Suárez de Figueroa y Córdoba] Capitano della guardia del Re [Filippo II] ha donato al detto Armiraglio due ginetti (horses) bellissimi, et è stat diverse banchetti di questi primi di Corte. Abbiamo veduto l’Imperatore con miglior fiera che mai, et con una vivacità negli occhi, che era cosa grandissima veder Sua Maestà Cesarea con tanta allegrezza.” Avviso da Bruxelles di 28 Marzo 1556, ASF MdP 3079, fols. 40r-40v.

<sup>211</sup> Shimizu, *Conflict of Loyalties, Politics and Religion in the Career of Gaspard de Coligny: Admiral of France, 1519-1572*, p. 26.

Peace negotiations are of course where some of the most interesting objects are gifted, and where this pattern of importance as to who gives or receives the greater gift is most critical. Gifts are perhaps at their most significant in the exchanges between the Empire and the Ottoman Empire. This could in part be from the linguistic problems in communication, and the importance of gifts as a means to communicate good intentions. For example, in an *avviso* from Prague, it is noted that the Emperor Ferdinand had had to deal with accusations from the Ottoman envoy that he had broken the peace between the two nations, saying that he sought only to “remove the insolence from the Turks shown towards him” no doubt regarding an imperial intercession on behalf of Christians on the wrong side of the border since the border treaty signed between the Emperor and the Sultan in 1556.<sup>212</sup> Wanting to send a strong statement that the Empire’s subjects would not be molested, and, at the same time, not declare an open war, this accusation of insolence was tempered with gifts. The *avviso* details:

[...] that the Ottoman Ambassador [Ciaussera] departed on the 5th, having been presented by His Imperial Majesty a silver cup filled with one hundred scudi, his entourage were provided with silken shirts, and their expenses were all settled [...] and that His Lordship (the Sultan) precisely observe the terms of the treaty.<sup>213</sup>

The peace held, in fact, it was reaffirmed in August of that year. Another *avviso*, this time from Constantinople, details how some important Christians were freed from Turkish prisons, and that the imperial ambassador received shirts of gold and silk – keeping equality

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<sup>212</sup> Avviso from Venice with news from Prague, 15 June 1552, ASF, MdP 3079, Fol. 211r.

<sup>213</sup> “Che il Ciaussera partito alle 5 presentato da Sua Maestà Cesarea di una taza d’argento che valeva scudi 100 con altri 100 scudi dentrovi: et di veste di seta per se et per tutti i suoi: et che saria alloggiato a spese di Sua Maestà Cesarea per tutto et la risposta era che Sua Maestà Cesarea non haveva rotta la tregua ma haveva cerco di rimuover’ l’insolentia che facevano i Turchi contro a Suddeti di Sua Maestà Cesarea et che ogni volta che il Signori facessi che i suoi deponessero le armi et si astenessino di non molestar i suoi suddeti che faria che i suoi deporrebbero le armi et osserveria precisamente la tregua vedi tal aviso in una lettera che veniva al Secretario del Re Cattolico.” Avviso from Venice with news from Prague, 15 June 1552, ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 211r.

with the Emperor's gifts, but perhaps just a little outdoing Ferdinand's munificence by including golden shirts when his own ambassador had only received silken.<sup>214</sup>

Keeping parity in a gift-exchange supports the need for compromise in any negotiation. An interesting form of compromise is what one might call inter-faith dialogue. As part of the above renegotiations, Suleiman the Magnificent had sent a letter directly to the Emperor Ferdinand, written in Turkish, it had written above it a Latin salutation: "In the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, at whose right hand is the most princely Lord Emperor Ferdinand, our dear friend, whose power and majesty shall prosper eternally."<sup>215</sup> Such a gesture was significant enough to be included in the publicly read *avviso* from Vienna. It demonstrated the value of respecting another's religion towards the successful completion of an agreement. It is therefore important but not surprising that in the same month, recorded in the news from Constantinople, the Venetian Balio was asked by the Sultan to provide a gift of golden fabric to make drapes for a mosque, as the *avviso* continues, "because the merchants would not sell or gift their good fabrics."<sup>216</sup> Most notable of all the gift presentations between the Empire and the Ottomans which the *avvisi* from Venice detail, is the inclusion of an Ottoman gift presentation at the end of 1562, to honour the coronation of Maximilian as King of the Romans in Frankfurt. From Frankfurt on the 29th of November, the report describes the ceremonies at the Cathedral, and then:

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<sup>214</sup> The negotiations of this peace can be followed in the letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq. Translated by Forster, S., *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq: Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople 1554-1562*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

<sup>215</sup> "In Fide Jesu Nazareni inter esteros Principu Electo atquesto Maximo Imperatori D'no Ferdinando amico nobis dilecto, cuius abutat virtus, et maiestas prospeto nuc et incternu." in "Per lettere di Vienna da 29 di Giugno 1562" ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 214r.

<sup>216</sup> "Che il Signore haveva chiesto al Balio di questi Signori qualita di Tele doro et drappi per la sua moscha, chiedendo li fussero portati da M Canti (Cali) che li pagherebbe ma che questi Signori se ne manderebbe ne donar buona per teta." in "per lettere de' [Luglio?]16 Constantinopoli [1562]" ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 216r.

On Friday the Turkish Ambassador had an audience with His Imperial Majesty (Ferdinand I) in the presence of the King of the Romans (Maximilian II), the electors, and around twenty other dukes and princes. The ambassadors comported himself with modesty and loveliness, speaking Turkish, he offered an inviolable peace for eight years. His Imperial Majesty accepted, saying the ambassador had made a great honour (speaking through Poles and Dragoman who are best with the Turkish language). He (the ambassador) then presented to His Imperial Majesty four camels, a horse and four porcelain vases.<sup>217</sup>

Accepting the ambassador so publicly was an important gesture to the Imperial Diet assembled, the gifts each a sign of Ferdinand's success in establishing for his empire a lasting peace.

Another aspect of intelligence gathering and gift exchange detailed in the *avvisi* from Venice is the constant insertion of monetary values of gifts. A gift of a necklace from the people of Milan to Isabella Gonzaga, marchioness of Vasto and Pescara, the Governor's wife, was included in one *avviso* seemingly only because it was said to be worth a 1000 scudi.<sup>218</sup> One will have already have noted the addition of values in scudi for many of gifts already mentioned. The most remarkable prices though are to be found in a gift from Sforza Sforza I, count of Santa Fiora, a Tuscan nobleman and a condottiere of Cosimo I de'

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<sup>217</sup> "Che il venerdi l'Imbasciador Turchesco haveva havuto audientia da Sua Maestà Cesarea alla presentia del Re de Romani, delli electori, et di circa 20 altri fra Duchi et Principi. Che esposè la sua imbasciata con Modestia et leggiadria et che fu lodato da tutti. Che parlo in lingua Turchesca, et la sustanzia fu che offeriva da parte del Suo Signore pace per 8 anni da esser osservata inviolabilmente. Che Sua Maestà Cesarea rispose che la accettava. Che a detto Imbasciadore è stato fatto grande honore, et che è di natione Pollacco et Dragomanno overo interprete maggior del Turco. Che ha fatto da presente a Sua Maestà Cesarea di 4 cammelli, uno cavallo, et 4 vasi di porcellana." "Per lettere di Francofordia de 29 di Novembre (1562)" ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 257v.

<sup>218</sup> "La Signore Marchesa da Pescara parti hieri de qua essendo statta presentata da questa Citta d'una colana di 1000 scudi. Ci sono avisi che i Cantoni di Berna et Friburgh tengono occupati al cuni luogo al Signor Duca di Savoia." "Da Milano ale 14 di Maggio" ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 269v.



Medici, who assisted the Duke in his fortification of Tuscany and the subjugation of Siena.<sup>219</sup> In 1562, from Vienna, it is described how:

[...] the Count of Santa Fiora has returned from a most fine expedition and he present in Innsbruck to the wife of the Lord Prince (Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria) a pair of fans with chains and belts hung with pendants of 100,000 scudi in value, and to the wife of Ferrara a cross of diamonds valued at 10,000 scudi, and to the other sisters, a great quantity of golden drapes.<sup>220</sup>

If we believe this news (and we should not, given these invented values), then we must ask, where on earth could Sforza Sforza have acquired such valuable objects? One can only guess that having joined the service on the duke of Alva in 1557, fighting in France, he then may have been active against Ottoman shipping, the most likely expedition whereupon he had the chance to acquire such fine objects.<sup>221</sup> Regardless of the meaning of the gift in this case, the estimated values are not without significance. These prices are given to provide a scale by which the reader – and one should say an educated member of the public: think literate merchant – would be able to gauge the importance of the gift exchange, ignorant of how much a bejewelled fan would actually cost, but cognisant as to the price of bread, the arbitrary price is an important measure. In this case, the invented value emphasises that the count of Santa Fiore was making a lavish demonstration of his affection (and perhaps loyalty). Crucially, for the student of gift-exchange in

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<sup>219</sup> One the latter, see Letter from Sforza Sforza to Cosimo I de' Medici dated 1 April 1554 ASF MdP Vol. 425, Fol. 7, MAP Doc ID# 17643, and the former, see ""Letter from Sforza Sforza, count of Santa Fiora, to Cosimo I de' Medici dated 24 April 1555" ASF, MdP 449, fol. 13, MAP Doc ID# 8111.

<sup>220</sup> "Che il Conte di Santa Fiore [Sforza Sforza I, count of Santa Fiora] sene torna benissimo espedito et che presentera in 'Spruch [Innsbruck] alla Sposa del Signor Principe un piao di Ventaglio con Catena et cinta et pendente di valuta 100,000 scudi et alla Sposa di Ferrara un Croce di diamanti di valuta di 10,000 scudi et alle altre loro sorelle una grande quantita di drappi d'oro." "Per lettere di Vienna de 14 et de 17 di Giugno (1562)" ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 211r.

<sup>221</sup> Ratti, N., *Della famiglia Sforza*, (Rome: Salomoni, 1794), Vol. 1, pp. 254-269.

early modern Europe, it evidences – with the inclusion of such an inflated price – that diplomatic and courtly gift-exchange interested not only sophisticated and value-savvy court circles, but a much wider readership who would believe (or at least be impressed), but the incredible worth of the objects exchanged.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

The gifts of others detailed in the Venetian *avvisi* received at the court of Cosimo I de' Medici provided information, that once analysed within its context, provided valuable intelligence. If the King of Portugal sent to the Pope a diamond and a ruby worth 10,000 scudi each, as is recalled in news from Rome received from Venice in August 1562, then it could indicate a number of factors relevant to Medicean foreign policy: Portuguese wealth, imperial success, the king's request from the Pope, or perhaps to rival other gifts given to His Holiness.<sup>222</sup> Gift exchanges may seem at first superfluous aspects of early modern diplomacy and court society, yet they are included in even the briefest of news reports: as such, they are always significant. This section has attempted to convey the value of trying to 'read critically' gift exchanges. As already noted, the gifts mentioned in the *avvisi* compiled in Venice, especially by Cosimo Bartoli, were written with an eye on what would be relevant to the Florentine court. These Venetian *avvisi*, unlike *avvisi* compiled elsewhere, reflect the interests of that court and of Cosimo I de' Medici, who cared to know about the gift exchanges occurring in European diplomacy.

Indeed, by way of a coda, in the 1550s there was a particular sore point for Cosimo regarding the precedence of his ambassador over that of the Duke of Ferrara.<sup>223</sup> Upon the succession of Elizabeth I of England, Ercole II d'Este sent an ambassador to congratulate the new queen while Cosimo sent a letter to say the same. The *avviso* from Venice with news from London dated 14th of July, noted that, "there came a gentleman from the Duke of Ferrara and left very much honoured and received many gifts, the Duke of Florence writes his

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<sup>222</sup> "Che l'imbasciador di Portogallo haveva in nome del Suo Re presentato al Papa un Diamante et uno Rubino di valuta di 10000 scudi per ciascuno." "Per lettere delli di Roma 1562" ASE, MdP 3079, fol. 237v.

<sup>223</sup> For Medici-Este precedence crisis, see Mondaini, G., *La questione di precedenza tra il duca Cosimo I de' Medici e Alfonso II d'Este*, (Firenze, 1898); and the later ceremonial conflict with the house of Savoy, see Osborne, T., "The surrogate war between the Savoyes and the Medici: sovereignty and precedence in early modern Italy", *International History Review*, 29 (2007), pp. 1-21.

congratulations but sends no one.”<sup>224</sup> Perhaps Cosimo should have paid better attention to the gifts of others: while the Ferraran merchants were subsequently granted trading privileges in London and access to credit, the Florentine merchants were not. Cosimo was forced to ask for the same two years later.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> “Che era venuto un gentiluomo del Duca di Ferrara et partito honorato et donato assai, Il Signor Duca di Firenze scisse ancora lui congratulatione ma non a posta.” “Da Londra di 14 Luglio (1558)” ASF, MdP 3079, fol. 71r.

<sup>225</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici to Elizabeth I of England, 13 August 1560, ASF, MdP 211, fol. 89, MAP Doc ID# 8753.

## 4.3 UNWANTED GIFTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

On a spring night in Prague in 1578, the Florentine ambassador, Giovanni Alberti, was awoken by Giovanni Vincenzo Modesti, the Grand Duke Francesco I's resident secretary at the imperial court. Modesti had been put in a difficult position. On behalf of Francesco de' Medici, his sovereign prince, Modesti had covertly organised the delivery of gifts to two Viennese noblemen the year before.<sup>226</sup> So as not to arouse the suspicion of other members of the imperial court, the gifts had arrived under the guise of a merchant's wares, before being delivered to Wolfgang Rumpf von Wullross, the most influential of Rudolf II's ministers, and Leonard Harrach, the heir to one of the greatest families of Bohemia.<sup>227</sup>

Rumpf had all but refused the gifts, but Modesti persuaded him to accept them, stating though that no obligation was owed beyond

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<sup>226</sup> Butters, "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici (1549-1609)", pp. 243-354, (p. 266).

<sup>227</sup> For the court of Rudolf II see Marshall, P., *The Mercurial Emperor: The Magic Circle of Rudolf II in Renaissance Prague* (London: Pimlico, 2007). Rudolf would eventually accuse Rumpf von Wullross of treason in 1600, and in dramatic events, tried to kill him personal, pp. 196-197. See also, Evans, R., *Rudolf II and his World: a study in intellectual history, 1576-1612* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 47, 71-72, 191.

the goodwill of the imperial minister to the Medici prince.<sup>228</sup> While winning Rumpf's goodwill for the future, the young Harrach responded with a gift of his own to Modesti – a golden chain accompanied with a thank you note for Francesco's gifts, but also, a request for a loan of 15,000 scudi from the Grand Duke.<sup>229</sup> It was on this matter that Modesti had arrived in some distress at the residence of the Florentine ambassador, Giovanni Alberti.<sup>230</sup>

The Medici gifts, meant to build a bond with the young nobleman as a useful friend at court, had, in the case of Harrach, instigated a cycle of obligation and reciprocation. Harrach had wilily twisted the exchange in his favour, giving a gift in return, but also, asking for a favour. Modesti was in no position to furnish that sum of money, nor was he keen to endanger his reputation by asking the Grand Duke, his patron, to honour such a financial commitment made without his permission to provide a loan to an untested young aristocrat. There was no other option, as Alberti and Modesti decided, the gold-chain must be returned; the unwanted gift refused, the obligation was avoided. Modesti justified the gold-chain's return with a letter stating that the original gifts sent to Harrach were only to honour the young nobleman's recent marriage, and thus the obligation to reciprocate was not necessary. Modesti's quick thinking was praised by Francesco.<sup>231</sup> Given his guile in using the Grand Duke's gifts, in the letter describing these events, an indignant Modesti referred to Harrach

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<sup>228</sup> Butters, "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici (1549-1609)", loc. cit.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>230</sup> For biographical information on Giovanni Alberti, who spent six years (1577-1583) as Florentine ambassador to the imperial court, see Passerini, L., *Gli Alberti di Firenze. Genealogia, storia e documenti*, (Firenze: M. Cellini, 1869), vol. I, pp. 221-222.

<sup>231</sup> Letter from Giovanni Alberti in Prague to Belissario Vinta in Florence, 4 May 1579, ASF, MdP 4338, fol. 388. Also cited in Butters, "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici (1549-1609)", p. 269.

as a “todesco italianato è un diavolo incarnato,” neatly suggesting that such a sly use of gifts is a particularly Italian cultural characteristic.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., fol. 389.

## 4.2 ON THE REFUSAL OF GIFTS

The culmination of early modern diplomatic thinking on diplomacy is arguably François de Callières treatise, *De la manière de négocier avec les souverains*, published in 1716.<sup>233</sup> This work is also the first to deal explicitly with gifts and their use in diplomacy, on which he wrote:

[Gifts] must be made by a careful design; and wherever large gifts are offered, the giver must take care beforehand to know that they will be received in the right spirit and above all that they will not be refused.<sup>234</sup>

Gift-giving was clearly no science, and while the benefits of gift-giving will by now be becoming clearer, the embarrassment of having one's gift refused, adds a new risk for a prospective donor to take into account. In diplomacy, as well as at court, the refusal of a gift in public or private would certainly be a set back. The hoped for cycle of obligation and reciprocation would not exist between donor and recipient, nor would there be an easy way to perpetuate communication. Indeed, the act of refusing a gift is one of the strongest indicators of their potency. Why else would one go to the trouble of refusing a gift if it meant nothing? Just as the acceptance of gifts, as read in the *avvisi*, for example, illustrate the many meanings the reader can give to such acceptances, likewise, the reader can find numerous meanings behind the refusal of gifts.

Castiglione explains one of the most important reasons to refuse gifts in *il Cortegiano*. The court at Urbino were discussing the pursuit of love, and the use of gifts to win a woman's heart, when Cesare Gonzaga contributed a speech on the chastity of one young girl, who although in love with her suitor, would not let her virtue be compromised in the eyes of her family:

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<sup>233</sup> Callières, F., *The Practice of Diplomacy: Being an English Rendering of François de Callières's "De la manière de négocier avec les souverains"* [trans. & ed. by Alexander Frederick Whyte], (London: Constable, 1919).

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.



[...] she maintained such continence for two years that she never gave this youth any token of loving him, except such as she could not hide; neither would she ever speak to him or receive letters from him or gifts, although a day never passed but she was besought to do both.<sup>235</sup>

By avoiding any communication with the young man, especially gifts, she was under no obligation to him. Indeed, the acceptance of a suitor's gift could seriously compromise the reputation of a young woman. As Gonzaga continues in another anecdote, one noble woman, not willing to acknowledge the intentions of a would-be lover was forced to do so when one of her ladies "(already corrupted with money) soon had ready a little gift, a letter, a sonnet or some such thing to give her on the lover's behalf."<sup>236</sup> This gift-giving, whether an object, letter, or sonnet, was a way to open communication, indeed, as Gonzaga concludes, that as soon as one of these tokens is accepted, the suitor may advance to the next level of seduction, even compelling the focus of his attentions to surreptitiously meet him.

In love, then, as it is in diplomacy, a gift was a way of breaking down the resilience of the target to enter into cycles of communication and even debts of obligation. As Jacques T. Godbout has recently written, "the principal danger of the gift is for the donor's gift to be refused."<sup>237</sup> Without the acceptance of the gift, the whole exchange system cannot function. While an accurate observation, at least from a sociological point-of-view, this is only a half-truth for historians. By refusing a gift, one may want to send a particular message; and not

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<sup>235</sup> Castiglione, B., [trans & ed by Leonard Eckstein Opdycke], *The Book of the Courtier* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1901), p. 210. This perceptions still abounds today, see the study by Lewis Hyde, "gift exchange must be refused when it is a real threat in the connections that it offers is because gift exchange is an erotic form that so many gifts must be refused." *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Random House, 1983), 72–73.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>237</sup> "[...] le principal danger du don, c'est, pour le donneur, que le don soit mal reçu." Godbout, J., *Ce qui circule entre nous: donner, recevoir, rendre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2007), p. 373.

always to the donor. Indeed, there could be good reason to avoid the social obligation a gift would entail. Likewise, the action of refusing a gift could be a more beneficial action in the eyes of one person than it would be beneficial in opening an exchange with the donor. As historical evidence details, there are many ways to refuse a gift, and even more reasons why it would be in someone's interests to do so. Given this complexity, gift rejection is as fertile a ground for historical research as gift acceptance, and perhaps even more useful for historians to understand the use of objects and materials, their meanings and powers, in the early modern world.

One element of gift exchange has yet to be approached in this thesis: what is the difference between a gift and a bribe? When discussing gift-rejection, such a question is particularly apposite. It will also require a discussion of an important aspect of early modern elite culture – the honour and integrity of the individual. Where that individual is placed on the social hierarchy of the age may well affect that individual's ability to refuse gifts and thus avoid obligation. Perhaps most importantly, this freedom to refuse gifts and associated obligations is in the field of government service (as an agent of a lord or prince), and especially as a diplomatic agent or an ambassador. Indeed, the power of gifts to corrupt their envoys forced Venice to legislate as early as the fourteenth century to prohibit agents accepting gifts while on their embassy.<sup>238</sup> Roman emperors regularly refused gifts which they felt could compromise their standing as supreme potentate of the empire.<sup>239</sup> Yet, as shall be seen, the act of rejecting gifts often alludes to far more interesting contexts than the careful adherence to diplomatic codes of practice.

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<sup>238</sup> Queller, D., *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors* (Geneva: Droz, 1966) pp. 39-43.

<sup>239</sup> Flag, E., "Is Loyalty a Favor? or: Why Gifts cannot oblige an Emperor" in Gadi, Groebner, & Bernhard (eds.), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange*, pp. 29-63.

### 4.3 AVOIDING OBLIGATION

The Modesti-Harrach ‘exchange’, or rather ‘refusal’, is a type of diplomatic encounter echoed in other examples of gift-rejection. Marco Grimani, the patriarch of Aquileia’s papal legature in Scotland in 1543 and 1544, is recorded in a poetic text, written in Italian, which gives a full commemorative account of Grimani’s embassy to Scotland after the political turmoil following the death of James V and the regency of Mary of Guise on behalf of her infant daughter, Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>240</sup> Beyond the interests of the Church, Grimani was also charged with the interests of France – he arrived with two French ambassadors – in maintaining the influence of the house of Guise upon the throne of Scotland against the protestant regency of James Hamilton, earl of Arran.<sup>241</sup> This animosity between the houses of Hamilton and Guise had divided the Scottish establishment. Grimani’s mission – to reinforce the role of the church, while avoiding any spark to ignite the many sources of tension – required the papal legate to win goodwill quickly from nobles and worthies in the foreign land to which he was sent, while still keeping himself free to act as he saw fit. In diplomatic terms, this meant he should hold the debt of many, but be beholden to no one, which, when rephrased in the terms of gift-exchange, meant that he should give gifts freely, while accepting none. This he did. While generously distributing gifts to Cardinal Beaton and other Catholic Scottish nobles, he accepted only one in return, a mule, and even that was as a loan.<sup>242</sup>

Interestingly, in the poem itself, explicit reference is made to Grimani’s order to refuse all gifts to himself or to any member of his household. This explicit policy must have been noteworthy enough for the poem’s anonymous author, most likely one of the legate’s

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<sup>240</sup> Burns, C., “Marco Grimani in Scotland, 1543-1544: A Versified Account of His Legation”, in *Renaissance Studies*, 2 2 (1988), pp. 299-311.

<sup>241</sup> Kellar, C., *Scotland, England, and the Reformation 1534-61* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 91-95.

<sup>242</sup> Burns, “Marco Grimani in Scotland, 1543-1544: A Versified Account of His Legation”, p. 307.

entourage, to include a verse about it.<sup>243</sup> Perhaps, then, we should attempt to decode this policy as more significant than simply conforming in the Venetian practice – Grimani was Venetian himself – of ‘gift-neutrality’ with regards diplomatic agents. Yet, while the Venetians were keen to control the network of obligations and avoid any resulting conflicts of interest, in the case of Grimani, we must wonder: how do we reconcile the lavish gifting to the Scottish court – silver platters, polished mirrors, rosaries, perfumes, and ornate cypress boxes – with his refusal to accept gifts in return? Burns does not explain, but as the poem continues, in the same canto, immediately proceeding Grimani’s orders with regards gifts, it is detailed that the Patriarch believed that Henry VIII of England, though denying the Pope’s authority, was still a true Christian, and would, in time, return to the Roman flock: something Grimani prayed for, “but with time still he was hoping.”<sup>244</sup> One could draw from this that Grimani did not want to be obliged, as a papal legate, representing the Pope himself, that the Vatican would support only the Guise faction, and would not in the future reach accord with the king of England.

Certainly, England was deeply unhappy about the dispatch of a papal legate to Scotland. The government of Grimani’s homeland wrote to Henry VIII discharging themselves of any responsibility regarding the Patriarch of Aquileia’s mission:

[...] that the mission to Scotland by the Pope of the reverend Patriarch of Aquileia, may possibly be interpreted in such wise as to prejudice our subjects and affairs. Tell him in reply that they knew nothing whatever of the Patriarch's coming, nor was there even the slightest understanding with them about sending him: but the Pope, to whom, and not to our Signory, prelates render obedience, makes use of them to suit his purpose, as in

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

the present instance, the Patriarch Grimani being at the Court with his Holiness.<sup>245</sup>

While one might be tempted to portray Grimani's refusal of gifts in such a pro-Calvinist climate at 1540s Scotland as an attempt to refute the Protestant accusations of avarice and greed so often weighed against the Roman church, perhaps even to win the goodwill of Protestant noblemen, it is much more likely that Grimani was reflecting the decision of Pope Paul III to support the French only so far as it was politick in the drawn-out Habsburg-Valois wars and in the promotion of his own family's interests.<sup>246</sup>

The level of obligation in early modern diplomacy is also measured by the public nature of the gift. If a gift presentation is witnessed, it is more likely that the recipient would be held to their obligation. In 1639, in Constantinople, the Venetian Balio, Alvisе Contarini (1597-1651), attempted to honour a favourite of Sultan Murad IV with gifts.<sup>247</sup> Murad was returning in triumph, having defeated Persia in the reconquest of Babylonia:

The Balio of Venice [Alvisе Contarini], as soon as he knew that the Great Turk [Murad IV] was arriving in Izmit, some 100 miles distant from here [Constantinople], he sent two of his dragomen with a most beautiful gift of sugars, rare foods, and

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<sup>245</sup> This information was recorded in *Deliberazioni Senato (Secreta)* and conveyed to England via the Venetian secretary in London, Girolamo Zuccato, see Brown, R., (ed.), 'Venice: June 1543', in *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, Volume 5, 1534-1554, (London, 1873), pp. 117-118.

<sup>246</sup> One Paul III's foreign policy towards France, and importantly, how Scotland played an important part, see Gamrath, H., *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2007), pp. 47-72.

<sup>247</sup> Alvisе Contarini is one of Venice's most important career diplomats of the seventeenth century. His embassies to the Low Countries are well known thanks to the publication, Contarini, A., *Relazione del congresso di Münster* (Venezia: Antonelli, 1864). Contarini's five years (1636-1641) in Constantinople is less well-studied. For a general history of the Venetian diplomatic presence in Constantinople, including Contarini's ancestors as Balii, see Dursteler, E., "The Balio in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice's Early Modern Diplomatic Corps", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 16 2 (2001), pp. 1-30.

cloth of gold to be presented to the favourite of the Grand Turk,  
the naval general [Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha].<sup>248</sup>

This princely gifting to favourites at court was an essential activity for any foreign diplomat at the Sublime Porte, indeed, Francesco Contarini, Venetian Balio in 1602-1604, and, incidentally, Alvise's kinsmen, had also gifted to Ottoman government officials, the Pashas, and even to their wives.<sup>249</sup> While gifts were often accepted – as Ozden Mercan has pointed out, gifts to the Sultan, and one can imagine, other high-ranking Ottomans, were taken as tribute<sup>250</sup> – the gifts sent to Grand Admiral Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha were rejected, “he did not accept it [the package of gifts], excusing himself by saying that the Grand Turk would not want him to take it.”<sup>251</sup>

Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha had good reason to reject this publicly offered gift, not wanting himself to be compromised to a foreign power, especially as he was in the process of negotiating the

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<sup>248</sup> “Il Bailo di Venezia [Alvise Contarini] subito inteso che il Gran Turco [Murad IV] arrivava a Asmid [Izmit], lontano di quà 100 miglia, mandò due suoi dragomanni con un bellissimo presente di zuccheri, paste rare, et telette ricamati d'oro per presentarle al favorito del Gran Turco, che è Generale di Mare.” Letter from Fra Iacopo Franceschini in Constantinople to Antonio Balbi in Venice, 14 June 1639, ASF, MdP 4275, ins. 7, fol. 527, MAP Doc ID# 22207. Grand Admiral Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha was known also as Tayyar “the mercurial” Mustafa Pasha; although Baghdad had been captured in January, Murad IV had fallen ill, delaying his return to the Sublime Porte to June 1539, see Imber, C., *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 71.

<sup>249</sup> Börekçip, G., “Factions and Favorities at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and his immediate predecessors”, Ph.D. Thesis [unpublished], The Ohio State University, 2010, p. 94. See also Ebru, T., “The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Pasha and the Making of Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman (1516-1526)” Ph.D. Thesis [unpublished], University of Chicago, 2007.

<sup>250</sup> Mercan, O., “Medici-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations (1574-1578): What Went Wrong?” in Arfaïoli, M., & Caroscio, M. (eds.), *The Medici and the Levant*, (Leuven: Brepols, 2015) [not yet in print].

<sup>251</sup> “Et egli non lo accettò, scusandosi con dire che il Gran Turco non voleva si pigliasse” Letter from Fra Iacopo Franceschini in Constantinople to Antonio Balbi in Venice, 14 June 1639, ASF, MdP 4275, ins. 7, fol. 527, MAP Doc ID# 22207.

peace with the Persian Empire in order to secure a stable border, an agreement which was signed on 17 May 1639 as the Treaty of Zuhab.<sup>252</sup> Whether the gifts were sent before or during the negotiations, we know not (Fra Iacopo Franceschini's letter is dated 14 June 1639), nor do we know whether they may have been offered in congratulations to the Admiral for the successful conclusion of the negotiations. Regardless, the public refusal exonerated the Admiral from any rumour at court (his enemies were many, while promoted to Grand Vizier, he was executed in 1644 by Murad's successor, Ibrahim), yet interestingly, "but in private, he then took some of the most beautiful fabric with which to dress himself, with the agreement he would pay for it when he arrived in Constantinople."<sup>253</sup> In this way, Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha was able to avoid any obligation, by not having a public witness to the exchange (though rumours within the Italian community, had at least heard by Fra Iacopo) and also, breaking any chain of gifts and favours, by offering a payment, he attempted to transform the rejected gift-exchange into an acceptable commercial transaction.

The presence of an audience is a fundamental element in the efficacy of gift-giving in early modern court society and diplomacy. While Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha reasoned that an audience witnessing his acceptance of a Venetian gift was reason enough to reject the advance, the presence of an audience in Rome could also force an unwilling recipient to accept. For example, in 1585, Tolomeo Gallio, cardinal of Como, and Gregory XIII's secretary of state, was gifted a box of confectionary from Lorenzo Priuli, the Venetian ambassador. Gallio's intention was to refuse the gift, feeling already under great obligation to the *Serenissima*, but, as Lorenzo Priuli explained to Doge Nicola de' Ponte in Venice, recalling the words of Gallio verbatim:

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<sup>252</sup> See Kern, K., *Imperial Citizen: Marriage and Citizenship in the Ottoman Frontier Provinces of Iraq* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), pp. 53-59, especially for a bibliography of the treaty.

<sup>253</sup> "[...] ma di nascosto prese poi alcune telette delle più belle per rivestirsi, con patto però di pargarle quando fusse arrivato in Constantinopoli." Letter from Fra Iacopo Franceschini in Constantinople to Antonio Balbi in Venice, 14 June 1639, ASE, MdP 4275, ins. 7, fol. 527, MAP Doc ID# 22207.

[...] but there being present some gentlemen [*gentilhuomini*], and seeing that they were confectioneries, I [Tolomeo Gallio, cardinal of Como] did not dare to do it [to refuse], so as not to make myself appear a poor courtier by refusing you such a gentleness of this quality; in any case, I was thinking to send for you at my home this evening [...]<sup>254</sup>

The presence of *gentilhuomini* had precluded the Cardinal's desire to evade the gift. Indeed, when he found hidden inside the case of sweets a further gift of six silver goblets, he was yet more perturbed as to what type of cycle of reciprocation in which he found himself.<sup>255</sup> Indeed, the Cardinal was so annoyed at having been forced to accept the gifts, not being allowed, it seems, the customary opportunity to refuse when dealing with agents of a foreign state, that he warned the Venetian ambassador that such actions harmed their good accord. Writing to the doge, Priuli reflected on his dealing with the cardinal of Como, "this matter of gifts, as one of the most jealous and dangerous things with which one deals, deserves to be done under a bond of the most profound trust," Priuli concluded the letter with a warning, "otherwise, there follows consequences contrary to the intention of Your Serenity [Doge Nicola de' Ponte]." <sup>256</sup>

As this pattern emerges, it may well be possible to identify that the initial rejection of gifts only to later accept them may be part of the etiquette of diplomatic gift-exchange. Indeed, this first rejection, to

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<sup>254</sup> "[...] ma essendo li presenti alcuni gentilhuomini, et vedendo che erano confetti, non ardi di farlo, per non farmi tenere un mal cortegiano, ch'io rifiutassi da voi una gentilezza di questa qualità; son stato poi anco in pensiero di rimandarvi a casa ogni cosa una di questa sera [...]" Letter from Lorenzo Priuli in Rome to Doge Nicola de Ponte in Venice, 16 March 1586, ASVe, SS, Roma, Dispacci, 19, l. 8, orig. fols. 25r-28v. As transcribed in Butters, "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici", p. 316.

<sup>255</sup> The full transaction is well-explained in Ibid., pp. 260-263.

<sup>256</sup> "[...] che questa materia dei doni, come una delle più gelose et pericolose cose che si possano trattare, merita esser tenuta sotto profondissima credenza, altrimenti ne seguiranno sempre effetti contrarii all'intione di Vostra Serenità [...]" Letter from Lorenzo Priuli in Rome to Doge Nicola de' Ponte in Venice, 16 March 1586, ASVe, SS, Roma, Dispacci, 19, l. 8, orig. fols. 25r-28v. As transcribed in Ibid., p. 317.



demonstrate that the gift is not particularly wanted at its initial presentation, may lessen its power to obligate the receiver. Thus, the gift could be accepted on the second (or third) offering. An interesting exchange, perhaps apocryphal, is recorded between an English agent in Rome, a certain Mr Carr, and Sixtus V's Cardinal-nephew, Alessandro Peretti. According to Gregorio Leti's biography of Sixtus V, Carr was an English catholic, loyal to the earl of Essex and employed by the English crown to send intelligence back to the Tudor court.<sup>257</sup> Carr's mission was to win the goodwill of the Pope's nephew, Alessandro Peretti di Montalto, and for this task he was furnished with a portrait of the Queen and some diamonds.<sup>258</sup> Elizabeth's portrait was apparently shown to the Pope, who looked upon it favourably, and when Alessandro Peretti asked to see the same picture:

Carr immediately took it out of his pocket, and desired, 'He [Cardinal Alessandro Peretti di Montalto] would do him the honour to accept it.' The Cardinal, at first, civilly refused, but at last he agreed to take it, upon condition that he would give him leave, in return, to present him with one of his Uncle [Pope Sixtus V]; and stepping to his Cabinet, brought him the Pope's picture, in a gold frame, set with diamonds, inclosed in an ivory case of curious workmanship, worth 2000 Crowns (though the Queen's was of much greater value)[...]."<sup>259</sup>

Whether or not this exchange actually took place, it is insightful in supporting how a Cardinal would seek to evade an obligation by at first refusing a painting, albeit 'civilly', before accepting the gift, with a response of his own. In this case, we might also view the high value of

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<sup>257</sup> Leti, G., *The Life of Pope Sixtus the Fifth. (One of the Most Remarkable and Entertaining Lives That is to be Met With in Ancient Or Modern History.): In Which is Included the State of England, France, Spain. With an Account of St. Peter's, the Conclave* [trans & ed by Ellis Farnsworth] (Dublin: W. Collis. and L. Flin., 1779), pp. 307-310.

<sup>258</sup> Although this diplomatic portrait is not discussed, a recent approach to the diplomacy of Tudor portraiture has been made by Sowerby, T., "'A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith': Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture" *English Historical Review*, 129 537 (2014), pp. 296-331.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

the gift in reply, the bejewelled portrait of Sixtus V, as a way of placing beyond doubt, that Carr was in the obligation of the Cardinal, and not the other way around (not that Carr would believe so).

In these four case studies, the rejection, or attempted rejection of gifts, has been viewed as a tactic with which to avoid obligation. In each of these cases, the context of the exchange has been diplomatic: between an office-holder and someone with a diplomatic status or mission. From one point of the view, a successful diplomat was someone who could construct networks of contacts. These contacts were maintained by being obliged to the diplomat. Accruing social credit – i.e., having people obliged to fulfil a duty, whether to undertake an action or to furnish information – was an essential purpose to diplomatic gift-giving. Therefore, targets of gifts would be wary to be ensnared within a diplomatic web. An office-holder was concerned by what public opinion would be of their receipt of gifts from diplomatic parties, especially from representatives of different confessional and religious backgrounds. Yet, the concern to avoid obligation in early modern diplomacy by refusing gifts was more: a gift could represent that the office-holder had already provided some sort of service to the foreign power. Why, then, take the risk of displeasing one's prince or patron? As the basic level, it would appear that the value of gifts, whether monetary or aesthetic, was in order to make them highly appealing to the target recipient, and less likely to be refused as the object offered was too good to be refused. Indeed, these gifts were wanted, and as such, a canny office-holder could, as we have seen, try to evade the full weight of obligation, by giving an initial refusal, giving a like gift, or by receiving the gift in private.

#### 4.4 VIRTUOUS REJECTIONS

As a retainer to a lord or a prince, the fear of compromised loyalty in the eyes of one's patron was a predicament for anyone involved at a higher levels of an early modern court. One would not want to insult the giver by uncivilly refusing (especially if the giver was from a friendly court), but likewise, one would not want to encourage any whispers or dissatisfaction from one's own court. Interestingly, as a response to this dilemma, an unwanted gift could be both accepted and rejected. For example, in 1607, Father Ottaviano dall'Ancisa, Grand Duke Ferdinand I's confessor, received a gift of a horse from the Kingdom of Naples.<sup>260</sup> Horses were often princely gifts, and while the reason for the gift is unclear, it is most unusual that an obscure ecclesiastic from the Val d'Arno should merit such a gift from the Viceroy's court at Naples. Given Ottaviano's appointment of Grand Ducal confessor, such a gift could be seen as a gift for a service, likely information. Though Father Ottaviano accepted the gift, he also rejected it, as a letter from Belisario Vinta, the Grand Ducal secretary to the government minister, Vincenzo de' Medici record:

Father Ottaviano dall'Ancisa, confessor to our lord, the Grand Duke [Ferdinando I], having been presented with a horse from the Kingdom [of Naples], and as he was not wanting it himself,

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<sup>260</sup> Father Ottaviano dall'Ancisa has yet to be definitively identified. The name is difficult to read, and the date of the letter (1609) does not correspond to the two likeliest candidates for someone who was a spiritual counsel to Ferdinando I, the Oratorian, Vittoria di Pellegrini dell'Ancisa (1537-1598), founder of the Ospedale della Carità, see Eisenbichler, K., *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411-1785* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 118-119, nor does the antiquarian, Pier Antonio dell'Ancisa (1609-1693), author of a book on the Florentine nobility, now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Magl. XXVI, 177, provide a viable alternative identity to the historical personage of "Fr Ottaviano dall'Ancisa".

and not being able to keep it, has gifted it to our Most Serene patron [Ferdinando I].<sup>261</sup>

By accepting the gift from Naples, Father Ottaviano placed himself in the difficult position of appearing to be in receipt of a payment from Naples, perhaps for having passed on some information or undertaken some service on behalf of the Viceroy. Given his privileged position as Grand Ducal confessor, this could be a treasonable offence, but by re-gifting the horse to his patron, he simultaneously rejected the gift and any aspersions which could have been made, and instead, used the gift-horse as a demonstration of his own loyalty by freely giving the horse to the Grand Duke. In this way, Father Ottaviano was circumventing the social disadvantage of the gift-exchange cycle of obligation and reciprocation. Indeed, it seems that Ferdinand offered to give a gift of fifty scudi in return, perpetuating the cycle, but this gift too Father Ottaviano humbly refused for himself, saying instead that Ferdinand should pay off Father Ottaviano's debt with his book-dealer.<sup>262</sup> It would seem then that refusing gifts could be used in a much more subtle way – to one extent, to show the virtue of humility, but in so doing, Father Ottaviano also cannily paid off his debts – than simply avoiding obligation.

The refusing of gifts could be also seen as a virtuous act. When, on Christmas Day 1589, Pope Sixtus V was holding a consistory:

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<sup>261</sup> "Il Padre Fr' Ottaviano dall'Ancisa confessore del Granduca nostro signore [Ferdinando I] essendogli pervenuto un cavallo del Regno [di Napoli], che per se non lo voleva, et non lo poteva tenere, lo donò al Serenissimo nostro Patrone per lavaza", Letter from Belisario di Francesco Vinta in Florence to Vincenzo di Carlo de' Medici, 18 August 1607, ASF, MdP 300, fol. 79, MAP Doc ID# 13821.

<sup>262</sup> "[...] et sue Altezze col parere del S.r Cavaller[izz]o Maggiore ha destinato al Padre per elemosina 50 scudi. Et perchè il Padre non gli vuol toccare, et ne ha compri tanti libri, decidera che si paghino detti 50 scudi moneta fiorentina a Bartolomeo di Girolamo Franceschi libraro in estimazione di maggiore debito che il sudetto Padre ha con esso lui per conto di libri, et Vostra Signoria gli metterà a uscita a Serenissima Altezza a spese di donativo, et elemosina, et nel saldare de' scudi conti li saranno menati buoni." Letter from Belisario di Francesco Vinta in Florence to Vincenzo di Carlo de' Medici, 18 August 1607, ASF, MdP 300, fol. 79, MAP Doc ID# 13821.

His Most Illustrious Holiness was presented with a silver jug and bowl, a Cardinal's staff, a cope, and other gifts from various lords, he wanted not one thing, it was such an action which pleased many.<sup>263</sup>

By 1589, Sixtus V was deeply unpopular. His low birth, gourmand cardinal nephews, and expensive architectural projects, had set the citizens of Rome against him.<sup>264</sup> Indeed, the expensive tastes of the Peretti family, had been indulged by the other families of Rome, but only begrudgingly. Alessandro di Pierluigi Farnese had gifted a Flemish tapestry said to be worth four-thousand scudi to Cardinal Felice Peretti di Montalto in order to confirm the inheritance of the Farnese kinsman, the young Giuliano Cerini to his ducal title and the hand of a noble Roman bridge (Livia Orsini).<sup>265</sup> Francesco I de' Medici was concerned that his New Year's gift of wine would not be to the pope's liking, writing to his diplomat in Rome, Francesco Gerini, "But stay vigilant: if the wine will have satisfied His Holiness, we would gladly know, but if

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<sup>263</sup> "[...] Sua S. Ill.ma [Sixtus V] stata presentata d'un bacile, et boccale d'argento, si una mazza Cardinalitia, di coppe, et altri doni da diversi Signori, non ha voluto cosa alcuna; la cui attione è piaciuto molti." in an avviso from Rome, 27 December 1589, ASF, MdP 4027a, ins. 2, fol. 124, MAP Doc ID# 19510.

<sup>264</sup> Sixtus V deserves much greater scholarly attention. For a general approach to the more unsavoury aspects of his papacy, see Gustavo, B., *La nepote di Sisto V: Il dramma di Vittoria Accoramboni (1573-1585)* (Rome: Mondadori, 1936). Beyond the more fanciful intentions of Sixtus V, such as transporting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from Jerusalem to Rome, his tangible architectural legacy is remarkable, see Pastor, L., *Sisto V: Il creatore della nuova Roma* (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1922), and more recently, Marder, T., "Sixtus V and the Quirinal" in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 37, 4 (1978), pp. 283-294; and Ewart Witcombe, C., "Sixtus V and the Scala Santa" in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 44, 4 (1985), pp. 368-379.

<sup>265</sup> "[...] che [Felice Peretti di] Montalto gl'ha detto haver da [Alessandro di Pierluigi] Farnese che vuol presto dar assalto al papa [Sixtus V] per il parentado di Giuliano Cesarino [Cesarini], et che per addolcir' le materie, oltre la carroz[z]a che donò a esso Montalto li di passati, vuol anco donarli un paramento di tapezeria d'oro et di seta mandatoli di Fiandra dal Duca [Ottavio di Farnese], che vale iiii mila scudi, soggiugnendo Montalto, che accetterà quanto li doni [...]" Letter from Pietro di Francesco Usimbardi in Rome to Antonio Serguidi in Florence, 14 February 1587, ASF, MdP 1198, ins. 1, fol. 146, MAP Doc ID# 17403.

it displeases, this year there will not be that goodness with which they are in the habit of treating us.”<sup>266</sup> To add further insult to the Roman aristocracy, Sixtus V also propagated sumptuary laws and simple dress codes.<sup>267</sup> Thus, given his reputation for avarice and preaching of sobriety, for Sixtus V to reject such luxurious gifts given to him by various notables (importantly, by rejecting gifts en masse, he was not intending to communicate an insult by rejecting the gift of someone in particular), the Pope was attempting to portray himself, at the Feast of the Nativity, as a humble and penitent man. Ironically, and perhaps fittingly for Sixtus V, as the *avviso* goes on to detail, such public rejection of luxury and attempt to convey humility was likely diminished by his other action of Christmas 1589 – the placing of a statue of himself in the Chapel of the Cradle in Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>268</sup>

Should we need any further example of the power of the gift, and an officer of state’s need to avoid any entanglements by refusing, we have a letter explaining how gifts from foreigners were viewed at the court of Philip II, regarding a gift sent by Cardinal Ferdinando de’ Medici via a Medici diplomat in Madrid:

I have shown, as I have written, that picture in *pietre dure* to His Majesty’s count of Chinchón and, then some days having passed, I presupposed that it was already accepted, but a little later was sent back to me, saying that it was too expensive, and that His Majesty had not conceded to him [count of Chinchón] the freedom [to accept], now I will go to Lord Luigi [Dovara;

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<sup>266</sup> “Però stategi vigilante: se il vino harà satisfatto a Sua Santità, ne sentiremo piacere, ma ci dispiace, che questo anno non sieno di quella bontà che sogliono farci [...]” Letter from Francesco I de’ Medici in Florence to Francesco Gerini in Rome, 2 January 1587, ASF, MdP, vol. 270, fol. 12, MAP Doc ID# 16413.

<sup>267</sup> *Riforma del vestire, delle doti, et d’altre spese* [Issued in the Name of Sixtus V] (Roma, 1587).

<sup>268</sup> “Nella sudetta Cappella del Presepio si è visto in queste feste scopta et finita di tutto punto la statua marmorea del Papa inginocchiata co’ le mani giunte di rimpetta à quella di Pio V.” in an avviso from Rome, 27 December 1589, ASF, MdP 4027a, ins. 2, fol. 124, MAP Doc ID# 19510.

the Medici ambassador in Spain] and will explain to him that the gifts of Your Most Illustrious Lordship [Ferdinando de' Medici] do not come accompanied with some interest, because one does not show pretensions in this court, because the main point of the gift was to please the King, and they are not to gain the work of his ministers, we will ask them to pick another picture which pleases them better, and will show it to His Majesty too, such is the way of life at this court.<sup>269</sup>

As such, a gift, if publicly known, may encourage the involvement of the court's prince or monarch who would intervene to avoid any supposed corruption of his ministers and secretaries. Curiously, and this may well be worth further exploration as a new research project, the Medici ambassadors, or at least Ferdinando, who, as a Cardinal in Rome, was, unlike his elder brother who had travelled in Spain, ignorant of these points of Spanish court life, and had not known that the King had to be informed of any expensive gifts, less his officers of state be obliged to the agents and princes of foreign states, and could, one might suppose, cause him harm.

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<sup>269</sup> "Mostrò, come scrissi, quel quadretto di pietre a Sua Maestà [Felipe II de Austria] il Conte di Cincione [Diego de Fernando de Cabrera] et, havendolo poi ritenuto alcuni dì, presupposi che già fusse accettato, però poco poi me lo rimandò dicendo che era di troppo valore et che Sua Maestà non gliene havea concessa licenza, onde io andai col Signor Luigi [Dovara] (quale mi havea persuaso questo complimento) et mostrandogli che li regali di V. S. Ill.ma non veniano accompagnati da alcun interesse, sì perchè non havea pretensioni in questa corte, come perchè la tanta parte che ella havea nella volontà del Re, non le lasciarìa desiderar l'opera de' ministri, l'inducemmo a pigliar l'altro quadro di pittura nel quale lui si compiaque grandemente, se ben con protesta di mostrarlo anco a Sua Maestà, tanto è 'l riguardo con che si vive hora in questa corte." Letter from Giulio Battaglini in Madrid to Ferdinando de' Medici in Rome, 1 March 1584, ASF, MdP 5113, ins. 1, fol. 100, MAP Doc ID# 15708.

## 4.5 SENDING INSULTS

In 1622, the rejection of religious paintings sent by Pope Gregory XV through the Apostolic Nuncio in Spain, Giuseppe Aquaviva, titular bishop of Thebes, by two of the most important women at the Court of Philip IV of Spain, Inés de Zúñiga y Velasco and Ottilia Francisca van Claerhout-de Zúñiga, may seem hard to reconcile with the idea of pious abstention as demonstrated by Sixtus V. As Averardo di Raffaello de' Medici di Castellina, the grand ducal ambassador in Spain, reported to the state secretary back in Florence, Curzio da Picchena:

He [Giuseppe Aquaviva] has brought to their majesties [Felipe IV de Austria, Élisabeth de Bourbon-de Austria] and the Infanti [Carlos, Fernando, María Ana de Felipe III de Austria], as I have written before, expensive devotional objects [...] and having some devotional paintings for the Countess of Olivarez and Lady Francisca de Zúñiga, but they have not wanted to accept them at all.<sup>270</sup>

While being included in gifts sent by the Pope to the royal family may have been too awkward for some courtiers (no matter how noble), this refusal does not concern noble decorum of the powerful Zúñiga-Olivares clan.<sup>271</sup> Certainly, it was possible to sow discord at a foreign court by aggrandising a subject over the respective monarch, and so the

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<sup>270</sup> “Ha portato a loro Maestà [Felipe IV de Austria, Élisabeth de Bourbon-de Austria] et Infanti [Carlos, Fernando, María Ana de Felipe III de Austria], come ho scritto con altre, ricchi presenti di devozione [...]. Haveva alcuni quadri pur di devozione per la Contessa d'Olivarez [Inés de Zúñiga y Velasco] e dona Francisca de Zuniga [Ottilia Francisca van Claerhout-de Zúñiga] che non hanno voluto accettarli in maniera nessuna.” Letter from Averardo di Raffaello de' Medici di Castellina in Madrid to Curzio da Picchena in Florence, 25 May 1622, ASF, MdP 4951, MAP Doc ID# 8545.

<sup>271</sup> Family power-blocks were the mainstay of Spanish politics, see Gaston, R. “All the King’s Men: Educational Reform and Nobility in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain” in Romaniello, M., & Lipp, C. (eds.), *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 167-189. The virtue of promoting the interests of one’s noble family was also enshrined in such texts as Moreno de Vargas, B., *Discursos de la nobleza de España* (Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1622).



rejection of such gifts could well be a clever side-step.<sup>272</sup> Yet, it is unlikely either Pope Gregory XV was being so cunning as to try and expose the grandiose power of the countess of Olivares. Instead, Ines de Zúñiga y Velasco, as the wife of Don Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke of Olivares, the king's favourite, was simply used to getting her own way.<sup>273</sup> Gregory XV may have been Pope, but in the countess's eyes, this did not exempt him from being treated as a rival. Indeed, the rejection of his paintings was likely related to the reason for the papal nuncio's mission. As another letter from the Florentine diplomatic dispatches details:

He [Giuseppe Aquaviva] presented in the best way the noble gifts of devotional paintings to their Majesties. And Rome wants his quick return, having here given his congratulations for completing the long negotiations for the marriage of the Princess of Venosa to the Pope's nephew [Niccolò Ludovisi].<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> The Venetians had attempted to show-up the inflated status of Cardinal Wolsley who opposed their trading freedoms in London to Henry VIII, by gifting the cardinal the ludicrously expensive gift of sixty Damascene rugs. This was a gift so princely that the houses of Venetian noble families had to be stripped of the carpets in order to furnish Wolsely, and pointedly, the Venetian ambassador in London, Giustiniani, even sold the gold chain gifted to him by Henry himself to raise enough money for Wolsey's gift. See Matusiak, J., *Wolsey: The Life of King Henry VIII's Cardinal* (London: The History Press, 2015); Gwyn, P., *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Pimlico, 2002); Erickson, C., *Great Harry* (London: J.M. Dent, 1980), p. 152.

<sup>273</sup> The best study in English on the Don Gaspar de Guzmán remains Elliott, J., *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1986). Elliot refers to the political situation in early seventeenth-century Spain as, "(he) was not a king [Philip IV], but a person whom the count-duke seeks to conserve in order to make use of the office of king – a mere ceremonial leader." in Elliott, J., *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 101.

<sup>274</sup> "Ha presentato in nome proprio noblili regali di quadri di divozione a queste Maestà [Felipe IV, Carlos, Fernando and María Ana de Austria, Élisabeth de Bourbon-de Austria]. E di Roma gli è dato fretta per il ritorno [...], havendo qua dato cumplimento col suo arrivo alla lunga negoziazione fatta [...] per il casamento della Principessa di Venosa [Isabella Gesualdo] col nipote [Niccolò Ludovisi] del Papa [Gregorius XVI]" Letter from Averardo di Rafaello de' Medici di Castellina in Madrid to Curzio di Lorenzo da Picchena in Florence, 10 May 1622, ASF, MdP 4951, MAP Doc ID# 8535.

The reason for these long negotiations was no doubt the Zúñiga-Olivares party (it is unclear what they had to gain, the principedom was in the peerage of Spain, and so perhaps they had their own candidate in mind), and so the successful conclusion of the marriage agreement with the Spanish king, whose approval was required for Isabella Gesualdo, princess of Venosa, a wealthy heiress, to marry the papal-nephew, Niccolò Ludovisi, may have been the cause of their ire.<sup>275</sup> Rejecting the Pope's painting was a blunt expression of their dissatisfaction over this further expansion of Ludovisi power in Italy.

Spain was also the main diplomatic arena in which Cosimo I de' Medici and his heirs had to contend for influence.<sup>276</sup> Spanish-Imperial support for the Medici had secured Medici rule in Florence, and although often a difficult relationship, especially after the Florentine annexation of Siena, Spanish dominance in the Italian peninsula – the legacy of the Italian Wars (1496-1556) – was the political reality of the age.<sup>277</sup> As part of this pro-Spanish strategy, vast numbers of gifts – precious objects of varied types: art, sculpture, glassware,

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<sup>275</sup> The marriage is mentioned in Visceglia, M. A., "Factions in the Sacred College in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" in Signorotto, G., & Visceglia, M. A. (eds.), *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 126. The advantageous marriages of the Ludovisi family during Gregory XV's papacy made them one of the richest in Italy and rivals in the Catholic world to other noble dynasts, Williams, G., *Papal Genealogy: The Families and Descendants of the Popes* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland, 1998), p. 103.

<sup>276</sup> See Volpini, P., "Toscana y España" in Martínez Millán, J., & Visceglia, M. A., (eds), *La monarquía de Felipe III: Los Reinos*, (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre - Instituto de Cultura, 2008) vol. IV, pp. 1133-1149. For cultural relations, see Goldberg, E., "Artistic Relations Between the Medici and the Spanish Courts, 1587-1621: Part I", *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1996), pp. 105-114.

<sup>277</sup> Broad approaches to the political and diplomatic system of Spanish Italy can be found in Fasano Guarini, E., "Italia non spagnola e Spagna nel tempo di Filippo II" in Lotti, L. & Villari, R., *Filippo II e il Mediterraneo* (Rome: Laterza, 2003), pp. 5-23; Di Stefano, G., Fasano Guarini, E., & Martinengo, A., (eds.), *Italia non spagnola e monarchia spagnola tra '500 e '600. Politica, cultura e letteratura* (Firenze: Olschki, 2009); Dandele, T., & Marino, J., (eds.), *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); and most recently, Baker-Bates, P., & Pattenden, M., (eds.), *The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Images of Iberia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

fabrics, and skilled people – were carefully chosen and despatched to Spain.<sup>278</sup> When the Medici condottiere, Chappino Vitelli was despatched to serve the Spanish crown in 1562 (he would later take a command in the Spanish Netherlands), he wrote to Cosimo I de' Medici advising him about gifts for the Spanish court.<sup>279</sup> One of the court, Philip II's minister of state, Gabriel de Zayas, was more difficult than the others:

To Zayas, I believe something ought to be gifted because he has worked hard in the service of Your Most Illustrious Excellency and he is person of value, [but] they [the court] are greedy and some of them want shamelessly whatever they can get from Your Most Illustrious Excellency, I would not entreat you, that I would persuade you to give them nothing, but because every day here there is the need to value his [Gabriel de Zayas] friends and servants.<sup>280</sup>

The necessity to “get things done” in Spain through gifts in Spain is well-evidenced in the letters of the *Mediceo del Principato*. Perhaps more than anywhere else in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe,

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<sup>278</sup> Helmstutler Di Dio, K., “Sculpted Diplomacy: State Gifts of Sculpture from Italy to Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in Bernstorff, M. von. & Kubersky-Piredda, S., (eds.), *L'arte del dono: scambi artistici e diplomazia tra Italia e Spagna, 1550-1650: contributi in occasione della Giornata internazionale di studi, 14-15 gennaio 2008, Roma, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Istituto Max Planck per la storia dell'arte* (Cinisello Balsamo (Milano: Silvana, 2013), pp. 51-65.

<sup>279</sup> Letter from Gian Luigi Vitelli in Madrid to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 23 August 1563, ASF, MdP 648, fol. 549, MAP Doc ID# 22352.

<sup>280</sup> “A Zaias [Gabriel de Zayas] mi pare che sia da donarli qualche cosa perché ha travagliato molto in servizio di V.E.I. et è persona che vale, sono ingordi et una parte di loro vengono sfacciatamente a mezza lama si V.E.I. non havesse da trattare se non per lei non la saprei persuadere a darli nulla, ma poichè ogni giorno li occorre valersi di qua et per suoi amici et servitori, credo che sia bene usarli qualche gratitudine et il medesimo faria con Erasso il quale ha abbracciato ogni cosa et per minima che sia passa per le mane sua [...]” Letter from Gian Luigi Vitelli in Madrid to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 23 August 1563, ASF, MdP 648, fol. 549, MAP Doc ID# 22352.

the Spanish kingdom was run on a gift-economy.<sup>281</sup> Gabriel de Zayas, as the secretary responsible for Italy, was at the fulcrum of this gift exchange.<sup>282</sup> As such, we must ask, were these refusals just to avoid the obligations entailed by accepting a gift in early modern diplomacy? Or were they more personal insults? Certainly, in the case of Zayas, having been involved in the arrest of his colleague in government, Antonio Pérez del Hierro, for passing state secrets, he would be particularly keen to preserve his reputation for untarnished loyalty. Such judicious attention to one's image may have unintentionally caused insult, when, in March 1584, Cosimo's son, Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, tried to endow an altar in a church associated with the Zayas family. Not only was the offer rebuked, but it was taken as a reflection of a breaking friendship:

Of the altar of Zayas, it can, perhaps, be made less, because he, showing himself somewhat angry of the many deferments [one presumes, offered by the house of Medici], that he has not wanted to give the name of the church, saying that he wants to maintain the favour of the Cardinal [Ferdinando de' Medici] for when he has more need. In truth, I, having desired very much to be able to keep satisfied this good and old friendship, but I don't know how to do more [...].<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Diana Carrió-Invernizzi has shown how Spanish gift-giving practices were influenced by Italy, but in turn, Spain influenced Italy, see Carrió-Invernizzi, D., "Gift-exchange in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Italy," *The Historical Journal*, 51 4 (2008), pp. 881-899.

<sup>282</sup> Rodríguez, P., "Gabriel de Zayas (1526-1593). Notas biográficas" in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie IV, Historia Moderna*, 4 (1991), pp. 57-70. He took responsibility from Italian affairs from 1579, after the arrest of his colleague, Antonio Pérez del Hierro, for passing state secrets, *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>283</sup> Letter from Giulio Battaglini in Madrid to Pietro di Francesco Usimbardi in Rome, 1 March 1584, ASF, MdP 5113, ins. 1, fol. 90, MAP Doc ID# 15715.

In this way, the constant offering of gifts could damage a diplomatic relationship, even the personal relationship of those involved.<sup>284</sup> The remarkable evasion of a gift on the part of Zayas by not revealing the name of the church, is testament to just how far one would go to avoid obligation, even to the point that the gift-giver would be insulted. Indeed, Ferdinando could well feel aggrieved by the rejection of his presents, as one will note from the example above concerning the count of Chinchón, that both gifts were refused on the same day (1 March 1583).

Gift-giving could cause offence, but often, the offence was not a calculated snub, but an unintended consequence of other mitigating factors. There is less doubt about the meaning behind the refusal of another type of gift: hospitality. When the Archduke Maximilian of Austria and his wife, Maria, were touring northern Italy in the early winter of 1551, the decision of Milan to entertain the future Holy Roman Emperor and his Empress with a comedy in a private home unexpectedly caused a diplomatic fissure:

The King of Bohemia [Maximilian I] and the Queen [Maria of Austria] [...] have had Turkish-themed entertainments held in a tent, and dances and balls in the palace [Castello Sforzesco?], they have not wanted to listen to a comedy, it non seeming proper to go to a private house where it was to be performed, saying, because of the Queen considered it inappropriate,

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<sup>284</sup> Medici largesse was so much that even frequent recipients of gifts, such as the Juan de Tassis y Peralta, the Count of Villamediana had to refuse gifts, albeit on the best of terms with the Grand Duchy, when he was offered a tapestry from Cosimo II de' Medici during his visit to Florence in 1613, see Letter from Curzio di Lorenzo da Picchena in Siena to Orso Pannocchieschi d'Elci in Madrid, 20 October 1613, ASF, MdP 4943, fol. 525, MAP Doc ID# 13806.

responding that the prince of Spain [Philip II], her brother, had enjoyed comedies in the Ducal Palace.<sup>285</sup>

Obviously, the Milanese had not intended to insult the Queen of Bohemia by not hosting the comedies (but one element in an elaborate state visit) at the ducal residence, as such, they did not expect Her Majesty to take such offence that she would refuse to attend. The reason for this refusal of hospitality against both the Milanese elite and the city's governor, Ferrante Gonzaga, may at first seem strange.<sup>286</sup> The immediate political context provides no grounds for such a gift rejection. Indeed, France was planning for yet another campaign in northern Italy, and Milan would be required to be a stalwart ally, with Ferrante Gonzaga leading the Habsburg's defence.<sup>287</sup> Yet, as Maria declared, it was an issue far more personal that forced her to refuse the gift. Her cousin, Philip II of Spain, had been entertained at the palazzo ducale in 1548 – though duke of Milan, Charles V refused him to be recognised as such during his brief visit<sup>288</sup> – and she expected the same treatment. The reason for this is simple, in 1551 the house of Habsburg was racked with the difficult negotiations for the division of the empire in expectation of the death of the Charles V. Maria and Maximilian were particularly sensitive to any slight which could suggest the

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<sup>285</sup> “Il Re di Bohemia [Maximilian I] e la Regina [María de Austria] [...] hanno hauto l'intrattenimento del Turco sul canapo e danze e balli in palazzo, comedia non han voluto udire, non parendo convenirsi andare perciò in casa ^di^privata è stato, dicano, consideratione della Regina che rispondeva che al Principe di Spagna [Felipe II] suo fratello le comedie si recitorono in Palazzo [Ducale].” Letter from Francesco di Paolo Vinta in Milan to Cosimo I de' Medici, 3 December 1551, ASF, MdP 3101, fol 27, MAP Doc ID# 12370.

<sup>286</sup> This was a lavish event, even the gifted elephant from the king of Portugal was in attendance, see Jordan Gschwend, A., *The Story of Suleiman: celebrity elephants and other exotica in Renaissance Portugal*, (Zurich: Pachyderm Press, 2010).

<sup>287</sup> Mallett & Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe*, p. 255.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

seniority of Philip over their own precedence.<sup>289</sup> In reply to spurning their entertainment, Milan may well have responded in kind, as the letter describing the comedy debacle continues, “this city has not given more to the Queen than a mirror. Of the sable fur of which I spoke of so singularly, it remains in the workshop.”<sup>290</sup> In any-case, respect for social status, and the appropriate honours accorded, whether gifts material or hospitality, were central features of early modern diplomacy, and mistaking their subtlety could lead to unintended insults.

In 1583, Alfonso Felice d’Avalos, the marquis of Pescara, refused Grand Duke Francesco I de’ Medici’s invitation to luncheon because the Duke had not paid him a visit the night before when he arrived in Florence. These were public statements, calculated to impact on the audience, in this case, to convey his displeasure to the Grand Duke. As Francesco’s secretaries informed each other:

The Marquis, wanting to leave straight away, without haveen seen His Highness, because, neither yesterday evening nor this morning has His Highness, having stayed in his chamber [such that] he [the Marquis] wanted to have been visited before, as has been the treatment of other princes [...] but the Marquis himself now dresses to exit outside of the salon, to take to the via della scala, without wanting to see more His Highness and in such a way he went, accompanied by Don Giovanni [de’ Medici], until the gate of the city.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Nexon, D., *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe : Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 176-179.

<sup>290</sup> “Questa città non ha portato altro alla Regina che lo specchio. Del zibellino sene parlò solamente e rimase in pelliciarìa.” Letter from Francesco di Paolo Vinta in Milan to Cosimo I de’ Medici, 3 December 1551, ASF, MdP 3101, fol 27, MAP Doc ID# 12370.

<sup>291</sup> “Il Marchese voleva partir subito senza vedere altrimenti S. A. perchè nè hiersera nè questa mattina S. A. era stata a vederlo in camera sua, et che pretendeva d’haver a esser visitato prima come havevono fatto altri Principi. [...] Ma il Marchese finitosi di vestire et uscito fuori del salone prese la via della scala senza volersi vedere altrimenti con S. A. et così se n’andò accompagnato da Don Giovanni [de’ Medici] fino alla porta della città.” Letter from Antonio Serguidi in Florence to Pietro di Francesco Usimbardi in Siena, 19 March 1583, ASF, MdP 5109, ins. 1, fol. 314, MAP Doc ID# 17600.

This remarkable episode may allude to a major or minor issue: a simple slight in not receiving the young marquis with the proper pomp and ceremony, or something far more serious, perhaps to do with Pescara's marriage to Lavinia Feltria della Rovere in 1583.<sup>292</sup> In any case, the actions of the marquis of Pescara demonstrate how the refusing of hospitality (and his sudden departure), could be used as a way of embarrassing or insulting another lord or prince in early modern diplomacy.

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<sup>292</sup> Lavinia's brother, Francesco Maria II della Rovere, duke of Urbino, had discussed the arrangements for the dowry with Francesco I de' Medici the year before, "[...] A me pare di dover dare a D. Lavinia [Lavinia Feltria della Rovere] mia sorella la medesima dote che dal duca mio padre [Guidobaldo II della Rovere] hebbe la Principessa di Bisignano [Isabella della Rovere-Sanseverino], che com'altre volte credo haver fatto saper a V.A. [Francesco I de' Medici], fu di 40 mila ducati, tre quarti in gioie et il rimanente in dinari [...]" Letter from Francesco Maria II della Rovere in Urbino to Francesco I de' Medici in Florence, 6 May 1582, ASF, MdP 4051, fol. 460, MAP Doc ID# 22501.



## 4.6 CONCLUSION

To prove the power of gifts in early modern society, especially within the spheres of diplomacy and courtly life, this section has presented examples from the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Clearly, giving gifts is a way to “get things done”, and for a society, highly formalised and ritualised as the early modern European court, gifts were an essential tool in creating webs of obligation and duty, as Ferdinando attempted with Gabriel de Zayas. Only by building up social credit could an ambassador hope to achieve the aims of his mission, yet this was a line carefully walked, as seen with Giovanni Modesti’s ‘a gift too far’ with Harrach, a situation carefully avoided by Marco Grimani’s conscientious refusal of all gifts in Scotland. Gifts, though, only work if they are desired, as the case of Contarini’s gifts to Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha demonstrates, but recipients had to be careful as to how the gifts were perceived, lest they wanted their loyalty to be brought into question. As such, given the very real danger that gifts could be refused, gifts had to be as appealing as possible to the target recipient. As such, the many luxury objects which this thesis discusses, can be put into this context of enticements, as a way to get people to accept the object presented. Sixtus V thought by refusing such luxury gifts he could make a rare show of humility. Likewise, the very real desire to consume luxury or interesting objects, especially to gaze upon or possess objects of value, could transform a one directional gift presentation into a reciprocal gift-exchange, as witnessed between the Englishman Carr and Cardinal Alessandro Peretti da Montalto and the mutual gifting of portraits.

All of this care taken is most clearly explained in the count of Chinchón’s refusal of a painting gifted by Ferdinando in 1584 when King Philip II of Spain made his feelings known that such gifts could be intended to sway the work of his ministers towards the advantage of the gift-giver and thus viewed unfavourably. The power of obligation is such, that no gift could not be taken lightly. To accept a gift was to accept an obligation, and depending on one’s position in early modern society, this could mean being compromised in the eyes of one’s patron or colleagues. There is one exception to this pattern of refusal: the rejection of gifts by those at the highest stratum of society, such as

Maria, queen of Bohemia, or the marchese of Pescara, whose rejection of gifts, even in the case of portraits offered by a pope, as with de Zúñiga ladies in 1621, could be used to communicate their displeasure, even to send an insult. This indicates that winning an obligation from such personages would require special effort, whether guaranteeing the free flow of hospitality when hosting them, or presenting gifts too good to be refused.

## Epilogue

Benedetto Pagni's *Medici Madonna* is described by Vasari as: "a picture of Our Lady with lovely and noble poetry, consisting of a Fiorenza who presents Her with the honourable rank (la dignità) of the Medici family."<sup>293</sup> The painting can be read as a depiction of the social world of gifts in the age of Cosimo I de' Medici. Fiorenza presents gifts in adoration of the christ-child, replacing the biblical Magi. While Christ stares out at the viewer, it is the Virgin who gazes down upon the gifts, judging them, not with the humility one would expect, but with a certain grandness more appropriate for a duchess. Such a suggestion would be accurate, women played a very important role in gift-giving, including high profile diplomatic gifts. The objects themselves are all highly symbolic: two papal tiaras; two ducal coronets, the Medici *palle*, a Medici family tree, and the *gigli* of Florence, bound by a ribbon, evoking the Medici family device of the *broncone*.<sup>294</sup> All of these gifts represented Cosimo's ancestors and their achievements, and his own role in the succession of the family, blessed by the Virgin's hand holding Cosimo's cornet, which acts as a ring, binding together the various elements of his family's patrimony.

In constructing the social world of Cosimo, it is essential to understand his relationship with the Medici family tradition – this is an important theme throughout the thesis – as providing a model of gift exchange. The memory of Lorenzo il Magnifico and Cosimo il Vecchio may be the most important in providing a template (especially the former) as how to use diplomatic gifts, for example, Lorenzo's gifts in Naples, during his embassy to Naples in 1479; or his gifts to the sultan

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<sup>293</sup> Benedetto Pagni, *The Medici Madonna*, 1547, oil on panel, Ringling Museum, Sarasota See, principally, Edward Wright, D., "Benedetto Pagni's 'Medici Madonna' in Sarasota: A Study in Medici Patronage and Iconography" *The Burlington Magazine*, 128, 995 (1986), p. 90. See Fig. 1.

<sup>294</sup> This collection of objects was not Pagni's invention but borrowed from Francesco Salviati's *Madonna* which he gifted to his brother, Alamanno Salviati as a demonstration piece, see *Ibid.*, p. 93.

in 1480, and his reception of the Mamluk ambassadors in 1484.<sup>295</sup> Leo X also provided an important example of how the city and the family should interact, especially in his grand triumphal entry into the city in 1515.<sup>296</sup> Clement VII, for all his failings, still used gifts of artworks as a means to affect the Medici marriage with the Valois of France.<sup>297</sup> Cosimo's social world was undeniably influenced, even defined, by the tradition in which he saw himself as a continuation, indeed, as a unifying figure.

Benedetto Pagni's painting was itself a gift to Cosimo and Eleonora through Pagni cousin, Cristiano.<sup>298</sup> His intention with this gift was to win patronage at the Medici court. Indeed, there are many examples of painters, sculptors, writers and composers who made gifts to Cosimo and Eleonora.<sup>299</sup> While these gifts provide a rich and varied

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<sup>295</sup> See pp. 355-359 of this thesis. And also, Bullard, M., "The language of Diplomacy in the Renaissance," in Toscani, B. (ed.), *Lorenzo de' Medici. New perspectives*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 263-278.

<sup>296</sup> See Shearman, J., "The Florentine Entrata of Leo X, 1515," in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 38, (1975), pp. 136-154; and Ciseri, I., *L'ingresso trionfale di Leone X in Firenze nel 1515* (Firenze: Olschki, 1990).

<sup>297</sup> See Cox-Rearick, J., "Sacred to Profane: Diplomatic Gifts of the Medici to Francis I", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 24, 2 (1994), pp. 239-258.

<sup>298</sup> Edward Wright, "Benedetto Pagni's 'Medici Madonna' in Sarasota: A Study in Medici Patronage and Iconography", p. 94.

<sup>299</sup> For example, Vincenzo de' Rossi gifted a sculpture, see Utz, H., "The Labors of Hercules and Other Works by Vincenzo de' Rossi," *The Art Bulletin*, 53, 3 (1971), pp. 344-366; Cristóbal de Morales dedicated and gifted madrigals, see Pietschmann, K., "A Renaissance Composer Writes to His Patrons: Newly Discovered Letters from Cristóbal de Morales to Cosimo I de' Medici and Cardinal Alessandro Farnese" in *Early Music*, 28, 3 (2000), pp. 383-400; Gabriello Simeoni gifted a biography of Cosimo's father, see Letter from Gabriello Simeoni to Cosimo I de' Medici, ASF, MdP 1175, ins. 5, fol. 16, MAP Doc ID# 526.

material to construct a study of patronage and artistic networks<sup>300</sup>, this thesis has discounted these gifts as not being “diplomatic gifts”. In all the examples cited in this first part of the thesis, diplomacy has been the context in which the gift-exchanges have taken place – the thread with which to judge and connect the many gifted objects discussed. This is not to say that artists seeking patronage differ fundamentally from a lesser lord seeking support from a greater one. Indeed, while an artist wishes in his gift to demonstrate his merit for patronage, some diplomatic gifts attempted to evidence the like benefits of cordial relations. Yet, on the whole, diplomatic gifts have different functions, especially in their role as aids of communication. Teasing out the unique facets of what comprises a diplomatic gift – even to the extent of outlined what made for a successful diplomatic gift and what did not – will hopefully be an important contribution this thesis can make to the interdisciplinary field of material cultural studies and diplomatic history.

Part one of this thesis has demonstrated that gifts were viewed and interpreted as a means of communication. They did this in two ways. Objects could convey a message, whether or not they were art-objects with particular emblems or images or objects such as food or deeds of a title. The exchange itself is also a means of communication, regardless of any of the attributes specific to the gift, the act of giving denoted a relationship – a social bond – between giver and receiver. Together, the following of these exchanges and the deciphering of the meaning (if any) of the objects themselves afforded to contemporary observers, in the case studies outlined above, that observer being Cosimo and his secretaries, an insight into the bonds (as evidenced by gift-exchanges) of friends and enemies alike as described in the *avvisi* sent from Venice. The other side of this exchange, gift rejection, equally afforded the viewer an important indication of favour or disfavour, or indeed, any of the other reasons for rejecting gifts outlined above. The consequence of these three approaches to gifts allow us to appreciate

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<sup>300</sup> Studies on this subject are copious, see Kent, F., (ed.), *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre Australia, 1987); and McLean, D., *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

both the significance of gifted-objects and their exchange as being two distinct elements, each with their own nuances. The term one is forced to use is 'multi-layered', and indeed, much of the thesis is taken up with identifying the intentions of the giver, the appreciation of the receiver (whether a sense of gratitude for a past action rendered or an obligation to reciprocate in the future), but most importantly, identifying the audience(s) to the gift and its exchange, and their interpretation of what the object and its presentation signify within the social world in which Cosimo I inhabited.

CHAPTER II

GIFTS IN THE LIFE OF  
COSIMO I DE' MEDICI

## Prologue



When Charles V, returning from his conquest of Tunis, entered Naples in triumph on 25 November 1535, he was greeted by the leading personages of the city, nobility and religious, led by Pedro de Álvarez de Toledo, the viceroy of the kingdom of Naples. The civic spectacle was framed with an elaborate staging of triumphal gates and columns. Embellishing the scene were the figures of Jove and Minerva, Hercules and Mars, replete with sirens and minor gods personified, the visual climax was the great victory arch, inscribed "AUGUSTUS NOMINI DEDITIS, POST AUCTUM IMPERIUM," decorated with other honoured conquerers of Africa: Cornelius Scipio, Hannibal Barca, Alexander of Macedon, and Gaius Julius Caesar.<sup>301</sup> Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, could not have been more pleased by such an imperious entry and august associations. The Entry into Naples was the highpoint in a celebratory progress during which all of southern Italy had lauded his victory with festivities, loyal declarations, and thanksgivings, much in tone with the first welcoming committee from Naples who had dutifully given supplication, "a baciare il

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<sup>301</sup> Sala, A., *Il triomphale apparato per la entrata de la cesarea maesta in Napoli: co[n] tutte le particolarita [et] archi triumphali [et] statue antiche cosa bellissima*, (Rome: Paola Danza, 1535). For detailed studies of the symbolism of the triumph, see Hernando Sánchez, C., "El Glorioso Triunfo de Carlos V en Napolés y el humanismo de corte entre Italia y Espana." in *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, 119 (2001), pp. 587-610; Megale, T., "'Sic per te superis gens inimica ruat.' L'ingresso trionfale di Carlo V a Napoli (1535)" in *Ibid*, pp. 587-610. Visceglia, M. A., "Il viaggio cerimoniale di Carlo V dopo Tunisi" in Martínez Millán, J. (ed.), *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558), svoltosi a Madrid nei giorni 3-6 luglio 2000*, (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Accion Cultural Exterior, 2001), vol. 2, pp. 133-172.



ginocchio e la mano a Sua Maesta Cesarea."<sup>302</sup> When Alessandro de' Medici, duke of Florence, entered the same city on 3 January 1536, the reception could not have been more different. Arrayed before the young Florentine leader upon his arrival were not the allegories of ancient virtues, but the baying taunts of *fuoriusciti*: Florentine exiles, who had come to Naples in the winter of 1535-36 to win the emperor's support against the Medicean principate.<sup>303</sup> The *fuoriusciti* had done their work well. They quickly convinced two of the leading men of the imperial court – Ascanio Colonna and Alfonso d'Avalos, marquis of Vasto – to take their side. Reinforcing their advantage, and in stark contrast to the Emperor's passage to Naples, during Alessandro's journey through Lazio and the Campania, the exiles made sure to humiliate the young duke, as Varchi records in his *Storia fiorentina*, "those *fuoriusciti* who had remained behind, or their partisans, wrote on the walls of their lodging, VIVA ALESSANDRO DA COLLEVECCHIO, in order to mock the low birth of his mother, which was said to have been that of a poor peasant woman born in such a place."<sup>304</sup>

Amongst Alessandro's entourage, still dressed *al bruno* in mourning for the recent Medici deaths – Pope Clement VII and

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<sup>302</sup> Rosso, G., *Historia delle cose di Napoli sotto l'impero di Carlo Quinto cominciando dell'anno 1526 per infimo all'anno 1537, scritta per modo di giornali da Gregorio Rosso autori di quei medesimi tempi*, (Napoli: Gio. Domenico Montanaro, 1635), p.138. For the celebrations immediately prior to Naples, see Cazzaro, V., "Le feste per Carlo V in Italia: gli ingressi trionfali in tre centri minori del sud (1535-1536)" in Fagiolo, M., *La città effimera e l'universo artificiale del giardino: la Firenze dei Medici e l'Italia del Cinquecento* (Roma: Officina, 1980), pp. 22-30.

<sup>303</sup> Varchi, B. *Storia fiorentina*, III vols., [ed. Razzi, S.], (Firenze: Società ed. delle Storie del Nardi e del Varchi, 1844), vol. III, bk. XIV, pp. 134-237. See also Rebecchini, G., "Fonti mantovane sul conflitto fra Alessandro de' Medici e i fuoriusciti fiorentini durante la visita a Napoli di Carlo V nel 1536", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 577 (1999), pp. 517-528; and most recently, Simoncelli, P., *Fuoriuscitismo repubblicano fiorentino, 1530-54* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2006), pp. 92-143.

<sup>304</sup> "[...] quei fuoriusciti che gli erano rimasi, o por partigiani, fecero scrivere su per le mura dell'alloggiamento suo, VIVA ALESSANDRO DA COLLEVECCHIO, per rimproverargli in quella maniera la viltà della madre, la quale era una povera contadina nata in quel luogo." Varchi, *Storia fiorentina*, pp. 134-135.

Cardinale Ippolito de' Medici – was his young cousin, Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici, son of the *condottiere*, Ludovico di Giovanni de' Medici (to whom posterity would drop the Ludovico and append the title *delle Bande Nere*), and Maria Salviati, the granddaughter of Lorenzo de' Medici called 'il Magnifico'. His presence in the group, and even their mode of dress, were all calculations, most likely by Alessandro's advisors, Francesco Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori, to thwart the slander promulgated by the pro-republican party, who, with Ippolito de' Medici's death, was under the leadership of Cardinals Salviati and Ridolfi, and who claimed that their late patron had been assassinated on Alessandro's orders.<sup>305</sup> Into this heated political environment Cosimo and his cousin, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, had been brought.

Departing from their home city on 21 December 1535, before Naples, the Florentines had visited Rome to pay homage to the memory of the recently deceased family members.<sup>306</sup> Showing a united Medici family, Cosimo and Lorenzo behind Alessandro, was careful propaganda. Alessandro needed to show strength and unity, and above all, stability, if he was to win the full support of Emperor Charles V upon whom his future depended. Thus, against the taunts of the more rabid *fuoriusciti*, Alessandro and his followers maintained their cool, such that, "to those words [the *fuoriusciti's* insults] the gentlemen in duke Alessandro's company, responded benignly, even though they were still very much against them [the *fuoriusciti*], they demonstrated the goodness of their souls towards them, so much so, that those who had been against them changed in favour of the duke."<sup>307</sup> In the war of

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<sup>305</sup> Spini, G., *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1980), p. 4.

<sup>306</sup> Firpo, M. & Lo Re, S., "Gliocchi azzurri di Alessandro de' Medici. Note su una copia di un celebre ritratto di Iacopo Pontormo" *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 49 3 (2005), pp. 413-416.

<sup>307</sup> "Alle quali parole quei gentiluomini ch'erano venuti in compagnia del duca Alessandro risposero benignamente, e si dimostrarono di buon animo verso di loro, ancorché eglino avessero l'intenzione loro molto contraria a quel ch'ei risposero, siccome si vide poi per quel ch'eglino adoperarono contro di loro in favor del duca." Varchi, *Storia fiorentina*, pp. 135-136.

words, Alessandro was winning, his victory and thus his security was confirmed on 25 February 1536 when he wed the natural daughter of the Emperor, Margaret of Austria.

This was Cosimo's first experience of statecraft, the successful use of which Cosimo's own rule would be hallmarked. Indeed, his time in Naples, at the impressionable age of only sixteen, was undoubtedly highly influential on the young man's mind and world outlook. First, had there been any doubts in the public exegesis presented by the *fuoriusciti* denouncing his cousin, Cosimo would be fully aware of the danger posed to his family's position in Florence and the hate aroused by the mere mention of his surname.<sup>308</sup> In visiting the sepulchres of his churchmen kin in Rome, Cosimo would have gathered the importance of maintaining the legacy of one's forebears, in particular, the connection between legacy and legitimacy. As such, Cosimo's visit to Naples represents a rare insight into his formative years. Having spent his childhood under the careful tutelage of Pier Francesco Riccio and his mother at the Medici Villa del Trebbio in the Mugello, Cosimo was much more a *cacciatore* than a *cortegiano*, or so the tradition goes.<sup>309</sup> Understandably, much to the disappointment of his ambitious mother, Maria Salviati, his shorter trips as a child to win the return of his patrimony or find new patronage in Venice and Rome were failures.<sup>310</sup> His likely witnessing of the coronation of Charles V in Bologna in 1530, and in 1532, his return to Bologna for Alessandro's meeting with the emperor, was as a juvenile minor spectator. Indeed, as his cousin, thirty kilometres away in Florence, did not maintain a court in the traditional

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<sup>308</sup> Cosimo was a "popolani" after all, as a decendent of Pierfrancesco de' Medici, see Brown, A. "Pierfrancesco de' Medici, 1430-1476: a radical alternative to elder Medicean Supremacy?" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 42 (1979), pp. 81-103.

<sup>309</sup> Cochrane, E. *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, p. 23.

<sup>310</sup> As a boy, Cosimo travelled with his mother to Rome to see Clemente VII, they fled to Venice and Bologna during the troubles of 1528-1530, before returning to the Tuscany, see Guasti, C., "Alcuni fatti della prima giovinezza di Cosimo de' Medici Granduca di Toscana illustrati con documenti contemporanei" *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani*, 1 (1857), pp. 13-70.

definition of a palace society, the experience would have been eye-opening.<sup>311</sup>

While still a youth, though mature beyond his years, his second trip to Rome would have made a great impression, Naples would have been a remarkably different world entirely.<sup>312</sup> The exotic entertainments, assembled nobility, colourful soldiery, and grandiose ceremonies, centred upon the most powerful man in the world, Charles V, a sight which leads Maria Antonietta Visceglia to write, “[that] the presence of the sovereign staying in Naples, for a very short period, made a true court.”<sup>313</sup> From 8 January 1536 to the 2 February 1536, Charles hosted a parliament of the state, in which Cosimo would have observed the workings of imperial government and had contact with the great men of the day: Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, Alfonso d’Avalos, Andrea Doria, Ferdinando d’Aragona, and the Sanseverino family (a daughter of which house, four years before, Cosimo’s suit to marry had been rejected).<sup>314</sup> All of these men would feature as regular correspondents when Cosimo became duke. Making his first introductions and connections to this powerful circle – it would not be

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<sup>311</sup> Cantini, L., *Vita di Cosimo de’ Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, (Firenze: Albizzini, 1805), p. 13-14. He may well also have followed in Alessandro’s entourage to Milan and Genoa as he accompanied Charles V, see Rastrelli, M., *Storia d’Alessandro de’ Medici primo duca di Firenze scritta, e corredata di inediti documenti*, 3 vols, (Firenze: Antonio Benucci, 1781), vol. 2, pp. 27-30.

<sup>312</sup> Under the Aragonese kings, Naples had developed one of the highest court cultures in Europe, see Hersey, G., *Alfonso II and the Artistic Renewal of Naples*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969). This tradition was changed and enhanced by the viceregal court from 1532, see Hernando, C., *Castilla y Napoles en el siglo XVI. El virrey Pedro de Toledo: Linaje, estado y cultura (1532-53)*, (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 1994); Guarino, G., *Representing the King’s Splendour. Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2011).

<sup>313</sup> “La presenza del sovrano faceva sì che a Napoli tornasse, sia pure per un periodo molto breve, una vera corte,” Visceglia, M., “Il viaggio cerimoniale di Carlo V dopo Tunisi,” in Martínez Millán, J. (ed.), *Carlos V y la Quiebra del Humanismo Político en Europa (1530-1558)* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal, 2001), vol. II, pp. 133-172, (p. 154).

<sup>314</sup> Rosso, G., *Historia delle cose di Napoli sotto l’impero di Carlo Quinto*, pp. 66-68.

too much of a stretch of the imagination to see Cosimo hunting with the imperial court in their frequent outings in the Campania, an activity at which the *mugellano* could have demonstrated his worth – Cosimo could attend court as a man of renowned legitimate heritage, not simply a minor cousin of a bastard duke.<sup>315</sup>

Nor would it be unlikely for Cosimo to have viewed during his days in the city the triumphal arches which greeted the Emperor's arrival only a month before.<sup>316</sup> As the city still resonated with talk of the spectacular Entry, Cosimo will have noted the detail on the greatest of triumphal arches which depicted allegories of the virtues; Peace, Clemency and Glory, and "Humanity which receives the King of Tunisia, and all his Moorish clothes, with which he makes many gifts [...] and Liberality, which gifts with one hand gold and coin, and picks from baskets antique vases, and with the other hand, lifts a golden neck chain destined as a gift for the said soldiers [and] Paul the Muse holds many gifts, and various vestments and things with which to gift to persons, and to soldiers in need of charity."<sup>317</sup> Even the most casual glance would have extolled that one of the most fundamental traits of rulership was the exchange of gifts.

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid. p.69.

<sup>316</sup> The longevity of triumphal decorations is subject to some debate. It is highly likely that the Neopolitan arches remained in place for the duration of Charles V's sojourn until April 1536. Sheila ffoliot has argued that the Fountain of Orion Messina, the first city of the 1536 triumphal progress in southern Italy, is a remnant of the Entry of 1535. See ffoliot, S., *Civic Sculpture in the Renaissance: Montorsoli's Fountains at Messina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984). The weather was also very mild that winter, "Tutto quello inferno, che l'Imperatore stette a Napoli, non parse inverno, ma una continua primavera senza freddo", Rosso, *Historia delle cose di Napoli sotto l'impero di Carlo Quinto*, p. 65.

<sup>317</sup> "l'Humanita, e per ricevere il Re de Tunizi, e li suoi tutti vestiti alla Moresca, alli quali fa molti doni [...] e la Liberalita, che co una mano dona alli soldati oro, e danari, che li piglia da canestri, & vasi antichi, & con l'altra mano mostra levarsi una catena dal colo, per donarla allo detti soldati [...] Pavlo Musa, che tiene intorno molti doni, con vari vestimenti, et robbe, per donarli a persone, a soldati afflitti per la Carita." Quoted from "Il triomphale apparato per la entrata de la cesarea maesta in Napoli: co[n] tutte le particolarita [et] archi triomphali [et] statue antiche cosa bellissima." Sala, *Il triomphale apparato per la entrata de la cesarea maesta in Napoli*, p. 7.

Emphasising this important princely practice, he would have seen first-hand the number of gifts presented to the Emperor. The golden banner embroidered with eagles and a white charger from the city of Palermo; the ships, and war materiel, fruits, wines, and other food stuffs from Messina, “[...] said to be valued 1000 ducats and was therefore the greatest honour to all assembled who believed they had made the gift to all the kingdom [...],” or the bejewelled necklaces, silver vases, and medallions received from the other cities of the *Mezzogiorno* which Charles visited before Naples, and which one anonymous contemporary chronicler valued at half a million ducats.<sup>318</sup> This largess was fully in the public domain. These gifts were repaid by the Emperor, the *quid pro quo* of gift-exchange which lubricated early modern society. Charles, having been showered with gifts, would reciprocate with appropriate munificence and magnificence: honours, rights, privileges, titles, lands, and occasionally, choice objects.<sup>319</sup>

The efficacy of this gift-exchange as part of a broader social and cultural process of fusing realm and ruler was keenly demonstrated to Cosimo when the climax of the month-long parliament conceded to the

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<sup>318</sup> Visceglia, op. cit., p.133; “[...] et diceva tal dono intal luoco esser di valuta di docati 1 milia, hebbero a dunque grandissimo honore e per tutto il campo si credeva il dono di tutto il Regno [...]” quoted from d’Alibrando, C., “Il triumpho il qual fece Messina nella Intrata del Imperator Carlo V e Molte altre cose Degne di notizia, fatta di nanzi, e Dopo L’avneto Di sua Cesarea Maghestà in detta Città (1535)” reprinted in Gallo, C., *Annali della città di Messina*, 3 vols., (Messina: Francesco Gaipa, 1756), vol. II, pp. 498; and “Racconti di Storia Napoletano” in Giannini, F. (ed.), *Archivio Storico per le province napoletane* (Napoli: Società napoletana di storia patria, 1909) vol. XXXIV, p.109, quoted in Visceglia, op. cit. p. 144.

<sup>319</sup> Charles V could reciprocate a ‘gift’ exchange by conceding to a request or simply conceding to maintain one’s position or precedence at court or in civic society. Pedro Álvarez de Toledo was rewarded in such a way; his term of office as viceroy was extended for another three years. See Tracey, J., *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 274-288; and on Charles’ redistribution of titles in the kingdom of Naples, see Pedio, T., *Napoli e Spagna nella prima metà del Cinquecento* (Naples: Carucci, 1971), pp. 274-289.

Emperor's request for war monies, called a *donativo* (but really a type of war taxation) totalling one and a half million ducats.<sup>320</sup>

In sum, Cosimo's sojourn in Naples taught him that gift-exchange was a key aspect of sixteenth-century statecraft. Perhaps most important of all, Cosimo would have witnessed the realisation of the journey's objective: the marriage of Alessandro de' Medici to Margaret of Austria. After the long struggle against his family's many powerful foes, it would have been impressed upon Cosimo that this Medici-Habsburg match would be the foundation of his family's rule in Florence. Neither would it have escaped him that this marriage, in which he would have fully participated in its celebration with the rest of the imperial court, was only formalised at the presentation to Margaret by Alessandro of an engagement ring.<sup>321</sup> Had Cosimo not left Naples himself with gifts, or even gifted himself – he was a man of private wealth, though only recently established with the patrimony of his great-grandfather, Pier Francesco the Elder, only recently settled with his 'popolani' cousins – he would at least have parted with knowledge of their centrality in the social world in which he was to live.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Rossi, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>321</sup> Rastrelli, M., *Storia d'Alessandro de' Medici primo duca di Firenze scritta, e corredata di inediti documenti dall'abate Modesto Rastrelli fiorentino*, p. 184.

<sup>322</sup> Fasano Guarini, E., "Cosimo I de' Medici, duca di Firenze, granduca di Toscana" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, (1984): vol. 30.

## 5. SECURING TUSCANY, 1537-1541

### 5.1 THE MEDICEAN SUCCESSION

The relationship between a sovereign and his subjects is both illustrated and evidenced through the study of gift-exchanges. While Charles V, conquering hero in 1535, accepted the dutiful offerings of his southern Italian possessions, victory and thanksgiving were not the only reasons for gift-giving. Each city had a calendar of events, religious and civic festivals, which were marked by the public offering of gifts. Florence was no different.<sup>323</sup> The most important day in the Florentine calendar which merged both civic and religious identities of the city was the Feast of St. John the Baptist (24 June).<sup>324</sup> On this day, Florentines gave thanks to the city's patron saint and traditionally, in the days of the republic, would crown the statue of the Marzocco – the lion bearing the coat-of-arms of the city, the city's other sacred totem – as a ceremonial action designed to reinforce the commune's identity as a kingless *res publica*.<sup>325</sup> While the Marzocco was a potent republican

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<sup>323</sup> For a detailed overview of Florence's calendar of events, see Trexler, R., *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>324</sup> See Chretien, H., *The Festival of San Giovanni: Image and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

<sup>325</sup> See van Veen, H., "The Crown of the Marzocco and the Medici Dukes and Grand Dukes" *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 43, 2 3 (1999), pp. 656-657.



symbol, the city's sacred protector – St. John the Baptist – stood in far higher elevation than a podium in the Piazza della Signoria. The saintly patron was the city's heavenly guarantor of independence and fortune, and like the Holy Virgin's protection of Florence's ancient rival, Siena, was evoked as intercessor in times of crisis and thanked as saviour in times of relief.<sup>326</sup> Understandably, Duke Alessandro de' Medici was keen to associate himself with St. John the Baptist and his Feast Day – such an important sacred and civic juncture in the city's year – and so communicate clearly that he too was Florence's patron and protector.

In June 1534 we read of how this intention, or rather, relationship between *signore* and *stato* was manifested in gift-giving. In an undated letter from 1534, but likely in the days immediately following the Feast of St. John the Baptist, we read of Alessandro's gratitude toward the Tuscan cities under his authority for the gifts which he claimed had demonstrated during, "this solemn feast of St. John the Baptist your love for me, which, though not a new thing, is not less than most gratefully received, such that you know that to me you have shown your great quality."<sup>327</sup> Signifying this love were gifts. From Pisa was sent sixteen chests of fish, the same gift sent, though in various quantities and types, from Prato, Pistoia, Bibbiena, Barga, and Fucecchio, while Volterra and another Pistoian neighbourhood sent

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<sup>326</sup> The role of St. John the Baptist in Florence's history is well described in Pastori, P. (ed.), *La festa di San Giovanni nella storia di Firenze: rito, istituzione e spettacolo* (Firenze: Edizione Polistampa, 1997). Compare with Norman, N., *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>327</sup> "[...] questa solemnità di san Giovannibattista il vostro amor' in me che non mi è cosa nuova et niente di meno m' è stato gratiss.o si come alla giornata con efficaci conoscerete quanto mi sieno a grado le ottime qualita vostre." from a *Ricordo* of gifts received for the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, *minuto* of thank you letter from Alessandro de' Medici, (after 24) June 1534 ,ASE, MdP 181, fol. 283, MAP Doc ID# 15552.

calves, while San Gimignano sent vernaccia wine.<sup>328</sup> In sending these gifts, the product of their local water and soil, Tuscan cities under Alessandro's dominium (both those considered to be of the *contado fiorentino*, in the city's immediate vicinity, and those under the city's *dominio* of communes held by Florence further afield), dutifully supplicated to their lord following the older tradition enjoyed by Lorenzo il Magnifico in the fifteenth century.<sup>329</sup> Though we may ponder whether by gifting to Alessandro and not to Florence (i.e. not to St. John

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<sup>328</sup> "Forma d'una lettera che s'è scritta a tutti quelli homini et Comunità che hanno portato lo Ill.mo S.re Duca nella solemnità di San Giovanbattista nel 1534. Et che presenterà sara qui descritto. / Ho per il vostro Amb.re o mandato recupero il presente non per dimostrarne in questa solemnità di san Giovambattista il vostro amor' in me che non mi è cosa nuova et niente di meno m' è stato gratiss.o si come alla giornata con efficaci conoscerete quanto mi sieno a grado le ottime qualita vostre. Aggiuntoci lo interesse del mio mons.re d'Assisi che tanto io amo per suo rispetto molto piu voi. / Quelli che presentono s. Ill.ma Sig.ria / La Comunità di Pisa 16 cestini di Pesce / La Comunità di Piet.a S.ta una soma di Pesce / La Comunità di Prato vecchio 40 trote / La Comunità di Monte pulciano / La Comunità di Pist.a una Vitella et 47 trote / La Comunità di San Gem.o 2 some di vernaccia / La Comunità di Volterra 4 vitelle / La Comunità di Poppi Pesce / La Comunità di Barga Trote / El [...] di Casentino Trote / La parte panciatica di Pist.a una vitella / La comunità di fiuizano libb. 100 di Pesce Marinato / La Montagna di Pist.a libb. 60 di Trote / La Comunità di Bibbiena 19 libb. d'Arno / La Comunità di Fucecchio 20 libb. di Tinche / Il Proveditore de Consoli Pesce." Ricordo of Gifts Received for the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, Minute of thank you letter from Alessandro de' Medici, (after 24) June 1534 ASF, MdP 181, fol. 283, MAP Doc ID# 15552.

<sup>329</sup> On Lorenzo's approach to Florentine civic ceremonies, namely the feast of St. John the Baptist, see Ventrone, P. (ed.), "'Le tems revient'- 'l tempo si rinnova'," in *Feste e spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico, catalogo della mostra*, (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 1992), p. 251. On the strong bonds between the Medici and the subjugated cities, compared to the animosity of the communes to the Florentine *signoria*, see Black, R., "Arezzo, the Medici and the Florentine Regime," in Connell, W., & Zorzi, A. (eds.), *Florentine Tuscany: Structures and Practices of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 293-312.

the Baptist, who had traditionally received the gifts of homage<sup>330</sup>) the subject communes were circumventing the long-held discomfort they felt towards their subjugated status under fellow Tuscans by pledging loyalty to the Duke's person and not the city of Florence. Regardless of this nuance, the key point emerges: that Alessandro, by 1534, was secure in his relationship with his realm outside of the walls of his capital, territories whose loyalty had only recently been in question.<sup>331</sup>

The subject of this section is how Cosimo in the first five years of his rule sought to consolidate his position to that of Alessandro, through, in part, the use of gifts. The scholarly tradition which has developed against Alessandro as a sexual libertine, spendthrift, and juvenile tyrant, in sum, a sixteenth-century playboy – a subject upon which I will soon elaborate – has rightly been challenged by recent historiography.<sup>332</sup> Catherine Fletcher, amongst others, has argued that Alessandro's rule established an archetype for Cosimo to follow.<sup>333</sup> This is undoubtedly true, as Henk van Veen has masterfully demonstrated

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See Ibid., pp. 293-312. On the *fiesta degli omaggi* see in Maccabruni, L., "La 'San Giovanni' e l'eredità storica della festa. Il palio, gli omaggi, l'offerta," in Pastori, P. (ed.), *La festa di San Giovanni nella storia di Firenze: rito, istituzione e spettacolo*, pp. 125-226 (138); and Ventrone, P., "La festa di San Giovanni: costruzione di un'identità civica fra rituale e spettacolo (secoli XIV-XVI)" *Annali di Storia di Firenze*, 2 (2007), pp. 49-76. See also Gherardi Dragomanni, F. (ed.), *Cronica di Giovanni Villani*, (Firenze: Coen, 1846), vol. III, pp. 315-316. And on a similar imposition on the ceremony undertaken by the duke of Athens in the fourteenth century, see Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, pp. 257-258.

<sup>331</sup> This may well have been a calculated move on part of the leading men of the city after the siege of 1529-1530. As Nicholas Scott Baker finds in his reading of the Guicciardini correspondence, the Florentine *contado* was absolutely exhausted after the siege, with many peasants dead, plague, and food shortages (p. 134). The solution of this was Alessandro as duke: "All of the men recognised the necessity of maintaining preeminence of the Medici in the city and also of limiting participation in the *stato* to the family's friends and allies." Baker, N., *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 149.

<sup>332</sup> Baker, N., "Writing the Wrongs of the Past: Vengeance, Humanism, and the Assassination of Alessandro de' Medici" *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 38 2 (2007), pp. 307-27.

<sup>333</sup> Project Alex, <https://projectalexblog.wordpress.com/> (last accessed 24/04/2015).

in his comprehensive study of the self-representation of Cosimo I de' Medici: that Cosimo always adapted older models, whether from his own family or from the Republican past, albeit with a careful attention as to what should be left behind.<sup>334</sup> Indeed, the demonisation of Alessandro was much later, his legacy sacrificed as part of an increasingly paranoid propaganda of jealous Medici heirs, though by far, Alessandro was a victim to the vicissitudes of time and the poisoned wit of his assassin's self-justifying pen.<sup>335</sup> Though while modelling himself upon Alessandro's rule to ease the transition, Cosimo was faced with far greater challenges and stood in a far weaker position than ever had faced Alessandro. It is testament to the political abilities of the teenage Cosimo, and to those closest to him, that these obstacles were surpassed and his position secured: the widespread use of gifts a further testament to the veracity of this study's value in understanding both the man, his court, and his age.

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<sup>334</sup> See van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture* on the Republican past: "The orations and biographies make it clear not only that Cosimo modelled his image as a ruler on the ideal of the Florentine citizen. They also show that he presented his regime as civic-minded and himself as the champion of the the values, traditions, and goals of the Republican past [...] It was Cosimo who ensured the survival of the Republic and had protected it from those who craved change." (p. 187); and on Cosimo's connection to his lineage, quoting Domenico Mellini, "[...] he modelled himself on the Medici ancestors 'who had devoted themselves exclusively to increasing public welfare and public honour [...] According to Mellini, Cosimo 'imitated above all the great Cosimo il Vecchio and Lorenzo il Magnifico[...]" (p. 188).

<sup>335</sup> The *Apologia* of Lorenzino de' Medici has been subject to much debate: see dall'Aglio, S., "Nota sulla redazione e sulla datazione dell'Apologia di Lorenzino de' Medici", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 61 (2009), pp. 233-241; and Russo, F., *L'apologia del tirannicidio di Lorenzino de Medici: dalla teoria alla prassi politica* (Napoli: Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, 2006).

## 5.2 DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

In the rules of gift-exchange, though one may render a service, an honour, or an object freely, there is an expectation, even termed as an obligation, for the recipient to reciprocate. Likewise, such was Lorenzino di Pierfrancesco de' Medici's intention when by plunged his dagger into his cousin, Alessandro de' Medici's body, on the night of 6 January 1537. His intention, to be viewed as a deliverer of the city, was articulated in his *Apologia*, written while on the run, likely in France, sometime before 1544:

I say therefore that my intention was to liberate Florence by killing Alessandro [...] And my death in that case would have mattered, which would have given a good name to the opposition and those who wanted tyrannicide, and with the death of Alessandro, the part that seemed oppressed would be vindicated, and as such, by acting on their behalf, I would have hurt myself for their happiness.<sup>336</sup>

Fleeing the murder scene, the reward he sought – perhaps his own, or his brother's, investiture with the Duchy of Florence; though his *Apologia* states only his intention for an alternative form of government, not the continuation of the principate, and at least not under Cosimo<sup>337</sup> – was reciprocation for his 'civically minded action'. But the people would not gratefully reciprocate, regardless of what return he sought from his assassination. In sum, although Lorenzino evokes in the above quote his self-sacrifice – the value which underpins the nature of gift-exchange in human society – his own went unrecognised. Instead, the beneficiary of this bloody action, 'public gift' or not, would be Lorenzo and Alessandro's cousin, Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici. Three days

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<sup>336</sup> "Dico adunque che 'l fin mio era di liberar Firenze, e l'amazzare Alexandro [...] E la morte mia in quel caso importava assai, ché averebbi dato reputazione alla parte contraria e a quegli che volevon la tirannide, potendo parere che quel moto fussi in parte opresso e la morte di Alexandro vendicata; e così, procedendo per quel verso, io potevo più nuocere alla causa che giovare." in Bibboni, F. (ed.), *L'apologia / Lorenzino de' Medici. L'amazzamento di Lorenzino de' Medici* (Milano: I.T.E., 1935), pp. 9-10.

<sup>337</sup>Ibid, p. 12.

later, on 9 January 1537, the Senate of Forty-eight elected him, “capo et primario della città di Firenze.”

The election of the most minor legitimate Medici male – an untried, untested, and relatively unknown boy – was the only contingency for those men and women invested in the peaceful governance of the city. The identities of these actors on stage at the opening act of the reign of Cosimo I should be noted. Understanding their roles in the fast-paced events of the first years of Cosimo’s rule is critical to following the subsequent patterns of gift exchange that punctuate their life-long relationships with the duke of Florence. Beyond the personal support provided by his tutor Pier Francesco Riccio<sup>338</sup>, and the initial manoeuvring by seasoned statesmen, Francesco Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori, who led the pro-Medici (i.e. pro-Cosimo) party in the immediate aftermath of Alessandro’s assassination, Cosimo’s mother, Maria Salviati de’ Medici, has long been underestimated.<sup>339</sup>

The Salviati were a family long-established in Florence and in Rome since the the papacy of Sixtus IV to whom they served as

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<sup>338</sup> Pier Francesco Riccio deserves greater attention in historical scholarship: on his role as Cosimo’s tutor, see Paoli, M. P., “Di madre in figlio: per una storia dell’educazione alla corte dei Medici,” *Annali di Storia di Firenze*, 3 (2011), pp. 9-17; for a glimpse of his role at Cosimo’s court, see Cecchi, A., “Il Ducale Maggiordomo Pierfrancesco Riccio e gli artisti della corte medicea” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 42, 1 (1998), pp. 115-143. As members of the ‘office-holding class’, Francesco Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori are discussed extensively in *Ibid.*, but, as great men of letters, the number of articles and monographs in which they feature is copious, a good starting point are their biographies: Varotti, C., *Francesco Guicciardini* (Napoli: Liguori, 2006); and Devonshire Jones, R., *Francesco Vettori, Florentine citizen and Medici servant* (London: Athlone Press, 1978).

<sup>339</sup> See Tomas, N., “Commemorating a Mortal Goddess: Maria Salviati de’ Medici and the Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I” in Cassidy-Welch, M. & Sherlock, P. (eds.), *Practices of gender in late medieval and early modern Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 261-278; Langdon, G., *Medici Women: Portraits of Power, Love and Betrayal From the Court of Duke Cosimo I* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 23-46; Felice, B., “Donne Medicee avanti il Principato: Maria Salviati, moglie di Giovanni delle Bande Nere” *Rassegna Nazionale*, 152 (1906), pp. 620-645; and Pieraccini, G., *La stirpe de’ Medici di Cafaggiolo*, 3 vols. (Florence: Vallecchi, 1924-25; repr. Florence: Nardini, 1986), vol. I, pp. 465-488.

bankers.<sup>340</sup> It was also as churchmen and patrician Florentines of the *ottimati* that the Salviati had long made their mark (Francesco Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa, had conspired with the Pazzi in 1478, an anti-Medicean tradition continued even against Cosimo by his uncle, Alamanno Salviati).<sup>341</sup> During the early 1530s, the Salviati, tied to the Medici papacies, wealthy and well-connected, briefly became the dominant family in the city in the relative power vacuum in the first years of Alessandro de' Medici's tenure, receiving petitions and bestowing political patronage.<sup>342</sup> In this climate of ascending power, Maria, daughter of Jacopo and Lucrezia de' Medici, Pope Leo X's sister, and a crucial bond between the two houses, married Ludovico di Giovanni de' Medici in November 1516.<sup>343</sup> Two and a half years later she gave birth to Cosimo. From 1526, with her husband's death (though he had long been absent from his family), Maria was left independent and responsible for the security and promotion of her only child.<sup>344</sup> She had already proved her political acumen in supporting her husband's position during his exile of 1518, and in 1523, petitioning Clement VII

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<sup>340</sup> For the most recent survey of the family, with an extensive bibliography, see Di Stefano L., *Donne che vanno patrimoni che restano. Studio sulle strategie e alleanze matrimoniali nell'archivio della famiglia Salviati*, [unpublished thesis: laurea magistrale] (Pisa: Università degli studi di Pisa, Dipartimento di Civiltà, 2013).

<sup>341</sup> See Carlomagno, A., *Il banco Salviati di Pisa: commercio e finanza di una compagnia fiorentina tra il 1438 e il 1489*, [unpublished thesis: dottorato di ricerca] (Pisa: Università degli studi di Pisa - Lettere e Filosofia Università di Pisa, 2010).

<sup>342</sup> Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550*, p. 158.

<sup>343</sup> "Hiersera, al plagio di Iacopo Salviati, Giovanni de' Medici consumò el matrimonio con la moglie [...]." *Letter from Messer Goro [Ghieri] in Florence to Alfonsina Orsini in Rome*, 17 Novembre 1516, ASF, MAP, vol. 142, fol. 320. Extract quoted from Guathiez, P., "Nuovi documenti intorno a Giovanni de' Medici detto delle Bande Nere," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 5 30 (1902), p. 88.

<sup>344</sup> Tomas, N., *The Medici Women: Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 146-150.

for financial aid towards his debts.<sup>345</sup> Though it would be her son who would receive the full sum of her prodigious energies. Her letters and incoming correspondence indicate that Cosimo was ever her priority. Even as a four year old child, she imagined for Cosimo a life at the centre, not periphery, of Italian political life. In 1523, she requested that her husband send gifts of a dagger, and “a golden chain for Cosimo worth four or five ducats and a golden medal for Cosimo.” These were the accoutrements of nobility, an imagining of Cosimo’s life instilled early upon the child, and more importantly, to those around him, that Cosimo was a boy destined for an important future.<sup>346</sup>

The image of Medici men was a concern for another person who played a key role in the events of 1537, the imperial general, Alessandro Vitelli. Vitelli had gifted to Alessandro de’ Medici a suit of distinctive black armour by the mid-1530s, an armour which may well have adorned the Duke in Bronzino’s portrait of 1534 (though several paintings and medals depict Alessandro in armour, the suit from Vitelli could be depicted in any).<sup>347</sup> Alessandro in armour was a prince for all to see, indeed, armour denoted clearly the inclination of a ruler away from the civilian dress worn by participants in a republican constitution as opposed to an hereditary autocracy.<sup>348</sup> Alessandro Vitelli, the natural son of his father, identified himself as a noble warrior, thus following in

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<sup>345</sup> Moisé, F., & Milanese, C., “Lettere inedite e testamento di Giovanni de’ Medici detto delle Bande Nere con altre di Maria e Iacopo Salviati, di principi cardinali”, in *Archivio storico italiano*, 7, (1858), I, pp. 3-40, II, pp. 3-48; *Archivio storico italiano*, 9 (1859), I, pp. 3-29, II, pp. 109-146. Parigino G.V., *Il tesoro del principe: funzione pubblica e privata del patrimonio della famiglia Medici nel Cinquecento*, (Firenze: Olschki, 1999), pp. 37-38. ASF, MAP 106, fol. 54.

<sup>346</sup> “[post scripta] fate me fare una catena de ore per Cosimo di 4 ovvero di 5 ducati et una medaglia dore per Cosimo farite fare queste cose quando voii avete dinari non altro. Maria Salviati de Medici” Letter from Maria Salviati in Florence to Lucca Antonio, Camerlengo of Giovanni de Medici in Rome, 15 July 1523, ASF, MAP, vol. 106, fols. 56r & 56 bisr.

<sup>347</sup> “Entry 9 May 1536” in an inventory for the years 1531-1538, ASF, MdP 630, fol. 7.

<sup>348</sup> Springer, C., *Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), pp. 144-147.



his family's martial tradition. As Umbrians, subjects of the Pope, they had entered into the service of Rome. Failing in the defence of his home city which had been under the Vitelli since the death of Giampaolo Baglioni in 1520, they fled to Rome when Baglioni's son, Malatesta IV, recaptured Perugia in 1522.<sup>349</sup> In Rome, Alessandro Vitelli joined the bodyguard of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, later Pope Clement VII. In papal service, Vitelli stood with his family at the defence of Frosinone in early 1527 against Spanish troops approaching Rome.<sup>350</sup> Months after the city's fall, the reconciliation between Pope and Emperor was finally sealed in Bologna in 1530 with the latter's coronation of the former, while only months before, Vitelli had received his own orders as part of the papal-imperial détente to retake Florence for the Medici with Imperial troops.<sup>351</sup> While the Prince of Orange led the siege, Vitelli was involved in the restitution to the Medici of other cities in their former Tuscan *dominio*.<sup>352</sup> Entering Medici service as a retainer to Alessandro de' Medici, the new duke of Florence, in 1532, Vitelli served his master until the Duke's assassination.

There was another legitimate maternal descendent of Lorenzo de' Medici who had ruled the city, though on the behalf of the young Alessandro: Cardinal Innocenzo Cybo. The firstborn son of Franceschetto of the Genoan-Florentine Cybo (or Cibo) family and Maddalena di Lorenzo (il Magnifico) de' Medici, Innocenzo was born in 1491 at the heart of both the Medici circle and the Papal curia.<sup>353</sup> His

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<sup>349</sup> Vermiglioli, G. B., *La vita e le imprese militari di Malatesta IV* (Perugia: Bartelli: 1839), pp. 44-45.

<sup>350</sup> Arfaioi, M., *The Black Bands of Giovanni: Infantry and Diplomacy During the Italian Wars (1526-1528)* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2005), pp. 173-178.

<sup>351</sup> See Roth, C., *The Last Florentine Republic* (London: Metheun, 1925); and Stephens, J., *The Fall of the Florentine Republic, 1512-1530* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

<sup>352</sup> Mallett, M., & Shaw, C., *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London: Pearson, 2012), p. 223.

<sup>353</sup> Stafetti, L., *Il Cardinale Innocenzo Cybo* (Le Monnier: Firenze, 1899), pp. 4-5. On Innocenzo's relationship with Cosimo after 1539, see Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 142-150.

father was the illegitimate son of Pope Innocent VIII, whose name he was honoured to hold as his own, and in 1513, his Medici papal uncle, Leo X, made him a bishop and a Protonotary Apostolic, establishing for him that same year a cardinalate with which to support his career as the Church's senior diplomat.<sup>354</sup> Raphael captured Innocenzo's high status in his triple of portrait of Leo X flanked by Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Innocenzo.<sup>355</sup> Considered *papabile* in the winter conclave of 1520-1521, Cybo, newly made that year as archbishop of Genoa, narrowly missed the vote which went to Adrian of Utrecht.<sup>356</sup> His cousin's election as Clement VII in 1522 was a welcome blessing, his curial career advancing with his appointment as Legate of Bologna, a city which would host the diplomatic negotiations which culminated in the reconciliation between Pope and Emperor with Clement's coronation of Charles V in 1530.<sup>357</sup> Such a high profile in the arrangement of the new imperial dominium over Italy, afforded Cybo the status to be selected as guardian of the city of Florence while the city's newly appointed duke was in attendance at the imperial court in 1531-1532. Cybo's careful well-experienced hand, his Medici blood, and his pro-imperial credentials allowed him to continue in this role even when Alessandro returned to take up residence. Though his plans to continue his family's tradition in the Holy See were scuppered by the superior manoeuvrings of Alessandro Farnese who became Pope Paul III in 1534, his disappointment was funnelled towards maintaining a position of power in what was his last bastion – Florence.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>355</sup> Raffaello, *Portrait of Leo X with two Cardinals (c.1517)*, olio su tavolo, Galleria degli Uffizi, Firenze.

<sup>356</sup> Baumgartner, F., *Behind Locked Doors: A History of the Papal Elections* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2003), pp. 92-95; and Stafetti, *Il Cardinale Innocenzo Cybo*, pp. 34-36.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-107.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

### 5.3 GIFTS, DIPLOMACY, AND THE MEDICI PATRIMONY

#### *Old Debts, New Obligations*

Immediately following the death of Alessandro, the seizure and control of material goods played a surprisingly important role. In a moment of violence in an otherwise peaceful transition of power, a mob ransacked the Palazzo Medici on the via Larga, seizing anything of value.<sup>359</sup> Amongst this wanton pursuit of treasure, it has long been thought that the childhood correspondence of Cosimo was lost.<sup>360</sup> Alessandro Vitelli – Alessandro de' Medici's captain-general – was the instigator of this targeted pillage. He made the immediate step to secure for himself two prized assets (though in the name of the emperor, to whom alone he would obey along with the Governor of Milan): the Florentine state's bullion and the duchess of Florence, Margaret of Austria; and the Fortezza da Basso, garrisoned with his Spanish troops, as a secure place in which to hold these prizes.<sup>361</sup> Near contemporaneous accounts by pro-Medici historians viewed these actions as a treasonous and traitorous betrayal of the generous house of Medici in which he had been retainer – Jacopo Nardi carefully embellished his narrative of events, claiming that the fortune Vitelli had seized, said to be some 300000 denari and 70000 scudi from his dead lord's treasury, was packed onto a mule train and sent to Citerna in Umbria, poetically, a fief Vitelli had received from the Medici Pope Clemente VII.<sup>362</sup> In any case, in the days immediately following Alessandro's assassination, Vitelli controlled the keys to the Florentine state.

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<sup>359</sup> See Dall'Aglio, S., *L'Assassino del Duca. Esilio e morte di Lorenzino de' Medici* (Firenze: Olschki, 2011).

<sup>360</sup> Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, p. 20.

<sup>361</sup> Nardi, J., *Istorie della città di Firenze*, [ed. Gelli, A.], (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1858), vol. II, bk. X, p. 75.

<sup>362</sup> Nardi, loc. cit.

In this weakened position, a report dated 7 March 1537 from Venice details how quickly the *fuoriusciti*, under the leadership of Filippo Strozzi and with rumoured French support, were to take advantage of the political turmoil in Florence.<sup>363</sup> As the only soldier of adequate standing and with soldiers enough to defend the city, Cosimo's first priority was to win the support of the man who had so ably robbed him. Cosimo needed Alessandro Vitelli. Vitelli was acting in his own capacity until 10 May when the imperial ambassador in Rome, Ferdinando de Silva, count of Cifuentes, was sent to Florence on a mission of material diplomacy. Though historians have viewed his trip to Florence in the late spring of 1537 as an inspection of Cosimo's candidacy as duke, given that there were no other plausible alternatives by which to arrange the constitution, and that in any case, the emperor himself would have to legalise Cosimo's position (which he did later that year), the inauguration ceremony over which the Spanish count presided on 21 June, which some historians view as the crucial element of Cifuentes's stay, was no more than spectacle.<sup>364</sup>

Instead, Cifuentes' mission was material: the option for Cosimo to marry Margaret of Austria was to be presented, but only if Cosimo could afford the sum of 50000 scudi; combined with military concessions, such as the expenses for a permanent imperial garrison. Should this not be possible, or even in the interim, Margaret of Austria's residence would have to be dealt with, the Fortezza da Basso and Alessandro Vitelli as host being neither place nor person in which a natural born daughter of Charles V should be forced to dwell for long. Cifuentes also had to remind the new Florentine government of the continued imperial control of the fortresses of Livorno and Florence, and if possible, arrange for the additional occupancy of Pisa.<sup>365</sup> The option that Cosimo could marry his cousin's imperial bride (the absence of a pregnancy after eighteen months of marriage was enough

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<sup>363</sup> See "Report from Venice: 7 March 1537", ASF, MdP 3, fol. 1, MAP Doc ID 12450; and for the wider context in which this document related, see Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 55-64.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-84.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

in the sixteenth century to declare it unconsummated), would have been the easiest solution for Cosimo and the strongest defence against the *fuoriusciti*.

The problem for Cosimo was not only the price and the conditions attached, but the air of pragmatism that lingered in the imperial camp at such a crucial point in the Habsburg-Valois Wars. To avoid any distraction from the main thrust of the war effort, or provide an opportune weakness for the French to exploit, Cifuentes suggested that delegates of the *fuoriusciti* should be entertained and their proposals discussed, in the hope that a compromise Florentine government be built through reconciliation of all parties.<sup>366</sup> Cifuentes still maintained this position upon his departure on 4 July. Without money, but with sense not to capitulate to the Emperor's demands, the loss of Margaret as his bride was nonetheless a political set-back, as was his necessary concession, as a loyal subject of the emperor, to permit continued imperial control of Tuscany's strategic fortresses.

One reason for not being able to afford Margaret's hand was the drain on his limited treasury (Vitelli still held the ducal bullion) of the costs of hosting Cifuentes and his entourage. Such a large imperial delegation had been a real expense, as the Sienese Orator, Girolamo Tantucci, noted at the time:

For the plate of the Lord Count they [Cosimo and the Senate of Forty-Eight] have spent each day forty or fifty scudi and one hundred each month which they give to Messer Bernardo [presumably on the Count's staff]. To be placed in such need of money they have often collected an onerous tax and begged their fellow citizens, such that it is closing the shops, and the major part of the citizens are desperate, but they are not unhappy.<sup>367</sup>

Having arrived on 10 May and departed on 4 July, if we are to believe Tantucci, the entire sojourn would have cost Cosimo at least 3000 scudi,

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81; and Simoncelli, P, *Fuoriuscitismo repubblicano fiorentino, 1530-54* (Milano: F. Angeli, 2006), pp. 291-301.

<sup>367</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, p. 83.

likely more. He could not make the same gamble again in hosting an inconclusive imperial mediator. First, as Tantucci attests, the city's coffers were dry; second, the *fuoriusciti* were approaching ever closer to the city each day.

Without ready monies, Cosimo's only option in order to fight the army of the *fuoriusciti* was to transfer enough 'gifts' to Vitelli to compel him to take action against his enemies. In an unstudied volume of the archival collection *Mediceo del Principato*, left unconnected with its crucial political context in July 1537, we read of the numerous valuable gifts made by Cosimo to Vitelli and those around him. Sent in three shipments, 13th, 14th, and 24th of July, they included: velvet drapes with silk borders; upholstered chairs; moorish cotton sheets; turkish curtains; oriental rugs; tablecloths; ornate goblets, in gold and silver, two embossed with the arms of the city of Pistoia; candelabras in silver, including some broken candlesticks; a pitcher; saltshakers; satin curtains; silk banners from a Roman palio; bedroom hangings; and even saddlery (which was subsequently re-gifted by Vitelli to an old

comrade in Rome).<sup>368</sup> Such objects as the Pistoian candelabras and the broken candlesticks indicate quite how far the civic treasury was being looted in desperation to win, or rather, buy, the support of Alessandro Vitelli. The gifts worked. As the report sent to the Marquis of Vasto on the morning of the first of August narrates, Vitelli led the 1700 men of the Medici-Imperial force against the 4000 mustered by the *fuoriusciti* on the plain of Montemurlo. By the afternoon, the feared *fuoriusciti* were themselves defeated, captured, and scattered – Cosimo was victorious.<sup>369</sup> Material diplomacy had paid off, even if its cycle was perpetuated in triumph: Vitelli further demanded 50000 scudi from Cosimo for the captives, Filippo Strozzi in particular, who alone, in

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<sup>368</sup> “[...] Al signore Alixandro Vitelli datoli 2 sedie da dona di velluto cremesino, uno isparvieri di banbagi ala moresca, uno cortinagio di tafeta turchino, uno cortinagio di banb^a^gia moresco, uno tapeto di braccia 5, dui tapeti di braccia 3, 2 tovaglie grande da tavola, uno petinatoio [proposed reading: di netto], una coperta di pene [proposed reading: penne] da leto, tutte le dete cose portò Giovanni Antonio suo canborieri [...] Dato a Giovanni Antonio da Coreggia canborieri del signore Alixandro Vitello uno caveso di drappo vellutato con opera alta et bassa di seta bianca et gialla che fu braccia in tutto braccia xviii [...] [...] Al signore Alixandro Vitelli datoli sei tassoni martellati con piedi et orlo minorato, et dui candelieri nuovi tutti lavorati et una copa [proposed reading: coppa] tucta inorata con suo coperchio, dui tassoni martellati con l'arme dela comunità di Pistoia et più una brocha da aqua con sua serratura, uno bocalle a l'antica con uno fregio in mezo di fogliami et inorato, uno candelieri roto, dui saliere quadre et inorate tutte le dete cose sono d'argento consegnatole a Giovanni Antonio da Correggia suo camborieri per sua commissione del detto signore Alixandro Vitelli. Et più adì dato al soprascrito uno cortinagio di raso nero et di veluto nero usato [...] Adì deto per commissione del signor Alixandro Vitelli dato a Giovanni Antonio suo camerieri uno [proposed reading: caveso] di drappo di seta cheresina con oro filato di braccia sette in tutto; al deto datoli uno caveso di brocato rico in seta pavonaza di braccia otto et tre quarti; adì deto dato al soprascrito uno caveso di teleta d'oro nera di braccia [blank]; et più uno caveso di teleta d'oro in seta pavonaza che fu al palio che si guadagnò a Roma al tempo di sua Eccellenza che fue in tutto braccia [...] Dato al signore Alixandro Vitelli uno paramento da camera in otto cortine di raso nero et demasce bianco che lo mandò a messer Bernardo da Rieti per servirsene nella camera sua con dui tapeti di braccia tre incirca [...] Per commissione del signore Alixandro Vitelli dato a Giovanni Antonio suo camborieri uno fornimento da gianeta dello imperiale fornito di seta turchina con tutti li suoi fornimenti per mandarlo al count ofla Ghilara a Roma [...]” *Inventory Entries to Alessandro Vitelli*, 13-23 July 1537, ASF, MdP 603, fols. 9-12, MAP Doc ID# 24960.

<sup>369</sup> *Account to the Marquis of Vasto*, 1 August 1537, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 4.

order to extort Cosimo further, had offered, or so Vitelli claimed, 60,000 scudi for his own liberation.<sup>370</sup>

*Gifts for Francisco de los Cobos and Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle*

The victory of Montemurlo came as a surprise to many. Not least to the most important functionaries in the Habsburg Empire of the time, the Spaniard, Francisco de los Cobos, and the Burgundian, Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle. They had written in July, "Cosimo is weak and unlikely to survive, if he does not flee, he will die."<sup>371</sup> These men had the ear of the emperor, and sat in their respective webs of patronage which traversed the continent.<sup>372</sup> Their goodwill was essential if Cosimo was to capitalise on the legitimacy for his rule won on the battlefield. The ambassadorial agent sent to the emperor in Spain, Averardo Serristori, was dispatched on the 7 August 1537 in the days immediately following the victory at Montemurlo.<sup>373</sup> Serristori

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<sup>370</sup> Letter from Iacopo Salviati to Bernardo de Santi in Florence, 25 November 1537, ASF, MdP 3, fol. 11, MAP Doc ID# 12452.

<sup>371</sup> Canestrini, G., *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori ambasciatore di Cosimo I a Carlo quinto in corte di Roma (1537-1568)*, (Firenze: Felice Le Monier, 1843), p.xviii.

<sup>372</sup> On the Granvelle-Cobos administration, see Hernando Sánchez, "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy: Family, Court, and Government in the Toledo-Medici Alliance", p. 160; Keniston, H., *Francisco de los Cobos: Secretary of the Emperor Charles V* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960); Perrin, E., *Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle: ministre de Charles-Quint* (Besançon: Imprimerie de Paul Jacquin, 1901). The position was formerly a single chancellor, Charles V divided the role as part of his strategy to departmentalise his administration as much as possible.

Rady, M., *The Emperor Charles V* (London: Longman, 1988), & *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37. The consequence of this was a more fractured system of government, but one in which internal rivalries encouraged the building of relationships with various officials (often through gifts) in order to build a faction or network of support. <sup>373</sup> Canestrini, *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori Ambasciatore di Cosimo I a Carlo quinto in corte di Roma (1537-1568)*, p. xix. For the instructions to Serristori see Contini, A, & Volpini, P., (eds.), *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell'Italia spagnola, 1536-1648*, Vol. I (1536-1586), (Roma: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali, Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, 2007), pp. 17-25.



came from one of the families which truly embodies the idea of Florence's 'nobility' as an 'office-holding class'. Their role of honours included: *Gonfalonieri di Giustizia*, of the *Signori*, of the *Dieci di Balía e Guerra*, ambassadors, and provincial governors.<sup>374</sup> Though kinsmen of the Pazzi family, the Serristori had long been Medici partisans (Averardo's father a frequent guest at the Palazzo Medici, a connection he maintained even when Averardo was born in 1497 in Florence during the Medici exile<sup>375</sup>). With such a pedigree and proven loyalty, Serristori was an ideal candidate to be dispatched to Spain, indeed, his success in this first mission would lead to a career lasting the duration of Cosimo's reign.<sup>376</sup>

Serristori's embassy was tasked with several critical objectives which are detailed in the instructions of his mission.<sup>377</sup> Though Charles had been informed of Cosimo's election by a temporary delegation from Bernardo di Antonio de' Medici, bishop of Forlì, in January, Serristori's journey to Spain was to conduct negotiations to confirm and legalise Cosimo's de facto role as head of state. To receive this accreditation, Cosimo needed to convey his fidelity to Charles V, confirm his inheritance as Alessandro's lawful heir, secure his role as duke in the constitution of the Florentine state, request permission to form an advantageous marriage, and garner the support from both the emperor and his administration to pursue the remaining *fuoriusciti* who remained at liberty.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Canestrini, *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori Ambasciatore di Cosimo I a Carlo quinto in corte di Roma (1537-1568)*, p. xiv.

<sup>375</sup> Canestrini, *loc. cit.*

<sup>376</sup> Contini, A. "Dinastia, patriziato e politica estera: ambasciatori e segretari medicei nel Cinquecento," *Cheiron*, 15 30 (1998), pp. 85-91.

<sup>377</sup> Contini, A. & Volpini, P., (eds.), *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell'Italia spagnola, 1536-1648*, Vol. I (1536-1586), pp. 5-12.

<sup>378</sup> See Ibid. p. XLI, for their transcription of the first instructions for the Serristori embassy (Minuta, ASF, MdP 2634, fols. 13-18) see pp. 21-24; see also Simoncelli, *Fuoriuscitismo Repubblicano Fiorentino, 1530-54*, pp. 340-342.

Before Serristori had even confirmed his safe arrival, Cosimo was sending further instructions to his ambassador.<sup>379</sup> Cosimo was nervous, no doubt, as Alessandro's ambassador, Giovanni Bandini, was still in residence with the imperial court in Spain. This would provide a further purpose for Serristori's mission as Cosimo was unsure of where Bandini stood regarding himself and the *fuorusciti*.<sup>380</sup> Then there was the issue of access to the emperor himself. The long list of instructions with which Serristori had been burdened would take considerable time to negotiate. At the imperial court, crowded with the world's ambassadors, the delegate of a young minor and insecure princeling would not command much time of those who mattered. As such, it was essential for Serristori to oblige those who mattered to give the required attentions and support to his master's commands. The solution to this, as Cosimo knew, was to give gifts to the two most important men at the imperial court. Writing while Serristori was still enroute, Cosimo told his ambassador:

The drapes that you will present, one half to Covos [Francisco de los Cobos y Molina] with a statue, and the other to Granvella [Nicolas Perrento de Granvelle], with those words you will declare our guarantee of good wishes that we hold towards their Lordships and our service towards them [...]<sup>381</sup>

These gifts were Serristori's means by which to attempt to win the goodwill of two of the most important men in the Habsburg empire: Granvelle, who was secretary of state for Austrian-Flemish lands, and

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<sup>379</sup> See Ibid., pp. 21-25 for their transcription of the second set of instructions sent to Serristori (Minuta, ASF, MdP 2634, fols. 19-24). These instructions are referenced to in Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Averardo di Antonio Serristori in Spain, 13 September 1537, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 24, MAP Doc ID# 73.

<sup>380</sup> See also Contini, "Dinastia, patriziato e politica estera: ambasciatori e segretari medicei nel Cinquecento", pp. 85-91.

<sup>381</sup> "Li drappi presenterete, la metà a Covos [Francisco de los Cobos y Molina] con la statua, et l'altra a Granvella [Nicolas de Granvelle], con quelle parole indicherete convenirsi per arra della bona volontà tenemo mostrar a lor signor la servitu nostra in verso di quelle." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Averardo Serristori in Spain, 13 September 1537, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 24, MAP Doc ID# 73.

especially Cobos, who managed the Spanish-Italian affairs of Charles V. Given his purview, it is understandable that Cobos would receive an additional gift of an unidentified statue. Identification of this statue – Cosimo’s first major diplomatic gift, arguably the most important he would ever give – is crucial to unravelling the significance and complexity of this major gift presentation, and moreover, to provide our first example with which to understand, in the context of the court of Cosimo I de’ Medici, quite how sophisticated, symbolic, and significant gifts were in sixteenth-century court society and diplomacy.

### *The Gift of Michelangelo’s San Giovannino?*

In a recent publication on Spanish statuary collections, the sculptures owned by Francisco de los Cobos are discussed, but Cosimo’s gift, though noted, is again left unidentified, though the writers do record that a Carrara marble statue of St. John the Baptist as a child – San Giovannino – was given by the Venetian Senate in the same period.<sup>382</sup> In the Cobos family chapel-mausoleum of El Salvador in Úbeda, Andalusia, there stood, until its destruction in the Spanish Civil War, but recently restored, a statue in Carraran marble of San Giovannino.<sup>383</sup> While its existence confirms that a statue of St. John the Baptist entered the Cobos collections from Italy as a gift in the mid-sixteenth century, its provenance and attribution have been a great debate in art historical discourse since 1930, when Manuel Gómez-Moreno declared the work to be Michelangelo’s San Giovannino of 1494-5, drawing upon Vasari’s account of the production of such a

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<sup>382</sup> “Another bit of evidence is a letter sent to the Tuscan ambassador Serristori from Cosimo I de’ Medici in 1537. It instructs the Ambassador to give Cobos a statue and some fabrics as state gifts. In addition, during this same period, Cobos received a sculpture of St. John the Baptist as a child, made from Carrara marble, as a gift from the Venetian senate.” Helmstutler di Dio, K., & Coppel, R., *Sculpture Collections in Early Modern Spain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), p. 83-84.

<sup>383</sup> See Fig. 7.

statue and its accession into the collection of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco di Medici.<sup>384</sup>

Gómez-Moreno's claim has since been attacked, notably by Roberto Longhi in 1968, who declared the work to be of such inferior quality that it was impossible to be by the hand of Michelangelo, leaving the possible attribution of the San Giovannino of Michelangelo to seven or eight other candidates worldwide.<sup>385</sup> Gómez-Moreno, though, has also found his supporters, most notably, since 2000, Francesco Caglioti.<sup>386</sup> Thanks in part to the recent restoration of the San Giovannino of Úbeda, the name by which the statue is usually referred, at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence, Caglioti was able make a detailed analysis of the sculpture, comparing it to accepted works, such as the Madonna of Michelangelo, and finding every indicator pointing towards Michelangelo as the artist. Furthermore, Caglioti connected the statue mentioned in the letter from Cosimo to Serristori as the gifting of Michelangelo's San Giovannino.<sup>387</sup> Completing further research, he managed to trace the careful shipment and route taken for the statue to Spain, which he argues support his claim that the Serristori embassy was accompanied by such precious cargo, but frustratingly, these records neither explicitly state the subject of the statue or its maker.<sup>388</sup>

Caglioti's attribution is persuasive. Indeed, Cosimo would have good reason to gift both a work by Michelangelo and a work representing St. John the Baptist in the autumn of 1537. Therefore, this section will demonstrate how Caglioti's attribution of the San Giovannino of Úbeda can be strengthened by a contextual argument

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<sup>384</sup> Gómez Moreno, M., "Obras de Miguel Ángel en España", in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 17 (1930), pp. 189-197. He connect this statue with the one described by Vasari, G., *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori et architettori* (1568), p. 721.

<sup>385</sup> Longhi, R., "Due proposte per Michelangelo giovane," *Paragone*, 101 (1958), pp. 59-64.

<sup>386</sup> Caglioti, F., "Il "San Giovannino" mediceo di Michelangelo, da Firenze a Úbeda" in *Prospettiva: rivista di storia dell'arte antica e moderna*, 145 (2012), pp. 2-81.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-46.

that attempts to answer why Cosimo would gift a work by Michelangelo, or rather a work Cosimo thought was by Michelangelo, and second, why the choice of St. John the Baptist chimes so well within the diplomatic context of those months in late 1537.

*Protectors of Florence: St. John the Baptist and Cosimo I*

Cosimo needed to prove himself in the eyes of those who doubted him in his role as the new duke of Florence. These concerns about his suitability to safeguard imperial interests in the strategically important duchy of Florence were at the forefront of Cosimo's mind when he dispatched Serristori on his mission, writing:

I do not believe that His Majesty not having first seen manifest signs of my faith, devotion, and service, moreover, regardless of these present needs, I believe I have given such account to all the world that if someone before was perhaps having doubts, there will not be just cause to do so more in the future. Further whence, you will have such a mind upon whom you can enable to execute this and other instructions, as to you one commits themselves to the service of His Majesty.<sup>389</sup>

Cosimo needed to be seen and accepted as the new protector of Florence. As such, Cosimo needed to be associated with St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of the city of Florence.<sup>390</sup> Normally, this association is seen, as it was with Duke Alessandro de' Medici, with the veneration of the saint during the public celebration of his feast day, which had long been used to connect the house of Medici and himself with the ancient civic identity of Florence as the city of St. John the

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<sup>389</sup> "Io non credo che sua maestà non habbi prima veduti manifesti segni della fede, devotione et servitù mia inverso di quella, non dimancho in queste presenti occorrentie; credo haverne dato tal saggio a tutto el mondo che se alchuno prima ne havessi forse dubitato non harà iusta causa di farlo più per il futuro, donde anchora voi tanto più animo haverete potrete exequire questo per l'altra instructione vi si commette circa el fare capace sua maestà." Contini & Volpini, *Istruzione*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>390</sup> The origin of the veneration of St. John the Baptist was ancient, see the introduction to Chretien, *The Festival of San Giovanni: Imager and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*.

Baptist.<sup>391</sup> A less discussed continuation is that Cosimo, like Alessandro, connected themselves everyday with St. John the Baptist: on Florentine currency.<sup>392</sup>

With their portraits on the obverse and the image of St. John the Baptist on the reverse, their faces had replaced the *giglio* of the fourteenth and fifteenth century florins. This was a relatively new change, dating from March 1535, to combine the ducal portraits (before the Medici arms had been used, or the portrait had been paired with the Medici family saints: Cosmo and Damien) with St. John the Baptist.<sup>393</sup> In Cosimo's first coinage as duke on 11 March 1537 for the small *quarttino* coin, St. John the Baptist was paired with his arms, with the legend: COS.M.R.F.DVX.II on the obverse, and S.IOANNES.B on the reverse.<sup>394</sup> For the reissuing of the *giulio*, *mezzo giulio*, and *crazia* in 1538, Cosimo innovated, pairing his legend and arms on the obverse with St. John the Baptist walking with St. Cosmo.<sup>395</sup> This connection of Cosimo's name-saint with St. John the Baptist was the clearest message yet of his own association (beyond the association of Alessandro) with the patron saint of Florence, conveying to all using the city's currency that Cosimo I de' Medici was to be seen as the city's earthly protector. Given Serristori's mission to reassure the imperial administration of just this message, sending a statue of St. John the Baptist to Francisco de los Cobos could equally convey and reinforce the message that Cosimo was a steadfast protector of his realm.

Cosimo's youth – we must always remember, he was nineteen at the time of Serristori's embassy – was without doubt a serious obstacle: a man with many years more experience would have been just

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<sup>391</sup> See Richelson, P., *Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence* (Ann Arbor: Garland Publishing, 1978), pp. 108-109.

<sup>392</sup> Orzini, I., *Storia delle monete de' granduchi di Toscana della casa de' Medici*, (Firenze: Giovan Paolo Giovannelli, 1756), pp. 1-37.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 23, 27.

as tried in those months to maintain his position. As such, the statue of St. John the Baptist as a child – San Giovannino – would be a clear connection with the eighteen year old Cosimo as another youthful protector of the city. Indeed, one must be careful not to labour the point, but the role of St. John the Baptist in the confirmation and recognition of Christ's divinity and mission (John 1:29), chimes, albeit esoterically, with the function of the Serristori's mission to confirm and recognise Cosimo as Alessandro's full and legitimate heir as duke of Florence. To this extent, the San Giovannino of Úbeda is undeniably apt for the political context of 1537.

### *Michelangelo: The Medici Patrimony*

While Francesco Caglioti's argument is founded upon a stylistic study and technical evidence to support the identification of Michelangelo's hand in the execution of the San Giovannino of Úbeda, his archival research supports Cosimo's inheritance of the *Popolani* branch of the Medici family's collection of statuary, which included a San Giovannino by Michelangelo.<sup>396</sup> Furthermore, he makes a detailed case for the special arrangements made for the shipping of a statue in late summer 1537.<sup>397</sup> While a valuable foundation, Caglioti does not delve into the full context – diplomatic and political – to why the gift was sent, and therefore, does not seek to justify why a work purported to be by Michelangelo would have been dispatched to Spain. Indeed, had Cosimo the *Popolani* collection at hand, he could have sent another piece (beyond the reasoning behind the symbolic significance of the young St. John the Baptist), by another artist. Yet, Cosimo chose a piece he considered to be by Michelangelo. This could be highly significant given the political and diplomatic context of late 1537.

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<sup>396</sup> Caglioti, F., "Il "San Giovannino" mediceo di Michelangelo, da Firenze a Úbeda," pp. 25-27.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-37.

By 1537, Michelangelo's name was already household, or rather court-hold, across Europe.<sup>398</sup> Perusing the collections which he held – the collections of Alessandro already well scattered – Cosimo was faced with a choice. His political future, perhaps even his life, depended upon the success of Serristori in Spain to convey to the emperor his suitability to remain in the post to which he, the outside candidate, had been elected only months before. This could only be achieved if Cobos was won round to supporting him, especially as both Innocenzo Cybo and Nicolas Granvelle supported the legalisation of Alessandro's infant bastard, Giulio, as a conveniently passive alternative to the vagaries of a young man just entered into his majority.<sup>399</sup> In such a situation, Cosimo would do whatever he could to win the patronage of Cobos. Cobos though was a man at the height of his powers in an empire equally at its apogee, as such, Cobos was accustomed to receiving gifts of the greatest monetary and artistic value.<sup>400</sup> Cosimo's best card was undoubtedly a work by Michelangelo. Beyond its prestige and symbolism, the San Giovannino of Michelangelo would communicate a message to the recipient, that he too was being recognised as a co-patron of Florence and worthy of the finest gift Cosimo could send, and moreover, a gift from the ancestral Medici collections, conveying Cosimo's status as sole legitimate heir to the house of Medici in all property, traditions, and titles.

### *Countering Fuoriuscitismo*

In the original instructions sent with Serristori dated 7 August 1537 there is not a single mention of the *fuoriusciti*.<sup>401</sup> The instructions concern themselves with conveying to the Emperor Cosimo's loyalty and lack of presumption, humbly asking that the confirmation of his

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<sup>398</sup> See Hirst, M., *Michelangelo: The Achievement of Fame, 1475-1534* (New Haven, [Conn.] ; London: Yale University Press, 2011)

<sup>399</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 29-30, 146-148.

<sup>400</sup> Keniston, *Francisco de los Cobos: Secretary of the Emperor Charles V*, pp. 365-369.

<sup>401</sup> Contini & Volpini, *Istruzione*, pp. 17-21.



constitutional position made by the count of Cifuentes in June 1537 be officially recognised by writ of an imperial diploma.<sup>402</sup> Meanwhile, in the letter dated 13 September 1537 from Cosimo to Serristori, the content is completely taken up with discussion of the *fuoriusciti*: namely, intelligence regarding the whereabouts of those who had escaped from Vitelli's clutches at Montemurlo (and proved a real enough threat to convince Cosimo to build new fortifications).<sup>403</sup> These sensitive pieces of information are underlined in the minute of the letter stored at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze. This can sometimes be a scribal annotation for denoting that those words and phrases should be put into cipher: if so, tellingly, every mention of the *fuoriusciti* is underlined. The letter also opens with a reference to another coded document, "Regarding the encoded text attached, we refer you to the instructions which we said to you."<sup>404</sup> The coded document attached would suggest a set of supplementary instructions, but no such attachment is bound with the letter. There is, though, a set of undated instructions, conveniently titled *allegato* (an attachment) recorded in the *istruzioni* compiled by Alessandra Contini and Paola Volpini.<sup>405</sup> The content of this second set of instructions regards the *fuoriusciti*. It is therefore more than likely that this *allegato* is the second set of instructions mentioned in the letter dated 13 September 1537.

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<sup>402</sup> [...] Direte a sua maestà [con la debita] reverentia, et humiltà [co]me dal signor conte di Sifuontes [quella har]à inteso, qua[n]to .. a] sua excellentia, come procuratore di sua maestà è parso di declarare, et approvare sopra li interessi mia particolari, che insomma et quel tanto che voi vederete, per la copia del suo privilegio [...], Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>403</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Averardo di Antonio Serristori in Spain, 13 September 1537, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 24, MAP Doc ID# 73.

<sup>404</sup> "Quanto al Capitolo in cifra sopra l'examine ci referiamo alla instruttione vi si dette [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Averardo di Antonio Serristori in Spain, 13 September 1537, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 24, MAP Doc ID# 73.

<sup>405</sup> *Allegato ad Averardo Serristori presso l'imperatore, date unclear, Minuta*, ASF, MdP 2634, fols. 19-24, transcribed in Contini & Volpini, *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell'Italia spagnola, 1536-1648*, pp. 21-24.

This is highly important as it allows us to understand Serristori's priorities – his true mission – through the second set of instructions. As such, this *allegato* illuminates the context in which the order was given by Cosimo to present the gifts to Cobos and Granvella made in the same letter. Both the tone and content of the *allegato* are vastly different from the 7 August instructions which are written in such a way as to be read as a personal declaration and humble petition to the Emperor. Instead, the second is written with much more urgency and spirit. Cosimo explicitly wanted the threat from the renegade *fuoriusciti* to be conveyed to the Emperor, saying, "[...] but above all to have it made clear to His Majesty and those lords his counsellors that all this trouble with the *fuoriusciti* proceeds under French orders."<sup>406</sup> He continues that, "[...] the victory [of Montemurlo] was not only healthy for this state, city, and dominion, but also for His Majesty's in Italy such as has been noted by all [...]."<sup>407</sup>

The focus then shifts to Filippo Strozzi, the most important of the captives, with Cosimo saying that his fate would only be decided by the Emperor. This deferral to Charles V was partly spectacle – in truth, Cosimo was not in possession of the captives, Vitelli was, and urging the emperor's involvement was no doubt partly in fear of the possibility that Strozzi might be released.<sup>408</sup> Urging haste, he implored Serristori: "In sum, convey to His Majesty that to resolve well the case of Filippo brings peace, well-being, and security to this most loyal and most devoted city and dominium of His Majesty."<sup>409</sup> With Cosimo's priority to deal with the *fuoriusciti* in Serristori's mission, could a gift of

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<sup>406</sup> "[...] ma sopra tutto haver a fare intendere a sua maestà, et quelli signori sua consiglieri, come tutto questo molino di fuoriusciti è proceduto per ordine di Francia [...]" Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>407</sup> "[...] la victoria sia stata salutare non solo a questo stato, città et dominio ma alle cose di sua maestà in Italia come è notissimo a tutti [...]", Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>409</sup> "Mostrando insomma a sua maestà come il risolvere bene il caso di Philipppo porta seco la quiete et la salute di questa città et dominio et la sicurtà di questo stato fidelissimo et devotissimo di sua maestà." Contini & Volpini, *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell'Italia spagnola, 1536-1648*, p. 23.

a rumoured *fuoriuscito* have any significance of the choice of an artwork by Michelangelo?

### *Michelangelo: il fuoriuscito?*

Once synonymous, the great house and great artist had since drifted apart.<sup>410</sup> Michelangelo's role in the siege of Florence 1529-30, fortifying the city against pro-Medici imperial armies, had led to such a discomfort in Alessandro's ducal Florence that he abandoned the city for Rome, receiving Roman citizenship in 1536.<sup>411</sup> Rumours abounded that this dislocation had fed an animosity which had led Michelangelo into becoming a partisan of the exiles, albeit as a crypto-*fuoriuscito*.<sup>412</sup> Could Cosimo, aware of the artistic symbolism of Michelangelo himself and his works, gift the work of a known *fuoriuscito* sympathiser to make some sort of declaration of his own: to demonstrate his own

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<sup>410</sup> Acidini Luchinat, C., "Michelangelo e i Medici" in Chiarini, M., Darr, A., & Giannini, C. (eds.), *L'ombra del genio. Michelangelo e l'arte a Firenze 1537-1631* (Milano: Skira, 2002), pp. 12-31.

<sup>411</sup> See Manetti, R., *Michelangelo: le fortificazioni per l'assedio di Firenze* (Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1980); Marani, P., *Disegni di fortificazioni da Leonardo a Michelangelo* (Florence: Cantini, 1984); and Wallace, W., "'Dal disegno allo spazio': Michelangelo's Drawings for the Fortifications of Florence" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 46, (1987), pp. 119-134. For a general chronology of Michelangelo in these years, see also Bull, G. & Porter, P. (eds.) *Michelangelo, Life, Letters, and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>412</sup> These rumours were perhaps "guilty by association": he attended leading Republicans, such as Cardinals Niccolò Ridolfi and Ippolito de' Medici amongst other important figures within the *fuoriusciti* movement, see Costa, G., *Michelangelo alle corti di Niccolò Ridolfi e Cosimo I* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2009), pp. 15-23; Spini, G., *Michelangelo politico e altri studi sul Rinascimento fiorentino* (Unicopli, 1999), p. 51; and Simoncelli, *Fuoriuscitismo Repubblicano Fiorentino, 1530-54*, pp. 166-167. Though there could be more on Michelangelo in his next volume on the topic, "sul coinvolgimento di Michelangelo si consenta rinviare al II volume di questo Fuoriuscitismo repubblicano fiorentino." (p. 176).

triumph over those who would oppose him, or perhaps even to rehabilitate Michelangelo as a Medici artist?<sup>413</sup>

In the months following the Battle of Montemurlo in August 1537, there certainly was an artistic connection between Cosimo's victory over the *fuoriusciti* and the artwork of Michelangelo. Battista Franco's *Battle of Montemurlo*<sup>414</sup>, commissioned by Cosimo, depicts several unexpected scenes for a battle painting: these are quotations from drawings by Michelangelo – *Ganymede*<sup>415</sup>, *Archers Shooting at a Herm*<sup>416</sup>, and *il Sogno*<sup>417</sup> – which Michelangelo had gifted to a young man with whom he had fallen in love, Tommaso dei Cavalieri, in 1532.<sup>418</sup> Maria Ruvoldt, in her study on the circulation of these drawings, has found they were well-circulated and much appreciated within *fuoriusciti* circles, quoting a letter from Cavalieri to Michelangelo, "Cardinal de' Medici [Ippolito de' Medici] wanted to see all of your drawings and they were so pleasing to him that he wanted

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<sup>413</sup> This rehabilitation of Michelangelo is most keenly seen during his state funeral in 1564 where Cosimo and his creative directors (Giorgio Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini), presented Michelangelo as a Florentine hero (still under Medici patronage), see Wittkower, R., & Wittkower, M. *The Divine Michelangelo* (London: Phaidon, 1964); van Veen, *Cosimo I de' Medici and His Self-Presentation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 177-183; Scorza, R., "Vasari, Borghini and Michelangelo," in Ames-Lewis, F. & Joannides, P. (eds.), *Reactions to the Master. Michelangelo's Effect on Art and Artists in the Sixteenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 80-210.

<sup>414</sup> Battista Franco, *The Battle of Montemurlo*, 1537, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

<sup>415</sup> Michelangelo, *Ganymede*, ca. 1533, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass.

<sup>416</sup> Michelangelo, *Archers Shooting at a Herm*, ca. 1530, The Royal Library, Windsor.

<sup>417</sup> Michelangelo, *il Sogno*, ca. 1533, Courtauld Institute Gallery, Somerset House, London.

<sup>418</sup> Ruvoldt, M. "Michelangelo's Dream" *The Art Bulletin*, 85, 1 (2003), pp. 86-113; Ruvoldt, M., "Michelangelo's Open Secrets" in McCall, T., Roberts, S., & Fiorenza, G. (eds.), *Visual Cultures of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2013), pp. 105-125. The "gift drawings" of Michelangelo have been extensively studied, see Wallace, W., "Studies in Michelangelo's Finished Drawings," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1983; and Nagel, A., "Gifts from Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna" *The Art Bulletin*, 79, 4 (1997), pp. 647-668.

to have *Tityus* and *Ganymede* made in crystal.”<sup>419</sup> The so-called dream of Michelangelo, the three drawings of the original set – the *Rape of Ganymede*, *The Fall of Phaeton*, and the *Punishment of Tityus* – Ruvoldt has recently suggested is an anti-principate analogy, with the metaphor of the eagle of Juptier as the Habsburg Eagle, and perhaps of Alessandro de’ Medici as Phaeton.<sup>420</sup> Given their inclusion in Franco’s *Montemurlo*, it is more than likely they did have a significance for Cosimo as emblems of *fuoriuscitismo* (he could hardly have thought them compliments to himself), which must impact our understanding of Serristori’s presentation of Michelangelo’s *San Giovannino* as another appropriation of Michelangelo’s artwork, but to which end it is still unsure.

Michelangelo’s artworks of the period certainly had republican overtures<sup>421</sup>, but gift exchanges of his works further strengthen the connection between Michelangelo and the *fuoriusciti*. In 1530, Michelangelo has begun to sculpt a Leda and the Swan as a gift for the duke of Ferrara to tempt him to send artillery to the Republican defenders of Florence during the Habsburg-Medici siege.<sup>422</sup> He had

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<sup>419</sup> Ruvoldt, M., “Michelangelo’s Dream”, pp. 93-95. For more on Michelangelo’s involvement with the *fuoriusciti* circle in Rome, see Wallace, W., “Nothing else happening”: Michelangelo between Rome and Florence” in Hall, M. (ed.), *Michelangelo’s Last Judgement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 51-75.

<sup>420</sup> Ruvoldt, M. “Historical Fiction: Cosimo I, Michelangelo, and the Battle of Montemurlo” paper given at the conference, *Cosimo di Giovanni de’ Medici (Magnus Etruriae Dux)*, Archivio di Stato in Florence, 30 May 2014.

<sup>421</sup> In 1538 he started work for Cardinal Ridolfi on his bust of Brutus, a clear celebration of Lorenzino’s assassination of Alessandro: see Tolnay, C., “Michelangelo’s Bust of Brutus” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 67 388 (1935), pp. 22-29; and Martin, T., “Michelangelo’s Brutus and the Classicizing Portrait Bust in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” *Artibus et Historiae*, 27 (1993), pp. 67-83. This too was later appropriated by the Medici, Francesco had the plinth of the bust engraved: “Dum Bruti effigiem sculptor de marmore ducit / in mentem sceleris venit et abstinuit”. See also Scigliano, E., *Michelangelo’s Mountain: The Quest for Perfection in the Marble Quarries of Carrara* (New York: Free Press, 2005), see also p. 289-291.

<sup>422</sup> Ruvoldt, M., “Michelangelo’s *Slaves* and the Gift of Liberty” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 65 4 (2012), pp. 1029-1059 (p.1043).

gifted works to leading men of the republican movement, such as Antonio Mini, Bindo Altoviti, and Bartolomeo Bettini.<sup>423</sup> These gifts pale to the diplomatic exchange which resulted from Michelangelo's convalescence at a Strozzi palace in the summer of 1544. Remarkably, in an attempt to win French support against Cosimo, Maria Ruvoldt has found that a gift was promised to Francis I, the Strozzi brother's patrons, Roberto Strozzi writing, 'Remind the king [...] that if he would restore the liberty of Florence [Michelangelo] would make a bronze equestrian statue of him in the Piazza della Signoria at his own expense.'<sup>424</sup> Within this context, in January 1546, after another bout of illness, Michelangelo gifted (via the Strozzi) the statues of the *Slaves* (*Rebellious Slave* and *Dying Slave*) to Francis I, who died before he could receive them.<sup>425</sup> While perhaps not a diehard *fuoriuscito*, his artworks had been used to further their cause.<sup>426</sup>

The diplomatic and political context so far presented accounts fully for the provenance of the San Giovannino of Ubreda and the historical attribution of the statue to Michelangelo. The choice of subject would certainly suit Cosimo's representational strategy at the time, and a Michelangelo statue was without doubt the grandest gift Cosimo could give to a man with an interest in sculpture. As such, the diplomatic and political contexts of the gift-exchange can be a useful methodological support in an art historical attribution. Less sure is the connection with *fuoriuscitismo* and whether Michelangelo's politics played a part in deciding to send the artwork. Any further connections will have to wait for Paolo Simoncelli's second volume on

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid., p. 1047.

<sup>424</sup> Quoted in Ibid., p. 1048.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., p. 1051.

<sup>426</sup> In 1547, Cosimo attempted to stifle continued Republican agitation in Rome. By this point, Michelangelo's connection with the Strozzi, Luigi del Riccio, had been severed by his friend's death, and so when Cosimo arranged for banks in Rome to longer support known republicans, Michelangelo wrote to his nephew distancing him for the cause, see Letter from Michelangelo in Rome to Leonardo Buonarroti in Florence, 22 October 1546, transcribed and annotated in Tuena, F. (ed.), *La passione dell'error mio: il carteggio di Michelangelo: lettere scelte: 1532- 1564*, (Rome: Fazi Editore, 2002), p. 56.

*Fuoriuscitismo repubblicano fiorentino*. In any case, the gift presentation was a hugely important aspect of the negotiation, and the gifts worked: Serristori successfully completed his mission, and on 30 September 1537, Cosimo received his patent from the Emperor confirming him as the heir to Alessandro in all titles, honours, and privileges as, “primarius et caput gubernii et Status Reipublicae Florentinae.”<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Cantini, *Legislazione*, I, pp. 142- 145.

## 5.4 THE (MANY) GIFTS OF ELEONORA DE TOLEDO

Secure enough in his position, Cosimo could now freely pursue the *fuoriusciti* and free himself from even the threat of a Florentine counter coup, all the while continuing to develop his network of contacts at the imperial court. This priority was stated, along with restituting Alessandro's property from those who had looted the ducal collection, was to find a wife. In the 7 August 1537 instructions to Serristori it is quoted:

You do not have to speak pertinently about a wife for me, if not in that name or in that tenor, as the other instruction requires, because that practicality is already in movement at the court of His Majesty, and it will be made reasonably. If the design of His Majesty and those of those Lordships are uncovered to you, or of the duchess of Milan to be the duchess here, or something similar, you will give news to me straightaway.<sup>428</sup>

Cosimo, it seems, was aware that he was not in control of his own marriage negotiations. Deprived of Margaret of Austria, his cousin's widow, who was destined for Pierluigi Farnese, duke of Piacenza, the dowager duchess of Milan, Cristina of Denmark, was another option for Cosimo. It goes without saying, a suitable bride was not simply a royal or noble mother to his heirs, but a human bridge between his house and that of his spouse's as a buttress with which to reinforce his own position. An English royal bride was even suggested, but while royal, the troubled Tudors could provide royal prestige but little else.<sup>429</sup> Instead, Cosimo needed a family with whom he could build a strong partnership, but only if he could wrest control of his own betrothal. For

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<sup>428</sup> "Voi non havete di cosa appartenente a moglie per me a parlare, se non in quel nome, et di quel tenor, che nel altra instruttione si contiene, ma perché questa pratica di già è mossa in corte di sua maestà, et ne sarà mosso a voi ragionevolmente, se il disegno di sua maestà, et di quelli signori vi si scoprirà volto o alla duchessa di Milano o alla duchessa qui, o altra simile, potrete darne subito aviso" ASF, MdP 2634, fol. 16. Transcribed in Volpini & Contini, *Istruzioni*, p.19.

<sup>429</sup> Cox-Rearick, J., *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 23.



this, Mary Watt has argued, “Cosimo and Bandini looked to the Neapolitan court.”<sup>430</sup> Indeed, such was the mutual benefit for both families that one might say that Pedro de Toledo looked to Cosimo and Florence.<sup>431</sup>

The ideal candidate in Italy, as it would transpire, was a match with the Álvarez de Toledo family, led by the Spanish grandees, the dukes of Alba, and the marquises of Villafranca, the latter in 1537, Pedro, held the important role of viceroy of Naples.<sup>432</sup> As two cities, Florence and Naples could not be more different. One, an ancient royal port-city, long under foreign influence, and since 1535 hosting the strong viceregal administration of a Castilian nobleman. The other, a bourgeois merchant city straddling a river, fiercely independent, and ruled by a teenage duke. These two cities though held a shared history. Lorenzo (‘il Magnifico’) de’ Medici’s famed diplomatic visit in 1485 concluded peace after a brief but destructive war between the two cities. The two states were bound by a web of commercial contacts and obligations, Florentine loans indebted many Neapolitan nobles, and even, in times gone-by, the Aragonese crown. Moreover, Campanian grain, Puglian oil, and Sicilian wine were staples upon which Florence survived.<sup>433</sup> In 1537, this shared heritage would be brought to the fore

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<sup>430</sup> Watt, M., “Veni, sponsa. Love and Politics at the Wedding of Eleonora de Toledo” in Eisenbichler, K. (ed.), *The Cultural Worlds of Eleonora de Toledo: Duchess of Florence and Siena*, (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2004), p. 18.

<sup>431</sup> Coniglio, G., “I Medici, i fiorentini e il Vicereame,” in Cirillo Mastrocinque, A. (ed.), *Napoli nel Cinquecento e la Toscana dei Medici*, (Napoli: ESI, 1980), pp. 9-24.

<sup>432</sup> See Hernando Sánchez, C., *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El virrey Pedro de Toledo, Linaje, Estado y cultura (1532-1553)*, (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y Leon, Consejería de cultura y turismo, 1994), pp. 91-173; and Maltby, W., *Alba. A biography of Fernando Alavarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alba, 1507-1582*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

<sup>433</sup> Cantini’s understanding of the Toledo-Medici match was as a way to secure food security for Tuscany, “[...] provvedere de’ Grandi in Sicilia e a Napoli per mantener l’Abbondanza nell’Stato a fronte della mancanza quasi totale di quel Genere; La parentela di fresco contratto col Vice Rè di Napoli fù as Esso in questa circostanza di molto giovamento.” Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de’ Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, p. 105-106.

as two cadet lines of noble houses came to positions of power in their respective cities for their mutual benefit.

Pedro de Toledo, second son of the Duke of Alva, had inherited through his wife, Maria Osorio Pimental, the Marquisate of Villafranca in 1528. Four years later, he received the great honour, and great liability, of the Viceroyship of the Kingdom of Naples, a territory ravaged by war, and a city long decayed after thirty years of weak leadership.<sup>434</sup> In 1534 his family joined him in Naples, fully establishing a Spanish viceregal court, eventually hosted in a newly built palace, which, along with new fortifications, (forcing the reconstruction of large parts of the old city), and reforming the Neapolitan judicial system preoccupied Pedro in the early part of his rule.<sup>435</sup> Opposition was quick to follow. Under the leadership of Ferrante Sanseverino, the prince of Salerno, many of the old Neapolitan families, unsurprisingly, formed an opposition to this Castilian nobleman with princely ambitions. With the support of Alfonso d'Avalos, marquis of Vasto, the Captain-General of the Spanish army in Italy, the opposition was formidable, and during Charles V's triumphant progress through the kingdom in the winter of 1535-36, they orchestrated a smear campaign and attempted to have Pedro dismissed; the rumours of which, Cosimo may well have been witnessed.<sup>436</sup> This culminated in an official review of the Toledo administration led by Bishop Pedro Pacheco, with whose family burned an ancient feud.<sup>437</sup> These problems were only compounded when Margaret of Austria, who had lived at Pedro's Neapolitan court, and to whom she looked for guidance, lost her Duchy (of Florence) in 1537,

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<sup>434</sup> See Musi, A., "The Kingdom of Naples in the Spanish Imperial System" in Dandeleit & Marino, *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700*, pp. 73-99 (pp. 89-90).

<sup>435</sup> See Hernando Sánchez, C., *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El virrey Pedro de Toledo, Linaje, Estado y cultura (1532-1553)*, p. 240.

<sup>436</sup> See Hernando Sánchez, C., "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy," in Dandeleit & Marino, *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid, p. 143, On Cosimo's involvement in the feud, see Ibid., p. 171; and on the rumours Pacheco spread about Toledo, see Hernando Sánchez, C., *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El virrey Pedro de Toledo, Linaje, Estado y cultura (1532-1553)*, pp. 127, 302.

and was subsequently remarried, just before Pedro's already formidable opponent, the Marquis of Vasto, became governor of Milan in 1538.<sup>438</sup> Pedro needed to prove his use and value to the Emperor who sought a stable and consolidated resolution to the political volatility of early sixteenth-century Italy.

The marriage of Cosimo to one of Pedro's daughters was a solution which greatly favoured the Álvarez de Toledo. A Florentine-Neapolitan axis would secure Spanish rule, guarantee the pro-imperial Medici in their position, providing both geographical and political counterweights to the ambitions of Farnese and Avalos, and most importantly, established the Álvarez de Toledo with a native Italian dynasty and Cosimo with imperial insiders. Neapolitan nobles could access Florentine credit, while Campanian foodstuffs could feed hungry Tuscans (thus sating rebellious appetites). Southern Italian arms, i.e., Spanish troops garrisoned in the south, could suppress northern Italian republicanism.<sup>439</sup> Florentine influence in the church, though not with His Holiness Paul III Farnese, could be converted to curial votes for ambitious members of the Álvarez de Toledo family.<sup>440</sup> At least Cosimo would take from the match a likely fertile wife (her own mother having had seven children), and as the last remaining dynast of the Medici family, the opportunity to sire an heir.<sup>441</sup> The benefit to both houses is clear. Indeed, Alessandra Contini has rightly coined the term "mediceo-

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<sup>438</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-108.

<sup>439</sup> As was seen during the war with Siena 1554-1555, see Cantagalli, R., *La Guerra di Siena, 1552-1559; i termini della questione senese nella lotta tra Francia e Absburgo nel '500 e il suo risolversi nell'ambito del principato mediceo* (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1962).

<sup>440</sup> The fulcrum of this relationship was Eleonora's uncle, Juan Álvarez de Toledo, bishop of Burgos, a relationship which came to a head in the Conclave of 1549-1550, see Levin, M., *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca, N.Y. Bristol: Cornell University Press University Presses Marketing [distributor], 2005), pp. 58-59, and Hernando Sánchez, C., *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El virrey Pedro de Toledo, Linaje, Estado y cultura (1532-1553)*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>441</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, p. 136.

tolediani” to describe this mutually aligned power block in the Habsburg Empire.<sup>442</sup>

It is illuminating that the role of gifts – their presentation and exchange, both in the betrothal negotiations and marital celebrations – took such an important role in solidifying the bonds between both families: symbolising and affecting the union of such vital importance to the futures and wellbeing of both the groom and the bride’s father. Though there was contact between Cosimo and Pedro in April 1538 over the arrival of the Ottoman fleet of Barbarossa on Italy’s coastline, there seems not to have been any discussion of marriage.<sup>443</sup> In June 1538 the choice of Cosimo’s bride had yet to be decided when the Peace of Nice was signed between Francis I of France and Charles V, an reconciliation marked by the exchange of gifts, as Bernardino Duretti, the Medicean agent in Venice wrote to Cosimo:

The king of France gifted a diamond to the emperor made as though eyes, and saying to him as he gave this diamond that it was a testimony that there would forever be a firm friendship between them and that always they will be friends, and such that the eye does not suffer distortion, nor would their mutual fondness be tarnished. And such as he was promising this, the emperor bestowed the collar of his Order of the Golden Fleece upon the neck of the King, making the same promise.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Contini, A., ““Correre la fortuna” di Cesare. Instabilità, diplomazia ed informazione politica nel principato di Cosimo I,” Cantù, F., & Visceglia, M. A. (eds.), *L’Italia di Carlo V. Guerra, religione e politica nel primo Cinquecento, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Roma, 5-7 aprile 2001*, (Roma: Viella, 2003). See also Volpini & Contini, *Istruzione*, p. XLVII.

<sup>443</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini in Spain, 4 April 1538 (?), ASF, MdP 2, fols 89-96, MAP Doc ID# 7415.

<sup>444</sup> “Il Re di Francia donò un diamante all’Imperatore facto ad occhi, et disse che gli dava quel diamante in testimonianza che sempre sarebbe fra loro durabile amicitia et che sempre sariano amici, et come l’occhio non pativa macula alchuna così fra la loro amicitia non accaderebbe alchuna macula. Et così prometteva, et che l’Imperatore si cavò dal collo quel suo ordine del Tosone et messelo al collo del Re, et che promettesse il medesimo.” Letter from Bernardino Duretti in Venice to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 27 July 1538, ASF, MdP 3093, fol. 124, MAP Doc ID# 22273.

Witnessing the celebrations of peace was pope Paul III Farnese.<sup>445</sup> Desiring his own family's advancement, he had won the hand of Margaret of Austria for his nephew, Ottavio, and had hoped to marry his niece to a Valois. This plan being frustrated at Nice, Cosimo was the next best option towards entrapping the duchy of Florence as a papal state in waiting.<sup>446</sup> Cosimo, still unmarried in the autumn of 1538, may have been tempted to take Vittoria Farnese's hand were it not for the petition of Pedro de Toledo. The petition heard at the same imperial council meeting (21 November 1537) which finally settled the *fuoriuscito* threat – the fate of Filippo Strozzi (who was to be executed) – Ambassador Bandini could press other Florentine business – the marriage of Cosimo – to be likewise definitively settled. That the Emperor confirmed that though neither the dowager duchess of Milan or a sister of the duke of Alba would be possible, Cosimo could be granted permission to marry a daughter of the viceroy of Naples.<sup>447</sup>

In March 1539, a Florentine embassy composed of Luigi Ridolfi and Jacopo de' Medici was despatched to Naples.<sup>448</sup> They were tasked with arranging the dowry with Pedro, a sum stated to be 50,000 scudi, but realised instead as a bond of 20,000 scudi should Eleonora predecease Cosimo without having produced children.<sup>449</sup> The instructions sent with the ambassadors also made strict arrangements for the property of Eleonora, especially jewels, and to whom they

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<sup>445</sup> Keniston, H., "Peace Negotiations between Charles V and Francis I (1537-1538)" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 102 2 (1958), pp. 142-147.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134. See also Segni, B., *Storie fiorentine*, p. 247.

<sup>447</sup> Letter from Giovanni Bandini to Cosimo, 21 & 23 November 1538, ASF, MdP 4296, fol. 200, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>448</sup> Contini & Volpini, *Istruzione*, state the departure date as February (p.51), though 11 March 1539 is stated by Cosimo himself, see Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini in Toledo, 10 March 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 128, MAP Doc ID# 19991.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

would belong, again, should the Duchess die childless.<sup>450</sup> These instructions were timely, as we read from Cosimo's letter to Giovanni Bandini in Toledo on the 10 March that:

[...] tomorrow I send to Naples Messers Luigi Ridolfi and Messer Jacopo de Medici with the order to conclude the final business, in the name of God, the marriage to Lady Eleonora [illegible] to give the ring to her, so in sum, to conclude all that has been shown of the business, though I know that the Pope will be thrown off my case with this news.<sup>451</sup>

The action of gifting the ring would be the symbolic action of sealing the alliance, much as the exchange of gifts between Francis and Charles had represented the confirmation of their truce. Cosimo's gift, as he states explicitly, was calculated as a message to Paul III that his scheme to take Florence was frustrated. This is an important reminder of themes dealt with in part one of the thesis – that gift presentations were of such symbolic value that the description of their exchange was

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<sup>450</sup> "Item che le gioie, vesti, o altri beni mobili che la prefata signora riceverà dal padre o gli condurrà seco restino proprii suoi, et il duca sia obligato restituirli a chi aparteneranno quelli che al tempo della sua morte si troveranno in essere. Et se per il signor viceré si farà instantia, che se ne faccia inventario con intervento de signori ambasciatori o d'altri per la parte che il signor duca si può satisfargli di questo. Ma havendo advertenza di non si obligare alle restituzioni, o altrimenti che nel modo sopradetto, usando etiam la diligentia debita nel contrasegnar in tal caso le gioie che si porranno nel inventario. Et questo instrumento si faccia presente et consentiente la signora Eleonora, rimettendosi nella particolarità del distender, ritenendo però li effetti sopra detti a ser Bernardo Gambarello, el quale rogherà questo instrumento insieme con uno notario dato per la parte del signor viceré." Minuta, ASF, MdP 2634, fol. 948. Transcribed in Volpini & Contini, *Istruzioni*, p. 48.

<sup>451</sup> "[...]domani invio a Napoli Messer Luigi Ridolfi et Messer Iacopo de' Medici con mandati amplissimi per concludere et ultimare [cancelled: con] al nome di dio questo negotio [cancelled: e dare spese capitulando et] sposare la S.ra Donna Lionora [Eleonora de Toledo] [...] e darle lo anello e in somma concludere tutto quello che sia necessario [illegible] di cio negotio: e benché io so che al papa si sarà butta di case mia questi gli vene a notizia lo conditioni che io ho proposte a quello che mi offriva Sua Santità." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini in Toledo, 10 March 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 128, MAP Doc ID# 19991.

carried quickly in the news of the day, communicating and encapsulating major political developments.

The instruction sent to the ambassador regarding the dowry had played on Maria Salviati's mind too, her role as mother of the groom, responsible for the practical arrangements of the marriage and festivities surrounding the arrival of Eleonora in Tuscany, which she estimated to be between 10,000 to 12,000 scudi (though an entire budget of 20,000 had been set aside).<sup>452</sup> Her position though had not been recognised, as Cosimo wrote to Bandini in the same letter regarding the engagement ring, his mother's role was not being fully respected in the arrangements for Eleonora's household.<sup>453</sup> Perhaps as a response to this situation, Maria Salviati prepared a gift of two-hundred pearls for her daughter-in-law, saying that she wished only to send fifty, the others being for when Eleonora would arrive in Tuscany.<sup>454</sup> It is likely that by dividing the gift, Maria hoped to be able to receive Eleonora's goodwill upon her arrival, thus establishing and confirming Maria's position in the female hierarchy of Cosimo's court. Indeed, such was the importance and monetary value of these two named gifts – Cosimo's ring and Maria's pearls – (and the other gifts sent with the ambassadors in March 1537) that Jacopo de' Medici felt it necessary to write to Pier Francesco Riccio, Cosimo's principal secretary, for confirmation of diplomatic etiquette on how they should be properly presented. His co-ambassador, Luigi Ridolfi, was similarly concerned with the rules of gift-giving, thinking that "some ceremonial debt" was owed to the siblings of Eleonora. Charminglly, he asked Riccio not to mention his

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<sup>452</sup> Letter from Maria Salviati in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa, 27 February 1539, Vol. 5926, fol. 3, MAP Doc ID# 3594.

<sup>453</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini in Toledo, 10 March 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fols. 130-32, MAP Doc ID# 19991.

<sup>454</sup> "È venuto il vezo delle perle da Venetia, che sono cento. Disegno al presente mandarne sino in cinquanta, et il restante riservare alla venuta qui di Sua Ex. [Eleonora de Toledo]" Letter from Maria Salviati in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa, 6 March 1539, ASF, MdP 5926, Fol. 8, MAP Doc ID# 3598.

ignorance of courtly protocol to Cosimo.<sup>455</sup> Ridolfi's letter indicates both importance of gifts, the focus of the ceremony mentioned, but also, the lack of sophistication on the part of Cosimo's inexperienced diplomatic service at this early period of his rule.

The final symbolic role of gifts in the marriage between Cosimo and Eleonora was played out during the welcoming festivities of June 1539 when the new duchess of Florence made her ceremonial entry into her new domain. As with most triumphal entries in early modern Europe, a printed account of Eleonora's progress from Livorno to Florence from July 1539 exists.<sup>456</sup> The lavishness of the display described could well have been a response to the widespread opinion at court, that a simple Castilian lady was a pale substitute for Caesar's natural born daughter, or even as Segni observed, that it was a sign of absolute submission to the Emperor to take any woman to whom Cosimo was ordered to wed.<sup>457</sup> Perhaps then, it was Cosimo's decision to flex what little choice he had in order to emphasise, albeit faintly, that he was his own man, by rejecting the first daughter offered to him, Isabella, for her younger sister, Eleonora.<sup>458</sup>

Having embarked from Naples on 11 June, though inclement weather and fear of Barbarossa's corsairs slowed their passage, the

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<sup>455</sup> Letter from Jacopo de' Medici in Naples to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 2 April 1539, ASF, MdP 1169, Ins. 4, Fol. 110, MAP Doc ID# 5441.

<sup>456</sup> Ma. Ge., *La solenne et triomphante entrata della illustrissima S. duchessa di Firenze, dapoi la partita sua di Napoli*, in *Liorno, Pisa, Empoli*, Poggio [et] Firenze, (Rome: 1539). The musical entertainments of Eleonora's arrival are recorded in Andrew C. Minor and Bonner Mitchell, *A Renaissance Entertainment: Festivities for the Marriage of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, in 1539* (Columbia (MO), University of Missouri Press: 1968). Other accounts include, Guazzo, M., *Historie di tutti i fatti degni di memoria nel mono successi dal MDXXVIII, sino a l'anno MDCLIX* (Venice: G. Giolito di Farrarii, 1549, 1st ed., 1546), p.249.

<sup>457</sup> See Hernando Sánchez, C., "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy," p. 144; and Segni, *Storie fiorentine*, bk. IX, p.247.

<sup>458</sup> Letter from Niccolini in Naples to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 4 January 1539, ASF, MdP 3261, fol. 135, MAP Doc ID#19494.



Neapolitan fleet landed at Livorno on 22 June.<sup>459</sup> Leaving for Pisa on the same day, Pier Francesco Riccio gave the well-known description of the official welcome ceremony on the 23 June:

Her Ladyship the Duchess entered Pisa dressed in black satin, all covered with dots of gold, including her veil and choker. This morning she left her dark garb and came outside dressed in purple velvet embroidered with gold, and a golden cap on her head, and on her neck the necklace the Duke had gifted and on her finger, the diamond.<sup>460</sup>

His gift of a diamond ring, and the necklace from Maria Salviati (I would correct Riccio on this point), symbolising Eleonora's initiation into her public role as wife of Cosimo and a private role in the court being carefully constructed by Cosimo's politically and socially able mother. Indeed, as Riccio continues in his letter to Pagni, it seems that Maria was behind much of the arrangements of the festivities.<sup>461</sup> Such stage management of an event is likely – it was the declaration of the house of Medici's survival after two years of near catastrophic turmoil and unpredictability. Presented to the Spanish and Tuscan nobles, this was the presentation of the Medici-Toledo alliance to the 'court' and to the world: an event which Cosimo had distributed in a printed version of a letter between his diplomatic notary, Pier Francesco Giambullari to

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<sup>459</sup> For recent historical analysis see Watt, "Veni, sponsa. Love and Politics at the Wedding of Eleonora de Toledo", pp. 23-37.

<sup>460</sup> Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Pisa to Lorenzo Pagni in Florence, 23 June 1539, ASE, MdP 339, fols. 79-81. Bronzino's painting of Cosimo as Orpheus has also been suggested as an 'erotic' wedding gift: Simon, R., "Bronzino's Cosimo I de' Medici as Orpheus," *Bulletin of the Philadelphia Museum of Art* 81 348 (1985), pp. 16-27.

<sup>461</sup> "His Lordship Don Grazia tonight will leave tonight with most of the his gentlemen, I send to you at this time a messenger to announce this so that tell Lady Maria [Salviati], and that they me accommodated readily and all the other things in demonstration of the great benevolence that it may done, and my thanks for what you do toward His Lordship Don Gratia that you judge which Her Ladyship would likewise thank." Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Pisa to Lorenzo Pagni in Florence, 23 June 1539, ASE, MdP 339, fol. 80.

Giovanni Baldini (then resident ambassador at the imperial court).<sup>462</sup> The wedding was therefore more than a conjugal celebration, but Cosimo's triumph, replete with arches extolling the virtues and heritage of Florence's young duke: Eleonora the trophy confirming his victory in the struggle for place and position in a hostile world. It was not his triumph alone, but a shared victory, carefully staged and presented as a loyal declaration to the Emperor Charles V, such as Cosimo had witnessed in Bologna (1530) and Florence (1536), the arches were as much Habsburg as Medici, replete with Charles' image, "there was painted His Majesty, the Emperor, crowned with laurels, toward which there were all the adornments of his bestowed favour, with the motto under: AUGSTUS CAESAR DIVUM GENUS AUREA CONDIT SAECULA."<sup>463</sup>

Such civic festivities was a time in which Cosimo, through gift-exchanges, could also secure his internal position amongst his subjects: noblemen and commoners alike. As one account states, Cosimo had already exhibited his largesse (his munificence), when, finding the imperial fleet still not departed for the defence of the Italian coast from Barbarossa's fleet "neither from the port of Livorno had they left [the imperial fleet], that the Lord Duke Cosimo, giving so liberally a gift of money to all of the captains and the owners of the galleys, that they left happily."<sup>464</sup> In doing so, Cosimo demonstrated his strength as a leader, even a prince. Likewise, as the same account details, he gifted clothes to two hundred young Florentines: "There were clothed two-hundred Florentines in clothes of many liveries that for one hundred years had not been seen, between which there were forty dressed in purple satin with golden details, with shoes and red stocking, crimson velvet bonnets finished with gold and white feathers, which together the

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<sup>462</sup> Giambullari, P., *Apparato et feste nelle nozze del Ill. Sr. Duca di Firenze et della duchessa sua consorte con le sue stanze, madrigaglie ed intermedi in quelle recitati* (Florence: Giunti, 1539).

<sup>463</sup> Ma. Ge., *La solenne et triomphante entrata della illustrissima S. duchessa di Firenze, dapoi la partita sua di Napoli, in Liorno, Pisa, Empoli, Poggio [et] Firenze*, (Rome: 1539), p. 5.

<sup>464</sup> "Ne prima del Porto di Livorno uscirno, chel S. Duca Cosmo, essa liberalita se tal dono di denari a tutti li capitani et Patroni delle ditte galere, che tutti lieti et contenti si partirno." in *Ibid.*, p.4.

company made a beautiful impression as they processed as the entourage of Her Ladyship."<sup>465</sup> The nobility, who had already played a prominent role in the ceremonies, were hosted in a lavish banquet at the Palazzo Medici "under the loggia there was the bride and groom's table, so large that it stretched the entire length of the courtyard, where one hundred gentlewomen for all the noble families were sat."<sup>466</sup>

Finally, there was a highly symbolic entertainment, the climax of the entrance which had depicted so comprehensively Cosimo as the heir of the Medici, Cosimo as a prince of Italy, and Cosimo as the centre of the Florentine court.<sup>467</sup> And for its centrepiece, an image of the future – Cosimo as Aeneas, founder of a new empire; Cosimo as Apollo, enlightened ruler of a new golden age.<sup>468</sup> In this last guise, Cosimo took on the mantle of the late Duke Alessandro, receiving from the Florentine subject cities – Volterra, Arezzo, the Casentino, Prato, Chianti, Cortona, Montepulciano, Castiglione, Certaldo, and Pistoia – the bounty of their territories and fealty sworn to Cosimo and Eleonora in a highly musical spectacle composed and orchestrated by Francesco

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<sup>465</sup> "Erano vestiti circa 200 gioveni Fiorentini con veste di tante sorte livree che in cento anni particolarmente non si conteriano, fra quali ne erano quarante vestiti tutti con saio pagonazzo tutti oranti di punte d'oro, con calze et giubboni rossi et bonetti di veluto cremisino con ponte doro in inabondantia et piume bianche, queali tutti di compagnia et con bello ordine, si poseno caminando alla staffa di Madamma." Ma. Ge., *La solenne et triomphante entrata della illustrissima S. duchessa di Firenze, dapoi la partita sua di Napoli, in Liorno, Pisa, Empoli, Poggio [et] Firenze*, (Rome: 1539), p. 3.

<sup>466</sup> "Sotto questa loggia fu la tavola degli Sposi, con largo apparecchio da ogni banda per le lunghezze del Cortile, dove federono oltre cento delle prime Gentil'Donne di tutta la Nobilita." Giambullari, P., *Apparato et feste nelle nozze dello illustrissimo signor duca di Firenze [et] della duchessa sua consorte, con le sue stanze, madriali, comedia, [et] intermedij, in quelle recitati*, (Florence: Giunta, 1539), p. 30.

<sup>467</sup> Cox-Rearick, J., *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 242-243, 256.

<sup>468</sup> Watt, "Veni, sponsa. Love and Politics at the Wedding of Eleonora de Toledo", pp. 34-36.

Corteccia.<sup>469</sup> This staging should not distract us from the role Cosimo was really playing, heir to Alessandro. Just as the late duke had received gifts for the Feast of St. John the Baptist from the Tuscan communes. Indeed, had the Neapolitan fleet not been delayed, these festivities would have likely occurred on the Feast Day (24 June) and not the 6 July as it had occurred. Though losing out on such a symbolic date, through his fine marriage and its lavish celebration, Cosimo had conveyed to all the world that he was truly secure as patron protector of Florence and her *dominio*.

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<sup>469</sup> Giambullari, P., *Apparato et feste nelle nozze dello illustrissimo signor duca di Firenze [et] della duchessa sua consorte, con le sue stanze, madriali, comedia, [et] intermedij, in quelle recitati*, (Florence: Giunta, 1539) pp. 44-63; Burr Litchfield, R., *Florence Ducal Capital, 1530-1630* (New York: ACLS Humanities E-Book, 2008), para. 49, Cantagalli, R., *Cosimo I de' Medici Granduca di Toscana* (Milan: Mursia, 1985), 114-117.

## 5.5 INSULTS AND INNOCENCE

With Eleonora by his side, Cosimo was fully integrated into the imperial court system. While the advantages of the Toledo match are elucidated before, imperial engagements could lead to imperial entanglements. In these early years of Cosimo's reign, though he had proven his mettle by 1539, try as he might through ceremonial grandeur to communicate his secure position in the hierarchy of sovereign rulers, his status was clear. The difficulties of working within the imperial system are well-illustrated in a minor issue in Tuscany in late 1538 which evolved into an insult made against Cosimo and his family – a serious diplomatic incident – involving all of the main personages vested in imperial control of Spanish Italy, and was resolved only two years later with the presentation of an ingratiating gift. This chain of communication and negotiation, with a gift at its heart, neatly traces Cosimo's evolving status in the imperial hierarchy.

In November 1538, a band of marauding soldiers under a noble captain called Vincenzo da Poggi, (an exile from his native Lucca, and formerly in Medici service, but had resigned his posting at the Fortezza da Basso when Alessandro Vitelli had been replaced by Don Lupo Hurtado de Mendoza, who had arrived in Florence to make arrangements for Margaret of Austria's marriage to Ottavio Farnese in 1538), attacked a group of Luccans merchants in Sienese territory.<sup>470</sup> Stealing their silken wares, the Luccans lodged complaints with the marquis of Vasto and the count of Aguilar, the Emperor's representatives in Italy.<sup>471</sup> Cosimo too was unhappy, writing to Bandini soon after the incident, "[its a] truly ugly things, and it touches not only the Luccans, but also the Florentines, the Genoans and every other nation in such activity, in sum all of Italy."<sup>472</sup> Cosimo was right to be so

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid., pp. 124, 160.

<sup>471</sup> Berengo, M., *Nobili e mercanti nella Lucca del cinquecento* (Torino: Einaudi, 1999), pp. 168-173.

<sup>472</sup> "[...] cosa veramente brutta, et che tocca non solo e' Luccans, ma fiorentini, genovesi et ogni altra natione che fa faccende, et in somma tutta Italia." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Baldini in Spain, 14 Novembre 1538, ASF, MdP 3, fol. 22.

concerned. No one in Italy wanted a return to the lawlessness of the fourteenth century when so-called 'free companies' of brigands (led by the men like Nicholas Hawkswood – whose image was still held in the folk and civic memory of Florence) roamed in a perpetual pillage of Tuscany.<sup>473</sup> It was also a black mark against his name, undermining his claim to being fully in possession of his state and a stabilising force in Italy on behalf of the emperor.

Cosimo's order to Vincenzo to restore to the merchants their property was not enough for the Luccans: they wanted Vincenzo and his men to be punished. The correspondence over this matter was slow, the issue then minor enough to drag on, other priorities, such as this wedding dominated the ducal administration and Cosimo's attentions over the winter of 1538-9. Meanwhile, in February 1539, the marquis of Vasto moved 1500 troops into the volatile Lunigiana region, ostensibly as a warning to the Malaspina family – feudal lords of that strategic coastal territory between Liguria, Lucca, and Medicean Garfagnana mountains – to remain loyal to the Emperor.<sup>474</sup> In April 1539, Cosimo made clear to the Luccans that if they wanted their silk returned, Vincenzo would have to come to Florence, and in the heightened state of anxiety in which Tuscany found itself with Avalos's soldiers stationed threateningly on the border, this would mean a declaration of safe passage for Vincenzo.<sup>475</sup> This was achieved, but Cosimo was duped. When Vincenzo arrived in Florence he was arrested by Juan de

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<sup>473</sup> The memory of past brigands had entered Tuscan folklore, as well as the public art of the city, see Hudson, H., "The Politics of War: Paolo Uccello's Equestrian Monument for Sir John Hawkwood in the Cathedral of Florence." *Parergon* 23 (2006), pp. 1–33; and see Caferro, W., *John Hawkwood: An English Mercenary in Fourteenth Century Italy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).. Brigandage would be again systemic by the end of the century, see Braudel, F., *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), II, pp. 752-753.

<sup>474</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 158-9.

<sup>475</sup> Spini, *loc. cit.*

Luna, the imperial castellan of the Fortezza da Basso, on the orders of Avalos.<sup>476</sup>

Cosimo's sovereignty in his own city had been undermined by de Luna's act. He wrote to his man at the imperial court, Giovanni Bandini:

I cannot but inform you that the way the marquis of Vasto comports himself with me, that having written to me the other day about the capture of Vincenzo di Poggio here. I have replied to him that I have written to His Imperial Majesty about it and that in as far as the reply, I was not going to do anything, but the Luccans have gone about it in a way I would not have wished, having given pieces of drapery to the marchioness [Maria d'Aragona-d'Avalos] without respect for my honour [...]<sup>477</sup>

Given that a man under his protection had been taken in his own city, Cosimo is concerned that the Luccans have gifted drapes to the wife of his rival, the marquis of Vasto. This is not to say that the undermining of his jurisdiction and the gift is unconnected, but rather that such a public act of the gift, given Alfonso d'Avalos's advocacy for the Luccans, was a public affront.<sup>478</sup> Avalos, though not accepting the gift himself, suggests that an act has been carried out for which the Luccans wish to thank him, i.e., that Avalos had responded to a request

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<sup>476</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Alessandro Bandini in Spain (Toledo?), 27 July 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 244, MAP Doc ID# 20004.

<sup>477</sup> "Non voglio mancar di farvi a sapere in che modi si governa il marquis of Vasto ^meco^ [cancelled: et noi] questo si è che havendomi scritto laltro giorno sopra il far scacciar Vincentio di Poggio di qua et havendo io rispostoli che io ne havevo scritto a S. M.tà et che in sino alla risposta non ero per farne niente essendoli proposto dalli Luccans che ci sarebbe un modo a farlo anche io non volessi et havendo dato qualche peza di drappi alla marchesa [Maria d'Aragona-d'Avalos] senza haver rispetto allo onor mio [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Alessandro Bandini in Spain (Toledo?), 27 July 1539, ASF, MdP 2, Fol. 244, MAP Doc ID# 20004.

<sup>478</sup> The Luccans alliance with Avalos is outlined in Sabbatini, R., *Le mura e l'Europa: aspetti della politica estera della Repubblica di Lucca, 1500-1799* (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2012), pp. 39-41.

from Lucca to have Vincenzo arrested. Cosimo's response to this would be, as he continues in his letter to Bandini, to denounce d'Avalos and Juan de Luna to the emperor as enemies, the latter in particular, if Vincenzo was not released.

By mid-1539, Cosimo had neither followed through with this threats against Avalos and Luna (Vincenzo presumably been released by August 1539 when Charles V found in favour of Cosimo), nor had he found another way to respond to the social slight that had already been delivered against him by Juan de Luna's illegal seizure of Vincenzo.<sup>479</sup> Buoyed by this presumption of authority, and perhaps frustrated at having to release his prize, Luna started to take liberties in his position as the imperial agent in Florence. Cosimo wrote in great anxiety to his father-in-law in October 1539 informing him of how he could no longer control Juan de Luna, describing two incidences, the first at a Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano:

And then as such having called in at that said place [Poggio a Caiano], where, not missing a good number of circumstances, he was saying to him [Pier Francesco Riccio] as rudely as you might know and can imagine, threatening and contemptuous words, making an enemy of himself to His Majesty, and often threatening to put his hands on his beard [Riccio's], and in sum, many other exorbitant things which shame me to write to you [...]<sup>480</sup>

In the letter, Cosimo describes in detail how important Riccio's role was at his court, and makes it clear that an insult directed at him was an

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<sup>479</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Alessandro Bandini in Spain, ASF, MdP 4299, fol. 139.

<sup>480</sup> "Et così poi che lo hebbe chiamato in detto luogo dove non mancava buon numero di circostanti gli disse quella rilevata villania che seppe et potette immaginare con parole minatiose et contumeliose, tassandolo di inimico di S. M.tà [Karl V von Habsburg] et spesso minacciando di porgli le mani alla barba, et in somma molte altre cose tanto exorbitanti che io mi vergogno a scriverli [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici to Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, 13 October 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 284, MAP Doc ID# 20012. Juan de Luna may have been goaded by a dwarf, see Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, p. 44.



insult to himself and thus to the Emperor. The second incident seems to have occurred in the presence of Maria Salviati – when Juan de Luna tried to apologise for his insults to Pier Francesco Riccio in such a way as to cause greater offence, namely, by not being honest about what he had originally said.<sup>481</sup> Cosimo was deeply concerned about how these events would reflect himself: “what safety may there be to all those gentlemen, seeing what little respect is shown to my servant?”<sup>482</sup> Writing for Pedro’s advice was a wise move: Cosimo did not want to seem weak by appealing directly to the Emperor, instead, Pedro could intercede on his behalf.

Even if Pedro did petition on behalf of Cosimo, his actions did not have any consequences in the winter of 1539-40. Minor skirmishes on the Florence-Lucca border were increasing, and in March, Avalos moved his forces from the Lunigiana to the vicinity of Livorno, ostensibly to embark for Spain, but in reality, moving his soldiers into the already tense border-zone between Cosimo’s realm and the city of Lucca. Cosimo was extorted for 6000 scudi to pay a month’s wages to the soldiers before they would embark.<sup>483</sup> Worse, Juan de Luna was mandated by the emperor to be the mediator between Lucca and Cosimo.<sup>484</sup> Given Juan de Luna’s role as mediator at this important juncture – Tuscany was experiencing famine, the Luccan merchants in Lyon were frustrating Florence’s grain shipments – a rapprochement was affected. The Emperor’s general and agent, Alonso de Alarcón,

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<sup>481</sup> “[...] il giorno apresso che fu hieri da mattina con il medesimo S.or Pirro si condusse alla presentia della S. Maria [Salviati] mia Madre, con la quale fece poco manco di quello che prima havessi fatto con il detto messer Pier Francesco, benché immediate e parendoli forse haver passato e' termini dello honesto, si sforzò non si partire da lei se prima non la haveva placata, et quietata, et il simile volese poco di poi procurare con Messer Pier Francesco con molte buone parole [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici to Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, 13 October 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 285v, MAP Doc ID# 20012.

<sup>482</sup> “[...] che sicurtà possa essere quella di tutti questi Gentilhuomini, vedendo il poco rispetto usato a un tal mio servitore [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici to Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, 13 October 1539, ASF, MdP 2, Fol. 285v, MAP Doc ID# 20012.

<sup>483</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l’indipendenza del principato mediceo*, p.160.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, p.161.

who briefly sojourned in Florence in July 1540, may well have been asked by Pedro de Toledo to attempt to settle the situation (documentary evidence suggests little of his intentions in Florence), or he may have simply been auditing Juan de Luna's activities in Tuscany on behalf of their master Charles V. In any case, it is significant that when the two dined together, it was Maria Salviati who provided the wines and the fruit for the table as a gift, Salviati no doubt attempting to present the amenability of the Medici, regardless of her own or her son's feelings towards Juan de Luna.<sup>485</sup>

As Cosimo's position strengthened, Juan de Luna, wanting to maintain his privileged role, though long critical of the duke's actions and conduct in government, would have realised by autumn 1540 that he had no more to gain from opposing a man now firmly established as the ruler of Tuscany. Indeed, in late 1540 the Emperor was concerned about the fidelity of another peripheral state in the Tuscan region, that of Piombino, ruled by the Appiano family. As such, Juan de Luna would have to rely on Cosimo if he was to satisfy the emperor's orders (indeed, he would receive orders to facilitate the temporary transfer of Piombino to the duke of Florence on 5 February 1541).<sup>486</sup> Perhaps pre-empting this situation, we read in a letter from Cardinal Innocenzo Cybo, written in December 1540, of gifts sent on behalf of Juan de Luna to Cosimo:

In these past months, his Lordship Don Juan de Luna having many times stated his desire that I may send to Your Excellency a bust of His Majesty, that I have in my possession, and another,

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<sup>485</sup> " [...] la S.ra Maria che gli s'è p[resenta]to vino rosso et bianco et melloni et stasera cena col S.r don g.i [...]" Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 15 July 1540, ASF, MdP 345, Fol. 258, MAP Doc ID# 18733.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid., p. 198. On the importance of Piombino for Cosimo (and indeed, the wider western Mediterranean), see Aglietti, M., "La chiave della Toscana. Lo stato di Piombino nella politica asburgica prima di Cateau-Cambrésis (1541-1559)", in *Piombino e l'Ordine di Santo Stefano, Atti del Convegno*, (Pisa: ETS, 2000), pp. 11-90.

that is still not quite finished, of the late Duke Alessandro, your predecessor.<sup>487</sup>

Sending such fine gifts is certainly a statement. Most likely, Juan de Luna was seeking a reconciliation, though it may be tempting to read into the significance of a gift of the Charles V's bust as a message emphasising his privileged role as the imperial agent in Florence, and that of Alessandro, possibly as a barbed message, reminding Cosimo of the greater closeness Alessandro had held, as son-in-law, to the Emperor. It is telling that Juan de Luna sent these gifts through an intermediary, and not directly, suggesting that while he wanted to find a working relationship with Cosimo, the presentation should neither be a sign of personal amicability nor submission.<sup>488</sup>

The gift though was not simply two marble busts, but also a gift of the artist who had made them. As Cybo continued:

[...] I have sent them both to you, and also, I have wanted to give you the company of the real master, more for Your Excellency to meet him than for any other respect, who is young but mature and of great ability, particularly in the practice of drawing from nature in that few can in the studio.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> "[...] A questi mesi passati, havendomi el signor Don Giovanni [Juan de Luna] con molta instantia ricercato li volesse mandare una testa che io havevo di Sua Maestà [Charles V] et un'altra, che non era ancor condotta a fine, de la felice memoria del signor Duca Alessandro [de' Medici] antecessore di V.ra Ecc.tia" Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 7 December 1540, ASF, MdP 3716, fol. 311, MAP Doc ID# 23566.

<sup>488</sup> I am grateful to Niccolo Capponi who pointed out to me that the older Florentine noble families were reluctant to gift directly to Cosimo during the early period of his rule, not wanting to supplicate themselves, they would rely on intermediaries.

<sup>489</sup> "[...] gl'el'ho mandate ambedui, alle quali ho voluto dar la compagnia del proprio maestro, più per causa di farlo conoscere a V. Ecc. che per altro rispetto, quale certo è giovane da bene et di gran principio, massime in questa pratica di tirare dal naturale in che pochi pongano il suo studio." Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 7 December 1540, ASF, MdP 3716, fol. 311, MAP Doc ID# 23566.

The sending of an artist as a 'gift' was not particularly unusual. Artists were usually under the patronage of a court, which could control that artist's production. The 'gifting', or rather, loaning an artist through a secondment was an important means by which artistic reputations were built. Cardinal Innocenzo Cybo was no outsider to the sixteenth-century art-world, indeed, he could be regarded as a connoisseur (his status as a *buongustaio* is discussed in elsewhere in the thesis), and a recommendation of an artist's abilities would be taken very seriously. That this gift and artist were sent together had reason. Cybo suggested that the artist make a bust of Cosimo to join another bust of Charles V and Alessandro that he had in his possession so that all three could be displayed together, writing, "so that it may be clear, my paternal affection that I keep towards Your Excellency."<sup>490</sup> Following this classical Roman model of the atrium of ancestral busts, we know to any Renaissance nobleman (having perhaps read Vitruvius<sup>491</sup>), Cybo suggested to Cosimo to undertake a similar major commission:

[...] for your greatness and all your house, because I think to make the same of the holy memories of Leo X and Clement VII – I already have a model for Clement, and that could be a good help, such that the said master will show – where I think it could be for you still more, were you to honour also the glorious memory of your father [Giovanni delle Bande Nere]. It may therefore please Your Excellency to give time and space to the said artist that my recommendation may be followed and that your portrait taken for the effect I have stated above. And may you take this as my cordial intention and desire that I hold

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<sup>490</sup> "[...] sia chiaro de la mia paterna affettione che tengo alla Ecc.a V.ra" Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 7 December 1540, ASF, MdP 3716, fol. 311, MAP Doc ID# 23566.

<sup>491</sup> Pellecchia, L., "Architects Read Vitruvius: Renaissance Interpretations of the Atrium of the Ancient House" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 51 4 (1992), pp. 377-416: see also Martin, T., "Michelangelo's Brutus and the Classicizing Portrait Bust in Sixteenth-Century Italy" *Artibus et Historiae*, 27 (1993), pp. 67-83.

perpetually the happiness and magnificence of the house of Medici.<sup>492</sup>

Upon first impression, this gift was intended to flatter Cosimo. It both accepted his established position and honoured him as the heir of the Medici in all achievements and glories. Juan de Luna's hand in the gift exchange is therefore highly significant. Though side-stepping the presentation of the gift himself, he is nonetheless associated with an obsequious display of fidelity to Cosimo. Cybo has considered that it was the right moment to pledge full support and loyalty to the young duke, and though Luna is involved (perhaps at the behest of Cybo), the honour of the exchange belongs to the Cardinal. This though is a first impression.

The role of Innocenzo Cybo in this gift exchange should not be lightly dismissed. True, as stated above, he suggests the initiative comes from Juan de Luna, but this was likely his own stratagem, an attempt to unify two warring elements within the imperial equilibrium of Tuscany, a balance which he had maintained under Alessandro. By affecting an apology from Juan de Luna (real or not is besides the point), Cybo was positioning himself as peacemaker. The cardinal was solving a problem that Cosimo's father-in-law was powerless to act upon, and where even Maria Salviati had only fruits and wines to offer. Thus we should not underestimate Cybo's intentions, he too had long been attempting to apologise for the accusations he had made against Cosimo in 1538, that the young duke had hired a Spanish poisoner to assassinate his infant illegitimate nephew, Giulio di Alessandro de' Medici.<sup>493</sup> Indeed, this

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<sup>492</sup> "[...] per grandezza di lei et di tutta la casa, perché penso fare il medesimo de le sante memorie di Leone [Leo X] et Clemente [Clemens VII], rinvenuto che io habbi il modello di Clemente, al che quella potrà fare buono aiuto, come el detto maestro li mostrerà, dove egli pensa possa esservi ancora quello de la gloriosa memoria del signor Gioanni suo padre [Giovanni dalle Bande Nere]. Piaccia adunque a V. Ecc.tia dar tempo et modo al detto che possa a mia consolatione ritrar la imagine di lei per lo effetto che di sopra le dicevo. Et prenda questa mia cordiale intentione et volontà che tengo perpetua a la felicissima et magnificentissima casa de Medici." Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 7 December 1540, ASF, MdP 3716, fol. 311, MAP Doc ID# 23566.

<sup>493</sup> Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, p. 44.

was likely the event which necessitated his self-imposed exile to his family's domains in the Lunigiana, a safe distance from Cosimo but close enough still to meddle in Tuscan politics.<sup>494</sup>

Thus his intentions with such a lavish gift recognised Cosimo as the legitimate heir to the house of Medici, relinquishing finally all claims otherwise which Cybo had once heaped upon his young ward, Giulio. Moreover, as it had been his intention to use this blood tie with Alessandro's bastard as a means with which to support his regency as the infant's guardian, as Cosimo had grown in strength and stature, the quotation from the letter, that Cybo wished to show 'paternal care' to Cosimo, could be interpreted as a new incarnation of his same plan. In doing so, Innocenzo Cybo was carefully reinforcing his position in an Italy where Charles was increasingly dependent upon Cosimo as a bulwark against seditious disturbances and French intrigue, and where he could hope to play a leading role in influencing and guiding the mind of the twenty-one year old duke.<sup>495</sup>

Who was this young sculptor? And does his identity have any impact on the discussion of gifts at the court of Cosimo I? The most likely candidate is Vincenzo de' Rossi, called da Fiesole, who was hired by the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore on 27 June 1541, only six months after the letter from Cybo to Cosimo.<sup>496</sup> According to Henk van Veen, this would time perfectly with the date (1541-42) in which Baccio Bandinelli took Vincenzo as a pupil and started work on the decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio (since May of that year, the ducal residence).<sup>497</sup> The work on the statues inside the Sala Grande – as Cybo had

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<sup>494</sup> On the origins of the Cybo-Malaspina position in the Lunigiana, and its strategic location, see Meli, P., *Gabriele Malaspina marchese di Fosdinovo: condotte, politica e diplomazia nella Lunigiana del Rinascimento*, (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2008).

<sup>495</sup> The success of this plan is borne out with frequent gifts between Cosimo and the Cardinal, and Cosimo and Elenora's visit to Fosdinovo, see below, p. 310.

<sup>496</sup> Waldman, L., *Baccio Bandinelli and Art At the Medici Court: A Corpus of Early Modern Sources* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004), p.218.

<sup>497</sup> van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 114-115.

suggested, the Medici Popes, Alessandro, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, and Cosimo himself – would have been begun about that time (but were only completed by Vincenzo de' Rossi twenty years later).<sup>498</sup> The creation of this Medici pantheon, by Bandinelli and Rossi is significant, and strongly suggests that this letter refers to Vincenzo de' Rossi. This correlation between Vincenzo de' Rossi as the young gifted sculptor, and Cybo is politically and art historically significant.

Cybo had not missed the opportunity for self-enriching himself when Alessandro died. As Vasari elucidates in his *Vite*, the cardinal had taken at least one such bust depicting the Emperor:

[Alfonso Lombardi] arrived in Florence and gifted to Duke Alessandro a beautiful marble bust of Emperor Charles V, which today is in Carrara, where it was sent by Cardinal Cybo in the aftermath of the death of Duke Alessandro taken from the collection of that Lord.<sup>499</sup>

Thus the bust he sent to Cosimo was likely Vincenzo de' Rossi's study of Alfonso Lombardi's work on Charles V, which the late artist (who had died in 1537 in Bologna) had gifted to the equally late duke of Florence, as Vasari narrates above. If the identification is correct, this could be an important unknown facet of Vincenzo's education – that he spent time copying the works in the collection of Cybo – before undertaking his pupillage under Baccio Bandinelli.

This observation could have significant consequences for the understanding of Cosimo's earliest sculpted imagery. Even if the identification of Cybo's young sculptor is not to be accepted as

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<sup>498</sup> Stern, R., & Partridge, L., *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1992), p. 302; see also Utz, H., "The Labors of Hercules and Other Works by Vincenzo de' Rossi," *The Art Bulletin*, 53 3 (1971), pp. 344-366.

<sup>499</sup> "[Alfonso Lombardi] arrivato a Fiorenza, donò al duca Alessandro una bellissima testa di marmo d'un Carlo V imperatore, la quale è oggi in Carrara, dove fu mandato dal Cardinale Cybo, che la cavò alla morte del duca Alessandro dalla guardaroba di quel signore." Vasari, G., *Le Opere di Giorgio Vasari: Pittore Architetto*, 2 vols. (Firenze: D. Passigli e Soci, 1838), I, p.593.

Vincenzo de' Rossi (though to my mind, no other plausible candidates exist), then it brings into doubt the attribution of one of the earliest marble bust of Cosimo said to have been by the hand of Baccio Bandinelli and completed in 1539-1540 (see Fig. 6).<sup>500</sup> This is one of two busts attributed to Bandinelli, the other being in the Bargello with the date 1544 (see Fig. 5).<sup>501</sup> Cybo's letter mentions a young artist who has just completed a bust of Alessandro, and of Charles V, which, reading Vasari, was most likely a 'natural copy' of Alfonso Lombardi's work which Cybo was known to have in his possession. We must beg the question: where are these pieces? And what happened to Innocenzo Cybo's commission of a bust of Cosimo from the same young artist? While the former seems lost to posterity, the latter, perhaps, pending further archival research and a thorough stylistic study, could be attributed as the lost bust of Cosimo in the Metropolitan Museum of New York by Vincenzo de' Rossi, and not Bandinelli in 1539-1540 as catalogued.

It is remarkable to think that this cycle of politics, originating with Luccans merchants robbed of their silk, could result in so many gifts, and such a contribution to a readily visible aspect of the Palazzo Vecchio. In particular, Cybo's use of the fall-out between Cosimo and Luna to support his own agenda: to ingratiate himself with Cosimo after such bitterness after Alessandro's assassination is remedied through gifts. By commissioning a bust of Cosimo in 1540-41 – a request unlikely to have been refused – Cybo was not only rebuilding a broken relationship, he was also commissioning one of the first images of Cosimo I as duke of Florence.

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<sup>500</sup> Baccio Bandinelli, *Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence (1539-1540)*, Marble, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See, Wardropper, I., *European Sculpture, 1400–1900*, in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), pp. 66-67.

<sup>501</sup> Baccio Bandinelli, *Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence, (1544)*, Marble, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. See Heikamp, D., & Paolozzi Strozzi, B., *Baccio Bandinelli. Scultore e maestro* (Firenze: Giunti Editore, 2014), pp. 22-23.



## 6. EMPIRE BUILDING, 1541-1550

### 6.1 LUCCA, 1541

After the failure of the Diet of Regensburg in early 1541, the imperial campaign to restore religious unity to Germany through a series of conferences and compromises was failing. All the while, the Ottomans had continued their advance with Budapest having just fallen to their forces. Addressing the threat of Protestant princes to the integrity of the Empire, especially after Francis I of France's meetings with Protestants, a meeting was called between Pope Paul III and Emperor Charles V to be held in the Tuscan city of Lucca in September 1541.<sup>502</sup> Organised as a conference between the two Catholic potentates to plan their strategy against the Reformation, it is largely forgotten in histories of the counter-reformation.<sup>503</sup> For Cosimo and Pedro, Lucca was of seminal importance; providing them with the first occasion since their respective consolidations of power to meet the Emperor in person. Given the choice of the city of Lucca, following from the Florence-Lucca border conflict, it was Eleonora, not her husband or father, who took a

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<sup>502</sup> On Francis I of France and the Edict of Fontainbleu, see Shepardson, N., *Burning zeal: the rhetoric of martyrdom and the Protestant community in Reformation France, 1520-1570*, (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Lehigh University Press, 2007), p. 21.

<sup>503</sup> A single monograph exists: Simonetti, A., *Il Convegno di Paolo III e Carlo V in Lucca, 1541* (Lucca: Marchi, 1901).

leading role in the Medici-Toledo participation at the summit. Gifts played a role in her strategy.

At the end of August 1541, Cosimo departed for Genoa, the port from which the Emperor would embark for La Spezia (avoiding the Apua Apennine mountains), having previously been hosted in Milan.<sup>504</sup> Cosimo wisely decided to spend as much time with the Emperor as possible. This was symbolically important, especially the journey by sea from Genoa to Lucca, during which Cosimo would be seen to accompany the Emperor into Tuscany, a territory (in its entirety) he claimed as his realm. This was also a valuable opportunity to become more familiar with the Emperor enroute. As he wrote to Pedro de Toledo on 24 August 1541, his intentions was “per fargli reverentia et tenerli compagna.”<sup>505</sup> In his absence, Eleonora was made regent.<sup>506</sup> While Cosimo was playing courtier, ingratiating himself personally with Charles V and his court, the responsibility for running the state, and the corresponding shift in the focus of the secretariat from Cosimo to Eleonora, means that we have many illuminating letters addressed directly to Eleonora (and minutes of the letters sent in her name).<sup>507</sup> These documents reveal her actions, and daring to use a word of the moment, her ‘agency’, in influencing important matters of diplomatic practice and precedence, whilst her husband was attending Charles V.

The immediate problem was how to deal with the Luccans. Lucca had stubbornly held onto its independence from the Florentine state; a fervency well-demonstrated by their reaction to Captain Vincenzo di Poggio and the seizure of their merchants’ silks. In a letter dated 24 March 1541, it is clear that the border war, which had long been escalating, had resulted in blows between armed Pisans, Cosimo’s

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<sup>504</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l’indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 201-204.

<sup>505</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in unknown location to Pedro de Toledo in Naples, 24 August 1541, ASF, MdP 4, Fol. 383, MAP Doc ID# 12749.

<sup>506</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l’indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 203-204.

<sup>507</sup> Lettere di diversi: contratti e quietanze relative alle sue proprietà; testamento, 1540-1562, ASF, MdP 5922a, not paginated.

subjects (and indeed, a city much lavished with patronage and projects by the Duke), and the Luccans, over a small village on the border.<sup>508</sup> In May of that year, the captain of Cosimo's Pisan guard was insulted by a Luccan soldier, the subsequent scuffle turned lethal, a Pisan man was slain, and Cosimo lodged a formal complaint with the Luccan government.<sup>509</sup> In this tough diplomatic climate, we see the particular advantages of Eleonora's diplomacy – she was able to establish her neutrality. Indeed, Eleonora had some connections already to the city of Lucca. Much to Cosimo's annoyance, she had in 1539 organised for a Luccan *cameriera maggiore*, though Cosimo had vetoed her choice.<sup>510</sup>

In a letter dated 3 September 1541, it seems that Eleonora had requested information about the accommodation of the Emperor so that the Toledo family (and one might imagine Cosimo too), could be lodged as nearby as possible:-

For the letter sent from Your Excellency on the second regarding the accommodation of your Most Illustrious and Most Excellent father and the Princes of the Kingdom that will be present here in our city when the His Majesty The Emperor comes [...] we recall what was decided with the herald of His Majesty, who deals with this, that he would be hosted honourably (if not as to the high grade to which he is accustomed), in the best accommodation that we have in our little country, which is the home of Bonaventura Micheli, with a well-appointed room as requested. It will be highly gratifying and to the satisfaction of Your Excellency how everything is now done for the other princes who will be here, and their

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<sup>508</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici to Agnolo di Matteo, 24 March 1541, ASF, MdP 4, Fol. 217, MAP Doc ID# 84.

<sup>509</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Agnolo Niccolini, 13 May 1541, ASF, MdP 4, Fol. 251, MAP Doc ID# 12698.

<sup>510</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini in Toledo, 10 March 1539, ASF, MdP 2, Fol. 128, MAP Doc ID# 19991.

families, who will all lodge nearby in the best rooms that we know will suit such Lords (the Toledo family) [...] <sup>511</sup>

The priority in early modern diplomacy (and even diplomacy today) was to gain access to the most important players: proximity meant influence. Just as Cosimo had remained in the Emperor's company for as much time as possible, Eleonora has guaranteed that her family will be accommodated close to the Emperor's temporary residence in Lucca. This was especially important as the Luccans had divided their city between the two potentates (Paul III and Charles V) in order to better accommodate their many important guests.<sup>512</sup> The valediction to the letter from the Luccan Gonfaloniere of Justice, "In gratitude, offering our good heart to the their comfort and plans, and to your good grace," may be nothing more than a courteous phrase, but plans were indeed afoot. Eleonora was making arrangements to strengthen the bond of the Medici alliance with two of the Emperor's closest ministers: Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, with whom we are already acquainted, and the Spanish ambassador of the maritime republics of Venice and Genoa, Juan de Idiáquez.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>511</sup> "Per il mandato di V. Ex'tia. Ci è stato resa la sua dette due del passato. Sopra l'alloggiamento per l'Ill.mo et Ex.mo S.re suo padre [Pedro de Toledo] et delli principi del Regno [di Napoli] che con esso si troveranno in questa venuta della Maestà Caesarea [Karl V von Habsburg] in la nostra città [...] ricordammo al forriere di S. M.tà, il quale tiene questa cura, ch'el fusse alloggiato honoratamente (se non come conveniva al grado et alteza sua) secondo li buoni alloggiamenti che tiene la piccola terra nostra et per la persona sua, si è disegnata l'habitatione di Bonaventura Micheli, stanza assai honorata et vista dal suo mandato, Ci sara gratissimo alla sodisfattia a V. Ex'tia. Come ha dimostrato che sodisfatti adesso, per l'altri principi che saranno seco et le loro famiglie, tutta via, si da ordine d'alloggiarli li appresso. In quelle stanze che si potranno migliori, sappiamo bene che tal Signore." Letter from The Elders and Gonfaloniere of Justice of Lucca to Eleonora de Toledo, 3 September 1541, ASF, MdP 5922a, Fol. 158, MAP Doc ID# 3287.

<sup>512</sup> Gagliardi, I., *Li trofei della croce: l'esperienza gesuata e la società Luccans tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Roma: Ed. di Storia e Letteratura, 2005), p. 146. Also Ambrosini, R., & Belenghi, A., (eds.), *Gherardo Sergiusti: sommario de' successi della città di Lucca*, (Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 1997), p. 133.

<sup>513</sup> "In farli Cosa grata, offerendosi di buon cor' alle Comodi et piani suoi [...]" Letter from The Elders and Gonfaloniere of Justice of Lucca to Eleonora de Toledo, 3 September 1541, ASF, MdP 5922a, fol. 158, MAP Doc ID# 3287.

In a letter from 8 September 1541, from Lorenzo Pagni, a ducal secretary, on behalf of Eleonora in Firenze to Cosimo at the conference in Lucca, it is mentioned that Eleonora was planning to send an emerald and a ruby to Granvelle and Idiáquez respectively. While the letter goes on to say that she has since changed her mind, it includes an important piece of information:

A short while ago Romanescho [a courier] wrote to Your Excellency with orders from Her Ladyship, the Duchess, that in her name, as she was desiring, to send to you an emerald and a ruby, wanting that you gift them to Monsignor Granvelle and Idiáquez.<sup>514</sup>

That gifts would be presented at such an important diplomatic meeting should come as no surprise. It is though more interesting that the gifts were to be presented “in her name”. Moreover, given the date of the letter, it seems that she was considering the presentation of these valuable gifts before the conference had even started. We must ask, why did she change her mind? Certainly, from one perspective, Cosimo’s time already spent with the Emperor personally would have negated the need to ‘buy’ access with a gift. Though Cosimo did not gain any concrete benefits from attending the Emperor in summer and early autumn 1541 (indeed, the Emperor told him that Margaret, his natural daughter, though remarried to Ottavio Farnese, was still the legal owner of much of the ducal patrimony), he did gain one advantage: Granvelle was given control of the city of Siena, which since 1532, had been one of the last bastions of instability in an otherwise tranquil Spanish-imperial Italy (often with a government hostile to the Medici and hospitable to the *fuoriusciti*).<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> “Poco fa per Romanescho (a courier) scrissi all'Excellentia Vostra per ordine della Signora Duchessa, et in suo nome, come lei desiderava, che la gli mandasse non so che smeraldo et un rubino che mostrava volerli donare a Monsignor di Gran Vella [Nicolas de Granvelle] et a Idiaquez.” Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Florence to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Lucca, 8 September 1541, ASF, MdP 653, ins. 9, fol. 257, MAP Doc ID# 26635.

<sup>515</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l’indipendenza del principato mediceo*, p. 203.

Thus, rather than try to contextualise this would-be gift-presentation to the politics of Lucca (improving relations with imperial ministers was ever to the advantage of Cosimo), we should instead take from these letters the role of Eleonora, her personal diplomacy and her ability to gift in her own name. We must remember that Eleonora, unlike her husband, had lived her entire life in a court society. Through her father and uncle she was intimately acquainted (if not related) to those at the highest echelons of the Habsburg imperial system. Eleonora's influence over the direction of ducal gift-giving strategies must be recognised from the outset of her tenure as consort because in the subsequent years following Lucca she would come to dominate the activity of gift-exchange at Cosimo's court.

## 6.2 BRONZINO AND THE BURGUNDIAN

### *Golden Coins and Golden Fleeces*

Following the Lucca summit, Charles V embarked on his disastrous expedition to seize Algiers. His fleet badly mauled by the weather, his embattled forces harried from the outset by the Ottoman defenders of the city, the gamble had cost the Emperor greatly in men and materiel, and worst, had allowed Francis I of France to seize the initiative.<sup>516</sup> In 1542, Granvelle left Siena to deal with the French threat, leaving the city as an imperial suzerain in alliance with Medici Florence.<sup>517</sup> Cosimo met again with Charles V in Genoa in May 1543.<sup>518</sup> Cosimo repeated his request, made so many times before, to be restituted the fortresses in Tuscany from Spanish to Medici control. This time, Charles was willing to listen. So pressing was his want for money to pursue his war against France that he had considered selling both Siena and Milan to the Farnese for two million scudi. As such, Cosimo's offer of 150000 scudi for the Tuscan fortresses was accepted.<sup>519</sup> The money required was raised through loans and a special tax all gladly accepted by the city: so happy were they to be rid of the Spanish

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<sup>516</sup> This action was part of the much larger Habsburg-Valois-Ottoman wars, see Mallett, & Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 238, 244; and for the French perspective, see Garnier, E., *L'Alliance impie: François Ier et Soliman le Magnifique contre Charles Quint, 1529-1547* (Paris: Editions du Félin, 2008), pp. 201-208; and on how it effected Cosimo, see Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 201-210.

<sup>517</sup> On Granvelle's activity in Siena, see Petrucci, P., *Memorie storico-critiche della città di Siena, che servono alla vita civile* (Siena: Vincenzo Pazzini Carli, 1755), vol. III, pp. 119-227.

<sup>518</sup> See Letter from Ugolino Grifoni in Genoa to Lorenzo Pagni in Tuscany, 29 May 1543, ASF, MdP 5, fol. 150, MAP Doc ID# 3863. This letter contains details of the meetings on the 25th and 26th, and an important list of who was in attendance. For the fuller context of this meeting, see *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>519</sup> Adriani, *Storie di Bernardo Segni e di Giovambatista Adriani*, vol. I, p. 312. See also, Teicher, A., "Politics and Finance in the Age of Cosimo I" in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500*, vol. I, pp. 350-351, n. 27.

garrison.<sup>520</sup> On 3 July 1542 Cosimo made his solemn entrance into the citadel, Medici banners were raised over the fortress, and his subjects rejoiced in celebrations of their liberty.<sup>521</sup>

By 1546, the Emperor was again in need of money to pursue his military campaigns. Writing to Pedro de Toledo on 10 September 1546, the Duke explained, “[...] as for his Lordship Don Francesco of Toledo, I have sent to His Majesty the 150,000 scudi that His Majesty had asked of me as a loan [...]”.<sup>522</sup> The exit of these monies from the ducal treasury is corroborated by the entry of 3 September 1546 into an account book of large expenditures for the 1540s.<sup>523</sup> This huge loan, equal to sum paid only two years before for the fortresses, was paid just weeks after Cosimo had been invested with the Order of the Golden Fleece (the highest honour of Charles V’s court), at a ceremony in Florence’s Duomo on 11 August.<sup>524</sup> This exchange is of some importance to our understanding of the relationship between Florence and the Empire.

Cosimo’s membership of the Order marks a quickly changing balance in Cosimo’s favour, such that Charles V would be more obliged to Cosimo than Cosimo had been to Charles for having invested him with Florence. It also illustrates an important dynamic in high diplomacy of the era: the role of gifts, especially honours, as a way to regulate the relationship between powerful retainers, such as Cosimo,

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<sup>520</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, p.214.

<sup>522</sup> “[...] come per il signor don Francesco de Toledo [Francisco Álvarez de Toledo ] havevo inviato a Sua Maestà [Karl V von Habsburg] la somma di cento cinquanta milia scudi che havevo provisti et e quali la Maestà Sua mi havea fatto domandare in presto [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Pedro de Toledo likely in Naples, 10 September 1546, ASF, MdP 8, Fol. 14, MAP Doc ID# 26563.

<sup>523</sup> “[...] e adi 3 di settembre scudi centocinquantamilia doro in oro porto il Signor Don Francisco de Toledo come per ricevuto di sua mano appare li quali riceve per ordine di Sua Maestà Cesarea Cesarea [Charles V] in presto come in essa ricevuta appare - 150000.” ASF, GM 13, fol. 76.

<sup>524</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Pietro Camaiani in Trent, 11 August 1546, ASF, MdP 7, fol. 258, MAP Doc ID# 4157.



and the imperial throne. This cycle of reciprocation is composed of a myriad of disparate objects and types of exchange with greatly varying values. As a result, in imperial diplomacy, the onus is on the exchange itself, not on the object (whether cash, food, honours, art, gems, action). As such, by offering the Order of the Golden Fleece, Charles V was fulfilling his end of the exchange. Interestingly, the man who mediated Cosimo's entrance into the Order was Nicolas de Granvelle. As Cosimo reported to his father-in-law in January of 1546:

I have understood as much as Your Lordship writes to me that Nicholas de Granvelle has spoken to you on my account with regard the Order of the Golden Fleece, and that I am very well satisfied by the response you have given to him. It seems to me in this case well governed and very prudent. And seeing how this thing is the desire of His Majesty and of Granvelle, it would pass with a very great honour and dignity to me were Your Lordship (or others) to ask for it [the Order of the Golden Fleece] in my name.<sup>525</sup>

Indeed, this mediation for Cosimo was part of a much broader relationship with Nicolas de Granvelle which was crucial to Cosimo's foreign policy in the 1540s and represents a cycle of gifts and reciprocation perhaps more important than even his relationship with the Emperor himself.

### *The Special Relationship*

Of all the gifts sent by Cosimo and Eleonora, one of the few that have received significant attention is the gifting of Bronzino's *Lamentation* altarpiece, originally made for the private chapel of

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<sup>525</sup> "Ho inteso quanto V. S. mi scrive [canceled: del ordine] che Mons.re di Granvella [Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle] li ha parlato per conto mio del ordine del toson [toison d'or], et resto molto ben satisfatto della risposta che lei gli ha dato, parendomi che in questo caso si sia governata ^ (secondo il solito suo) con molta prudentia. Et che venendo la cosa dalla ^propria^ volontà di S. M.tà et di mons.re di Granvella, habbi a passar' con molto maggior honor et dignità mia che se per ^V. S. o per ^altri in mio nome si fusse domandata." Letter from Cosimo I de Medici in Florence to Francesco de Toledo in Brussels, 15 January 1546, ASF, MdP 6, fol. 443, MAP Doc ID# 4019.

Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio, to Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, the Burgundian minister of Charles V, in 1545. Leading this research, Janet Cox-Rearick has traced almost exhaustively the construction and decoration of Eleonora's chapel. She has not ignored the significance of the altarpiece's use as a diplomatic gift. Cox-Rearick recognised that the importance of the recipient (in particular Granvelle's role in supporting the young duke in the early years of his rule), and that the gift could have something to do with Cosimo's attainment of the Order of the Golden Fleece (1546) which she misdates to summer 1545.<sup>526</sup> Cox-Rearick does not appreciate the full context of both the gifted painting and the relationship between Cosimo and Granvelle reveal which gives particular significance to Bronzino's *Lamentation*.

While already an important acquaintance, the value of Nicolas de Granvelle for Cosimo was accentuated when Granvelle was charged by the Emperor to govern Siena at the Lucca summit in 1541. As such, gifts of bedroom furnishings and tapestries were sent in 1543, maintaining the goodwill that existed between them.<sup>527</sup> With the collapse of imperial power in the Mediterranean theatre at Algiers, the Ottoman fleet of Barbarossa, reinforced by French ships, was free to raid the Italian coast in 1543-4. Tuscany suffered the greatest incursion; Elba was overrun, Porto Ercole and Talamone captured, Orbetello surrounded, and with Piombino vulnerable, all the Sienese state was left exposed.<sup>528</sup> Juan de Luna, the ex-castellan in Florence, who had since been made by Granvelle his overseer in Siena, refused Cosimo's assistance – an offer made all the more keenly for leading the French contingent was Leone Strozzi, Filippo's younger son, who, just like his brother, Piero (who in April 1544 mustering forces just north of Tuscany

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<sup>526</sup> Cox-Rearick, J., *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993), p.75. An error repeated, in Pilliod, E., "The Life of Bronzino" in Bambach, C., Cox-Rearick, J., & Goldner, G., (eds.), *The Drawings of Bronzino*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), p.7.

<sup>527</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Nicolas de Gravelle in Lombardy, 1 January 1543, ASF, MdP 5, fol. 13.

<sup>528</sup> Letter from the Balia e Consiglieri della Repubblica (Siena) in Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 13 June 1544, ASF, MdP 1850, fol. 224, MAP Doc ID# 8334.

in the city of Mirandola in the Romagna), was an irascible *fuoriuscito*. Though the threat did not manifest itself into an attack, it was an unwelcome reminder of the continued danger posed by Florence's exiled Strozzi family, and the vulnerability of Florence from mismanaged Siena, particularly the weakly defended southern Tuscan ports, and the Appiano family's poorly-governed lordship of Elba-Piombino.

As a result of this threat, Cosimo sought to fortify his position architecturally and politically. From Jacopo V d'Appiano, Cosimo had won major economic concessions: namely iron mines in Elba and Piombino.<sup>529</sup> It was partly from the profits of these ventures that Cosimo had raised in 1543 the 150,000 scudi to purchase the fortresses from the Emperor.<sup>530</sup> Barbarossa's incursions had proved the necessity and impetus for Cosimo to expand his influence over these territories. In a letter to Francisco de Toledo, his wife's cousin and an important Medici agent with both the imperial court and Roman curia, dated 4 July 1543, the duke of Florence made clear his frustration:

And finally when the fleet was discovered and seen from Piombino, and there not being soldiers still inside or other provisions, the men of that land being scared fled and abandoned that land, lowering themselves from the walls until reaching the bottom, and that good Lord [Jacopo V d'Appiano] also feared and fled, rosary in-hand, and started to cry and plan to flee, also abandoning that land.<sup>531</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe. Funzione pubblica e privata del patrimonio della famiglia Medici nel Cinquecento*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>530</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>531</sup> "Et finalmente scoprendosi l'armata alla vista di Piombino et non vi essendo ancora dentro un soldato, né fatto alcun'altra provisione, [cancelled: qu] li homini di quella terra spaventati si missono in fuga et abbandonorono la terra, calandosi in sin giù dalle mura, et quel S.re [Jacopo V Appiani d'Aragona] da bene, anco egli spaventato et fuori di sé con una corona di paternostri in mano, cominciò a piagnere et disegnava di fuggirsi et di abbandonare la terra" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Francisco de Toledo (perhaps at the imperial court), 4 July 1543, ASF, MdP 5, Fol. 194, MAP Doc ID# 3881.

In winter 1543-1544 Spanish troops were moved into garrison Piombino while Cosimo financed the reconstruction of the fortress. Cosimo found these actions to be futile while the Appiano family still held suzerainty:

You will not miss with that prudence and great ability which you know how to use, to remonstrate with His Majesty and with Monsieur Granvelle the danger that comes from there [Piombino], and the money that be spent on the fortifications and pay for the soldier will all be for naught [...] the fortification does proceed poorly from the worst government of that Lord [Iacopo V Appiano] and the sinister ways of his ministers [...]<sup>532</sup>

From 1543, and through 1544, Cosimo's requests to his ambassador at the imperial court were fixed upon the danger of Appiano's continued stewardship (or lack thereof) over Piombino. Cosimo's frustration that his financial investments were being wasted would manifest themselves in the coming years as a request to the Emperor for full legal annexation of both Piombino and Elba to Medicean Tuscany. By 1545, just months before the gift of the altarpiece was made to Granvelle, Cosimo's ordered Ricasoli, his resident agent with the Emperor and Granvelle in Brussels to repeat his accusation that Piombino was poorly and imprudently governed.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>532</sup> "Però non mancherete, con quella prudentia et destrezza che saperete usare, di rimostrare a S. M.tà [Karl V von Habsburg] et a Mons.re di Granvella [Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle] il pericolo che si porta delle cose di lì [Piombino], et che de' danari che si sborsano per noi in quella Fortificatione et nelle paghe de' soldati [cancelled: si spendano] se ne spende assai inutilmente [...] Et niente di meno con tutto questo la fortificatione [...]mal procedere et peggior governo di quel s.re [Iacopo V Appiano] et ^il sinistro procedere^ de' suoi ministri [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli at the Imperial Court (Brussels), 26 March 1544, ASF, MdP 5, fol. 513, MAP Doc ID# 3933.

<sup>533</sup> "Et queste ^fortificationi^ son tutte necessarie, et d'una spesa intollerabile, et a quella di Piombino ci si aggiugne (oltre all'ordinario) quello che si manda a male per la imprudentia et mal governo di quel S.re [Iacopo V Appiano] et la rapacità et tristitia de' suoi ministri." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli at the Brussels, 8 March 1545, ASF, MdP 5, Fol. 586, MAP Doc ID# 3930.

The gift of Bronzino's *Lamentation* must be viewed within this context of Cosimo's strategy to secure Piombino, the negotiations over which always involved Granvelle.<sup>534</sup> Piombino was by far the most important diplomatic issue of the the 1540s for Cosimo.<sup>535</sup> Undoubtedly, that the Piombino affair was the context in which the gift must be read, is further supported by the inclusion in the 'gift package' of Giovanni Camerini, an engineer.<sup>536</sup> Ostensibly an expert in hydraulics sent to drain the marshlands of Granvelle's estates, Camerini had also been involved with the fortification of Piombino, as a letter dated 12 March 1545 attests.<sup>537</sup> Indeed, Camerini would return to Piombino as chief of works in the 1550s.<sup>538</sup> From the mouth of Camerini, Granvelle would have received an expert first-hand account of the situation in Piombino.

The altarpiece itself was well-chosen. Arguably one of Bronzino's finest works, the piece was well-suited to Granvelle, an expert art-collector, and an art-object of such quality that Cosimo's gift could rival the torso of Jupiter that the Farnese had gifted to Granvelle

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<sup>534</sup> Diplomatic correspondence always report Granvelle's involvement with the Piombino negotiations. As nominal governor of Siena, the security of Piombino was a shared priority with Cosimo. A typical example of a diplomatic missive from the mid-1540s is as follows: "In che termino si ritrovano le cose di qua io non mi affaticharo in scriverla a V.Ecc.ita. perche il suo Ambascitor scivera all'Ecc'tia V. quanto li ha detto il Signor Ducha D'Alba e Mons. di Granvela e quello mi hanno ditto a me circa alle cose di Piombino." Letter from Giangiacomo Medici in Regsburg to Cosimo I de' Medic in Florence, 21 June 1546, ASF, MdP 380, fol. 83.

<sup>535</sup> See Cappelletti, L., *Storia della città e Stato di Piombino*, (Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1897), pp. 156-222.

<sup>536</sup> For a biographical sketch of Camerini, see Battaglini, G., "Giovanni Camerini" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 17 (1974).

<sup>537</sup> Letter Iacopo Masini and Giovanni Camerini in Piombino to Cosimo I de' Medici, 12 March 1545, ASF, MdP 617, Fol. 610, MAP Doc ID# 22943.

<sup>538</sup> Letters from Giovanni Camerini In Piombino to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 1 September 1552 & 29 June 1555, ASF, MdP 411, Fol. 1 & Vol. 442, Vol. 417.

earlier the same year.<sup>539</sup> The magnificence of the gift would have been accentuated by its provenance, the chapel of Cosimo's ducal consort, Eleonora. Only just finished, the decoration of the chapel, with the *Lamentation* as its altarpiece, imbues the gift with an air of intimacy – exactly the type of relationship which Cosimo sought to cultivate with the Emperor's private secretary. Interestingly, the familiar connotations of the altarpiece are strong: the side-panels of this *Pietà* in Florence were Saints John the Baptist<sup>540</sup> and Cosmas, and while they did not accompany the *Lamentation*, in the minds of Cosimo and Eleonora, the piece was associated with the patron protectors of Florence and Cosimo. Tellingly, the *Lamentation* was intended for Granvelle's own family chapel in Besançon.

Understandably, Cosimo wanted a copy to be made by Bronzino to replace the gifted original. According to Janet Cox-Rearick's study of the payments made by Bronzino:

The first if for fifty florins on 16 October 1544 and ten florins on 5 January 1545; for forty florins for work done from 7 July to 12 December 1543; and for thirty florins overdue for work done before 19 October 1542. A second series is for ten, twenty, one hundred, and twenty-five florins on 10 January, 16 July, 14 September, and 11 November 1545. It is likely that the payment

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<sup>539</sup> That the context of the gift was simple to rival the Farnese gift, see Van Durme, M., "Les Granvelle au Service des Habsburg" in de Jonge, K., & Janssens, G., (eds.), *Les Granvelle et les anciens Pays-Bas*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), p.19. Caroline Smyth argues that the gift was a delayed thanks for Granvelle's support for restitution of the fortresses in 1543, citing Castan, A., "Le musée de Besençon et la Déposition de Croix du Bronzino", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* XXXIII (1881), pp. 462-63, and Giglioli, O., "La Pietà del Brinzino della Cappella del quartiere di Eleonora de Toledo in Palazzo Vecchio", *Rivista d'arte*, 6 (1909), p. 263 in Smyth, C., "An Instance of Feminine Patronage in the Medici Court of Sixteenth-Century Florence: The Chapel of Eleonora de Toledo in the Palazzo Vecchio" in Lawrence, C., (ed.), *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors and Connoisseurs*, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1997), p. 79.

<sup>540</sup> Bronzino, *St. John the Baptist*. ca. 1542-1545. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

of 16 July is the last in this series connected with the chapel decoration [...]<sup>541</sup>

Having no reason to doubt Cox-Rearick, how do we account for the payments, September (one-hundred florins) and November (twenty-five florins)? The dispatch of the painting was delayed by at least two months from the decision made in July to send it to Granvelle. In this time, Bronzino made drawings of his work in order to reproduce it at a later date. This would account for one payment. Also, to prepare the painting as a gift, a frame was commissioned. This could perhaps accounting for the other payment. Yet, is it not also possible that rather than Bronzino make the frame himself (for twenty-five scudi!), could this time spent preparing the painting as a gift also have included changes to the aspects of the painting itself? And although we have a record of a letter dated 31 July 1545 of Cosimo's confirming his choice of the altarpiece as a gift for Granvelle, for how long before had the piece been under consideration as a gift while the artist was still working on its completion?

The *Lamentation* of Bronzino conforms to much of the expected portrayal of the deposition of Christ's body from the cross. One detail though stands out: a triptych of portraits of male characters with biblical associations in the scene, Joseph and Nicodemus, and their unnamed companion. Professor Cox-Rearick has made a compelling case that all three are portraits of artists: Bronzino, Pontormo, and Bandinelli.<sup>542</sup> The other portrait identified is that of the chapel's patron, Eleonora, as Maria Cleophas, perhaps with her sisters taking on the role of other attending women.<sup>543</sup> This interpretation is reasonable, but there could be another. When Nicolas's son, Antoine, commissioned a copy of the *Lamentation* from Pierre d'Argent in 1572, he replaced the

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<sup>541</sup> Lawrence, *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors and Connoisseurs*, p. 74.

<sup>542</sup> Cox-Rearick, J., "From Bandinelli to Bronzino: The Genesis of the 'Lamentation' for the Chapel of Eleonora de Toledo" *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 33, 1 (1989), pp. 37-84, (pp. 67-74).

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73, Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, p. 264.

‘Pontormo’ portrait with his own.<sup>544</sup> It would be a strange attitude for one of the great men of the Habsburg Empire to insert himself into a painting between two artists. While Bronzino could well have intended to portray himself with Bandinelli and Pontormo, it is possible that Antoine saw in the other two portraits, not two artists, but his own father<sup>545</sup>, and his father’s important ally, the benefactor of the painting, Cosimo, who stands with Eleonora de Toledo (if we accept that aspect of Cox-Rearick’s identification). As such, the pose of Joseph (Bronzino/ Cosimo) and Nicodemus (Bandinelli/Granvelle) in discussion would be an appropriate pose given the nature of Cosimo’s relationship with Granvelle.

Proposing an alternative to Cox-Rearick’s interpretation is not simply a supposition. Bruce Edelstein, in his review of Cox-Rearick’s *Bronzino’s Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, carefully deconstructed Cox-Rearick’s identifications, suggesting at best, that the so-called Bronzino would be better seen as Pontormo.<sup>546</sup> Nonetheless, these three portraits must represent three people of significant importance.<sup>547</sup> This then begs the question, even with the hesitantly set-out theory that the two men in discussion could be Cosimo and Granvelle, who is the third man wearing a turban? Whoever he is, he appears awkward and diminished, and in the year (1544-1545) in which the Ottomans had raided the Tuscan coast, an odd choice. If one pursues the political-diplomatic interpretation of this painting – it is a

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<sup>544</sup> Pierre d’Argent, *Lamentation*, 1572, Chapelle des De GranvelleÉglise Saint-Laurent d’Ornans, France. See Cox-Rearick, “From Bandinelli to Bronzino: The Genesis of the ‘Lamentation’ for the Chapel of Eleonora de Toledo”, p. 82, n. 93.

<sup>545</sup> Based on the Titian painting of Nicolas Granvelle, such an interpretation is possible: Titian, *Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle*, 1548, oil on canvas, Musee du Temps, Besancon, France.

<sup>546</sup> Edelstein, B., “Review: Bronzino’s Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio by Janet Cox-Rearick” *The Art Bulletin*, 76 1 (1994), pp. 171-175 (p. 172).

<sup>547</sup> As a gifted object, it would not be unusual for it to be personalised for the receiver, and as we note from the payments, there is certainly the possibility that Bronzino has the time to make alterations, perhaps making a more nuanced portrait of Joseph in order to represent Granvelle?



diplomatic gift after all – we might suppose that this figure is a rather ludic representation of the weak and ineffectual ruler of Piombino (the man at the centre of the correspondence between Granvelle and Cosimo), Jacopo V d'Appiano, lord of Piombino.

While this digression offers a fresh interpretation of the three portraits, it still remains that the 1572 copy made by Pierre d'Argent is an important example of the longevity of the value of artworks sent as diplomatic gifts by Cosimo. Whether or not Nicolas de Granvelle saw himself in the painting, his son, Antoine, valued the work so highly that he decided not only to make a copy of the work, but to include his own portrait. We could read much into this: that the gift held continued importance for the Perrenot de Granvelle family; or moreover, that Antoine saw himself as heir to his father, not only in name and title, but as an important ally to Cosimo and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany as represented in this diplomatic gift.

### 6.3 ILVA RENASCENS

#### *The Price of Piombino*

Since 1543, Cosimo had been investing in the defence of Piombino and Elba. By 1547, the expenses of the fortification works had been huge, not only for construction costs themselves, but for a loan of 200,000 scudi that Charles V had requested, as part of the transaction, and which Cosimo hoped would to his eventual annexation of the territories.<sup>548</sup> Even with this intention to take the lands from their

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<sup>548</sup> Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe. Funzione pubblica e privata del patrimonio della famiglia Medici nel Cinquecento*, pp. 56-59 (p. 56): see especially the graph (p. 59) and the increase debts as they correspond to the Piombino/Elba project. See also See Cappelletti, *Storia della città e Stato di Piombino*, pp. 156-222.

current owner – the Appiano family – for at least some of the costs incurred, Cosimo asked to be reimbursed by the Appiano.<sup>549</sup>

Our arrival was very well received by His Lordship [Diego Hurtado de Mendoza], which he then would have me see the instructions he had from His Majesty [Charles V] and the copy of the letter which he wrote to the Lady of Piombino [Elena Salviati-d'Appiano], the letter of Granvelle written to His Lordship which speak frankly and are very resolute and clear, saying to me formally, "Pagni, you can see that the Emperor

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<sup>549</sup> "Ma io in ogni caso intendo che cotesto S.re of Piombino] mi rimborsi delli miei danari per poter fortificare un luogo delli miei in coteste frontiere che sia l'antemurale et sicurezza dello stato mio [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Tuscany to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in Piombino, 16 February 1547, ASF, MdP 8, Fol. 390, MAP Doc ID# 4398. This was likely a clever ploy, with negotiations stalling over the removal of the Appiano family (Don Diego Mendoza had been trying to persuade the regent, Elena Salviati Appiano, to departure since 1546 Cesaretti, A., *Istoria del principato di Piombino*, (Firenze: della Rosa, 1788), vol. I, pp. 120-121.), their reneging on their debt provided the grounds to have them declared bankrupt in 1548. "[...] quella Sig.ra [Elena Salviati d'Appiano] che non essendo lei habile a fare la spesa della fortificatione di quel luogo et de porti dell' Elba, la provisione delle artiglierie et munitioni necessarie per dette fortezze pagare e soldati che l'hanno a custodire et soddisfare a molti debiti, che ha il s.or suo figlio, dovesse cotentarsi di lassar quello stato et ricevere la ricompensa in loco più godevole et quiet [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Francisco de Toledo in Trent, 13 January 1548, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 339, MAP Doc ID# 7451. Playing the bailiiff, Cosimo was now in control of the territories and launched the next stage in his diplomatic activities: to have himself recognised as legal owner. This was easier said than done, even if Charles V had accepted the "loan" Cosimo had sent in 1546. Instead, Cosimo had to work through diplomatic channels, appealing to the Habsburg administration's fear of the corsair incurious along the Italian coast, and playing on the danger that the Turkish-French alliance could gain a strategic foothold on the Tyrrhenian coast. "[...] la guardia et governo di Piombino et suo stato con le fortezze, artillerie et munitioni che stanno a suo carico in nome et per ordine di Sua M.tà consegnate por guardarlo et repararlo per tucto il tempo che l'armata turchesca e franzese et qualunche di epse correranno per questi mari, et per tener' et ristituir' il detto Piombino at suo stato per quanto tempo parrà a S. M.tà." Copy of Cosimo I de' Medici's Imperial Mandate over Piombino and Elba, [22 June 1548?] ASF, MdP 1175, ins. 8, fol. 46, MAP Doc ID# 13488. While the Emperor was favourable to Cosimo's claims, official recognition was not immediately forthcoming.

wants that Piombino is the Duke's, and I will he will hand it to him by mid-December, or at the latest, at the month's end."<sup>550</sup>

While Granvelle remains an important intermediary, the negotiations inevitably now involved Don Diego Hurtaldo de Mendoza, who, as the newly arrived imperial governor of Siena, was responsible for the security of the city, which was dependent on a fortified Piombino and Elba to block any incursions into the Tuscan interior. To help negotiations, and to endear Mendoza to the Medicean cause, Cosimo sent him a lavish gift package – forty bottles of ‘vino greco’, eighty of ‘rosso buono’, fine cloths and velvets – of which Riccio was told, “send to him straightaway the ‘greco’ and red wine so that His Lordship [Mendoza] will take in this business which is of much importance to His Excellency [Cosimo I].”<sup>551</sup>

Without word from Charles V over the winter of 1547-1548, in February 1548, Cosimo asked that an express courier be sent to update

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<sup>550</sup> “L'arrivo nostro qui fu molto grato a S. S. [Diego Hurtado de Mendoza] la quale poi che m'hebbe fatto vedere la instructione hauta da S. Maestà [Karl V von Habsburg], la copia della lettera che si scrive alla Signora di Piombino [Elena Salviati-d'Appiano], le lettere che G. V. [Nicolas de Granvelle] scrive a S. S. le quali parlano fuor di denti, et sono molto risolute et chiare, mi disse queste formali parole: ‘Pagno voi potete vedere che l'Imperador vuole che Piombino sia del Duca, et io glielo darò in mano per di qui a mezzo dicembre, o al più tardi per tutto quel mese.’” Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Siena to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 25 October 1547, ASF, MdP 1173, ins. 8, fol. 383, MAP Doc ID# 8218.

<sup>551</sup> “Hammi [mi ha] commesso ch'io facci opera con S. Ecc.a [Cosimo I], perchè qui pate di vini buoni, che di costì gli siano mandati 40 fiaschi di greco, [underlining begins] et ottanta di rosso buono, et braccia dua et mezzo di velluto cremisi, braccia dua et mezzo di panno di grana rosso et quattro braccia et un quarto di raso cremisi, [underlining ends] et che tutto sia ^cosa^ bella et buona, dicendo che il velluto, il panno, et il raso lo vuole per un cavaliere spagnuolo, che lo pagherà subito alla ricevuta. Però io sarei di partire, che la S. V. senza aspettarne la commissione da Sua Ecc.a gli inuiasse subito il vino greco et il rosso, poi che S. S. ha in sua mano questo negotio, che tanto importa a S. Ecc.a.” Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Siena to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 25 October 1547, ASF, MdP 1173, ins. 8, fol. 383, MAP Doc ID# 8218.

him on the Emperor's intentions with regards Piombino.<sup>552</sup> Only in April did word finally come that Piombino would become part of the Florentine *dominio* (when this news arrived the Pisans apparently celebrated on the streets).<sup>553</sup> By then, Cosimo was already doubting the economic wisdom of the annexation. In a letter to Francisco de Toledo, he worried that his new subjects would reject their vassalage, even though they had been granted such privileges that they were exempt from taxes (perhaps the reason the Appiano family were bankrupted) and that the income from mining would not cover the expenses lavished on their fortification and annexation.<sup>554</sup> He was right to be concerned: an imperial decree was one thing, governing and holding the lands was another problem entirely, all the more so with such a fiercely independent people as the islanders of Elba. As a result of this delay, opposition to the new Medici protectorate was quickly organised. The Appiano family had fled to Genoa, and the Genoans, whose shipping lanes passed between the mainland and Elba, were furious that Florence had seized such a strategic portal to the Tyrrhenian Sea, and started to petition Charles V against Cosimo's

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<sup>552</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Francisco de Toledo in Trent, 13 January 1548, ASF, MdP 9, Fol. 339, MAP Doc ID# 7451.

<sup>553</sup> Letter from Pier Filippo Pandolfini in Venice to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 28 April 1548, ASF, MdP 2967, fol. 864, MAP Doc ID# 23423. Interestingly, this letter comes from a report a Genoan, "Di Pisa è stato scritto qui ad un genovese che V. Ecc.a [Cosimo I] s'era impatronita di Piombino, et che quivi se n'era fatto festa con fuochi".

<sup>554</sup> "Il che facendo vedrà et troverà quanto piccol sia il numero de' sudditi et de' fuochi quanto poca l'entrata de' vassallatichi, et che quella che c'è ^è quasi tutta^ [cancelled: quella] delle vene del ferro, et che quei populi son per i loro capituli et privilegi talmente exempti che non hanno gravezza alcuna, et in tale essere et stato si son ricevuti sotto l'obedientia mia." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Francisco de Toledo in Augsburg, 15 July 1548, ASF, MdP 11, Fol. 339, MAP Doc ID# 19765.

fortifications, especially on Elba.<sup>555</sup> War between Genoa and Florence was becoming a real possibility. Under pressure from the Appiano family, and the three republics of Genova, Lucca, and Siena, on 24 July 1548, the unthinkable happened: Charles V restored the Appiano family to their lordship of Piombino. Cosimo had ruled Piombino for only thirty days. Although deprived of Piombino, he still garrisoned Elba. To counter the threat that Elba too could be restored to the Appiano family, Cosimo decided chose a diplomatic strategic with which to communicate a message, as such, he commissioned a medal to be gifted through the diplomatic channels of Europe.

### *Renaissance Medals and Diplomacy*

The fifteenth century use of medals in diplomacy has been well-documented.<sup>556</sup> Medals had already achieved an important status in society, commissioned as a luxury accessory with nuanced associations for the bearer or wearer<sup>557</sup> (a symbol of their classical learning, for example). The medal was a prestige object, highly portable, and rich in meaning: all valuable traits for an object gifted in

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<sup>555</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici to Francesco di Paolo Vinta, 8th of May 1548, ASF, MdP 11, fol. 147. For d'Appiano family's intrigues with Adamo Centurione, see Internal Minute of Letter, Summer 1548, ASF, MdP 11, fols. 199-200. For Genoa's presumed preparation of war by withdrawing assets from Livorno, see Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Bernardo de' Medici likely in Augsburg, 5 May 1548, ASF, MdP 11, Fol. 122, MAP Doc ID# 7074.

<sup>556</sup> See Dreyfus, G., Hill, G., & Graham Pollard, J., *Renaissance Medals: From the Samuel H. Kress Collection At the National Gallery of Art; Based on the Catalogue of Renaissance Medals in the Gustave Dreyfus Collection* (London: Phaidon, for the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1967); Hill, G., & Dreyfus, G., *Renaissance Medals* (Oxford: The University Press, 1931); Pollard, J., *Medaglie italiane del Rinascimento nel Museo nazionale del Bargello/Italian Renaissance Medals in the Museo Nazionale of Bargello* (Firenze: Associazione Amici del Bargello, 1984); Scher, S., *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance* (New York: H.N. Abrams in association with the Frick Collection, 1994); Scher, S., *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal* (New York: Garland Pub.: American Numismatic Society, 2000)

<sup>557</sup> "It was the custom at that epoch to wear little golden medals, upon which every nobleman or man of quality had some device or fancy of his own engraved; and these were worn in the cap." Symonds, J., (trans.), *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, (New York: Collier & Sons, 1910), p. 31.

early modern diplomacy. Secondly, medals held ancient associations with the coins found during excavations (termed *medaglie*, meaning both medals and ancient coins).<sup>558</sup> These were coins and medals most notably placed under buildings during their construction, the so-called ‘foundation medals’ – a practice continued in the Renaissance.<sup>559</sup> Moreover, given this use in construction, medals commemorated foundations, establishments, or achievements, they represented a solid declaration, as immutable as the medals from the ancient world in circulation during the Renaissance, in preserving the legacy of a person building, or an event. Able to communicate complex messages, albeit often framed within esoteric symbols, medals were objects for the elite, to be deciphered and enjoyed in equal measure.

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<sup>558</sup> For the ancient use of medals in this way, see Tacitus, *Histories*, Bk. IV, LIII. For a thorough study of the classical associations of medal design in the Renaissance, see Klawans, Z., *Imitations and Inventions of Roman Coins: Renaissance Medals of Julius Caesar and the Roman Empire* (Santa Monica, California: Society for International Numismatics, 1977). Cellini’s most famous medal was struck for Pope Clement VII to commemorate the end of hostilities in Europe after the signing of the treaties of Barcelona and Cambrai in 1529. With Clement on the obverse, and the personification of Peace on the reverse, set against a background including a temple with an embodied Discord fettered and flanked by pile of disregarded arms, the Pope was said to declare upon its presentation to him, “The ancients never had such medals made for them as these.” *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, p. 61.

<sup>559</sup> See Montagu, J., “Some Thoughts on Foundation Medals” in Simonato, L., (ed.), *Le arti a dialogo: Medaglie a medaglisti tra Quattro e Settecento* (Pisa: SNS, 2011), pp. 199-213. In a letter addressed to Sigismondo Malatesta, the use of his portrait medal in the foundations of the walls of Rimini was said to, “immortalize your name [...] and send to foreign nations,” (“Ad quamdam tui nominis immortalitem [...] vel ad exteris nationes transmissae sunt” Letter from Timoteo Maffei of Verona to Sigismondo Malatesta, 1453, in Clementini, C., *Raccolto storico della fonditione di Riminio e dell’origine e vite dei Malatesti*, (Rimini: Sembeni, 1627, reprinted, Bologna: Forni, 1969), p.386) in other words, to secure the possession of his walls in the eyes of his subjects and foreigners, see As the historian Minou Schraven notes though, “the portrait medals of Sigismondo Malatesta and Paul II had been deposited at various stages of the building process, in any case, *not* at the laying of the first stone,” see Schraven, M., “Sixtus IV and the foundation of the Ponte Sisto, 1473.” in Delbeke, M. & Schraven, M. (eds.), *Foundation, Dedication and Consecration in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 146.

Given these attributes, medals were struck in order to be given away, as Richard Schrer writes of a young Roman ambassador called Toscani who had commissioned medals from Lysippus the Younger, "Toscani, recognising that medals were a useful calling card for a rising young envoy, probably intended to distribute these medals at home and on his missions abroad. Like many ambassadors in the Renaissance, he must have viewed the medal as a continuation of diplomacy by other means."<sup>560</sup> In 1480, at the height to the Florentine war with Naples, Lorenzo il Magnifico opened his diplomatic overtures with Mehmet II by sending a medal, made by Bertoldo di Giovanni, with the Sultan's portrait matched with a war chariot on the reverse.<sup>561</sup> Cosimo's grandmother, Caterina Sforza, used medals to both self-fashion her own image as an independent ruler, and communicate that message through their dissemination.<sup>562</sup> For both of Cosimo's ancestors, the use of medals had been at key moments in their rule when they needed a propaganda tool to strengthen themselves and their alliances. Their choice of portrait medals is indicative of how these objects embody the purpose of diplomatic gifts: to communicate political messages.

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<sup>560</sup> Scher, *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal*, p. 101.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49. The more famous medal sent to Mehmet II is by Gentile Bellini in the same year, likely the medals were rival gifts, see Draper, J. *Bertoldo di Giovanni: Sculptor of the Medici Household* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 97-101.

<sup>562</sup> de Vries, J., "Caterina Sforza's Portrait Medals: Power, Gender, and Representation in the Italian Renaissance Court" *Woman's Art Journal*, 24, 1 (2003), pp. 23-28. The medals confidently declared her sovereignty: CATARINA SFOR VICECO DE RIARIO IMOLAE FORLIVII DNA (Catherine Sforza Visconti de Riario, mistress of Imola and Forlì).



While Cosimo's commissioning of medals late in his reign has received ample attention,<sup>563</sup> fewer scholars have studied Cosimo's use of both coins and medals at the critical early stages of his rule, for example, as a way to associate himself with his predecessor, Alessandro (thus securing his own identity as a legitimate and natural successor to his cousin). Dario Donetti has demonstrated how Cosimo commissioned Francesco da Sangallo to make a special medal bearing his portrait on the obverse and Duke Alessandro's on the reverse.<sup>564</sup> In so doing, Cosimo was able to convey that his rule was a continuation of what had gone before. The use of medals to establish credibility was an important part of their diplomatic power in the early modern period. In the same spirit, Adriano Candido, an ecclesiastic, having spent many years in Florence, desired a medal of Cosimo in order to show that he was in the good graces of the court, "that one may deign to make me a present of your grace of an imprint of yourself or a medal so that I can show to my Lords and to have some keepsake of Your Most Illustrious Excellency and I am myself party to your good graces."<sup>565</sup> With Cosimo's medal in hand, Candido had proof of his good standing at the Florentine court.

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<sup>563</sup> These studies are principally concerned with the Galeotti medals later in Cosimo reign, see Johnson, C., "Cosimo I de' Medici e la sua 'Storia Metallica' nelle Medaglie di Pietro Paolo Galeotti" *Medaglia* 12 (1976), pp. 15-46; and by the same author, "Ancora sul Corpus di medaglie di Cosimo I de' Medici" *Medaglia*, 14 (1977), 6-28; and Scorza, R., "Borgini, Zucchi, Galeotti and the Genesis of a Medal for Cosimo I de' Medici" *The Medal*, 53 (2008), pp. 34-40; and by the same author, "Imprese and medals. Invenzioni all'antica by Vincenzo Borghini," *The Medal*, 13 (1988), pp. 18-32.

<sup>564</sup> Donetti, D., "L'altra antichità di Francesco da Sangallo: due medaglie di fondazione nella Firenze di Cosimo I," in Simonato, L., (ed.), *Le arti a dialogo: Medaglie a medaglisti tra Quattro e Settecento*, pp.103-123. For the early medals of Cosimo (likely used for his first coins), see Fox, S. "Medaglie medicee di Domenico di Polo," *Bollettino di numismatica*, 6, 10 (1988), pp. 189-219.

<sup>565</sup> "[...] che quella si degni farmi un presente per sua gratia d'una sua impronta o vero medaglia acciò che io possa mostrare a questi miei Signori d'haver' qualche memoria di Vostra Illustrissima Excellentia et essermi partito di là con sua buona gratia." Letter from Adriano Candido to Francesco I de' Medici, 29 November 1565, ASF, MdP 518, fol. 556, MAP Doc ID# 22121.

That a medal could provide a form of accreditation of service done on behalf of a prince, and thus be shown by that ambassadorial agent to his master or to other princes, was likely why medals were chosen to be convey important messages. For example, when the Medicean agent, Iacopo Seriacopi, at the court of Emperor Maximilian II had a portrait medal of Cosimo, it became something of interest to the Emperor, as Seriacopi explained in a letter to Cosimo:

I have discussed with your ambassador, Ricasoli, about the portrait medal of Your Most Illustrious Excellency which I had in my keeping, of which it was said to me straightaway [...] the ambassador came to me for the medal, saying to me that it pleased very much His Majesty and that I must offer it to him after he has had dinner.<sup>566</sup>

With regards Medicean diplomacy in the late 1540s, one example stands out as highly illuminating of Cosimo's practice with gifting medals. In 1548, Philip of Spain, son and heir to Charles V, landed in Genoa before making his journey to the imperial court in Brussels. To meet him when he arrived, Cosimo had despatched his nine year old son and heir, Francesco.<sup>567</sup> Francesco had with him a magnificent gift: a silver credenza filled with 5000 "medaglioni" bearing the effigy of Cosimo. These "medaglioni" were coins, specially struck as a gift for Philip before leaving on his journey to the imperial court, likely the place he would spend them (the coins were valued at

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<sup>566</sup> "E mi fu domandato dal suo ambasciatore Ricasoli [Giulio Ricasoli] la medaglia che tenevo del retratto di Vostra Eccellenza Illustrissima [Cosimo I], la quale ci detti subito et entrato nelle camere di sua Maestà [Maximilian II von Habsburg] avanti la cena iersera, stavo aspettando, et uscito la Maestà Cesarea a cena, il signor ambasciatore mi ritornò la medaglia, dicendomi che era piaciuta molto a Sua Maestà et che io dovevo offerirliene doppo che havessi cenato." Letter from Iacopo di Girolamo Seriacopi to Francesco I de' Medici, 6 November 1565, ASF, MdP 518, fol. 253, MAP Doc ID# 22018

<sup>567</sup> See Letter from Giovanni Francesco Lottini in Livorno (?) to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 13 September 1548, ASF, MdP 1174, ins. 3, fol. 49, MAP Doc ID# 18399.

10 ducats/piastro d'oro each) or gift them to his courtiers or others.<sup>568</sup> As such, Cosimo using a gift to Philip of money as a way to communicate a message: likely an attempt to reverse Charles V's decision to restore the Appiano to Piombino. Unfortunately, the reverse of the medals has not been described, but in any case, as Philip would have re-gifted and distributed these medals, Cosimo's portrait would quickly have been in the palm and the pocket of the European elite by the end of the year. Signalling, if nothing else, Cosimo's standing and prosperity.<sup>569</sup> Crucially, this gift of medals was made in front of the Genoans to pointedly demonstrate Cosimo's continued high standing with the house of Habsburg – despite the reversal with regards Piombino – and his steadfast ambitions to invest his sizeable wealth into expanding the Florentine presence in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

### *The Elba Medal*

In April 1549, Cosimo instructed Cristiano Pagni to write to his private secretary, “to send here that wax model (modello di cera) of Elba or it may be of Porto Ferraio and the fortresses made by

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<sup>568</sup> “Bernardo Segni ci fa vedere, che altra prima di questa sia stata conziata ne’ primi anni del governo del Duca Cosimo per conto del regalo fatto al figlio di Carlo V. Imperatore, ed ecco le sue proprie parole, “l’anno 1547. Don Filippo figlio dell’Imperatore arrivato in Genova fu visitato dal Duca Cosimo per mezzo di Don Francesco suo Primogenito d’anni 9. andato in compagnia di Mess. Angiolo Niccolini, e Girolamo degli Albizzi, presentò a quel Rè una Credenza d’Argento ricchissima, fatta di nuovo con molto lavoro, e con grande spesa, e di più v’aggiunse in un gran Bacino cinquemila Medaglioni di Cosimo di dieci ducati l’uno, fatti battere novamente in Zecca per presentarli, arrivò quel presente in più cose a scudi centomila.” Gli chiama Cosimi, perché doveano avere l’Effigie del Duca; e il valore di dieci Ducati l’uno corrisponde appunto alla valuta della Piastra d’Oro. Ma non essendosene di queste vedute, non sene può dare il disegno, nè più particolare notizia.” Orzini, I., *Storia delle monete de’ granduchi di Toscana della casa de’ Medici* (Firenze: Giovan Paolo Giovannelli, 1756), p. 8; see also Galluzzi, *Istoria del granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici*, vol. I, p. 174.

<sup>569</sup> When Cosimo needed to pay back a debt to the Genoese in 1543, he coined the total repayment on new coins, again using the opportunity to disseminate his image and communicate a message. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Poggini.”<sup>570</sup> Writing on 19 April, Cosimo was informed that the model had safely arrived in Pisa.<sup>571</sup> From this we may draw that the goldsmith and sculptor, Domenico Poggini had been sent over to Elba to study the fortifications and make a model for the Florentine court. In the same month, Pier Francesco Riccio and Cosimo were discussing mottos for a new medal, “to give perfection on the reverse of your medal that it matches no other, if not Your Excellency resolves to the motto you want, either the idea of Your Excellency or on of these of Piero Vettori [...] putting “*Ilva Renascens*” (Elba Reborn) goes very well with good lettering.”<sup>572</sup> Indeed, the discussion continued throughout the month and resulted in a change from, “TUSCORUM ET LIGURUM SECURITAS” to the dative case, “TUSCORUM ET LIGURUM SECURITATI”, this being the inscription one sees on the *Elba Medal* in numismatic collections around the world.<sup>573</sup>

The *Elba Medal* was more than a description. It depicts Cosimo on the obverse in cuirass and mantle, right-facing and encircled with the legend “COSMVS MED·RP·FLOREN·DVX·II” (the standard portrait and legend as seen on Cosimo’s coins<sup>574</sup>). The reverse bears a relief of the fortifications of Portoferraio, the twin fortresses and chained harbour are depicted, and within the enclosed port is a flotilla of

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<sup>570</sup> “Il Duca [Cosimo I de’ Medici] dice che Vostra Signoria [Pier Francesco Riccio] mandi qua quel modello di cera del Elba o sia del Porto Ferraio et fortezze che il Poggini.” Letter from Cristiano Pagni to Pier Francesco Riccio, 16 April 1549, ASF, MdP 1175, ins. 3, fol. 7. MAP Doc ID# 515.

<sup>571</sup> Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 19 April 1549, vol. 1175, ins. 3, fol. 8, MAP Doc ID# 1412.

<sup>572</sup> “A dar perfectione al rovescio della sua medaglia non manca altro se non che Vostra Eccellenza [Cosimo I] si risolva al motto che lei vi vuole intorno, o il pensato da V. Ecc.a o uno di quelli di Piero Vectori... Vi si messe “*Ilva Renascens*”, che torna molto bene con buone et formate lettere.” Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio to Cosimo I de’ Medici, 2 April 1549, ASF, MdP 613, ins. 5, fol. 19, MAP Doc ID# 18046.

<sup>573</sup> Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio to Cosimo I de’ Medici, 12th of April 1549, ASF, MdP 613, ins. 5, fol. 21. See Fig. 8.

<sup>574</sup> Orzini, I., *Storia delle monete de’ granduchi di Toscana della casa de’ Medici*, pp. 7-33.

galleys. This relief is crowned by the motto “ILVA RENASCENS” while Neptune reclines at the exergue, completing the lettered edge is the legend “THVSCORVM ET LIGVRVM SECVRITATI.”. Thanks to the re-striking of the *Elba Medal* with Cosimo’s later title of duke of Siena, inscribed as, COSMVS MED·FLOREN·ETSENAR·DVX·II in 1567, the original context of the medal has long been overlooked.<sup>575</sup> This change of date is significant.

Rather than being a commemorative medal for one of Cosimo’s past achievements – the “Elba design” based on Poggini’s wax model was used for this purpose, in both the medallions painted by Vasari’s workshop in a lunette in the courtyard of the Palazzo Vecchio for Joanna of Austria’s entrance to the city in 1565, and in the fresco in the Sala di Cosimo – it is an object designed within a very specific context sixteen-years previously. The medal bore a message for the courts of Europe, in particular the Genoans, but also for Charles V himself. This message was Cosimo’s political programme communicated within the iconographic elements of the medal which outline Duke’s intentions on Elba. First of all, it depicts an accurate model of the fortifications of Portoferraio, as made by Poggini when he visited the island in 1549. After years of neglect under the Appiano family, the medal announced how the island is declared reborn (*Ilva Renascens*) under Medicean rule, clearly connoting the island’s restoration as a bulwark against the Turks who had several times ravaged the island. Another aspect of Cosimo policy is shown in the depiction of the harbour sheltering galleys: Cosimo wanted to convey that this was not a land-grab, but an action to ensure Tuscany *and* Liguria’s security. The message to anxious Genoan merchants was that Florentine control of Elba and Piombino was not a threat, but a benefit, providing a safe harbour for their merchant ships from Turkish corsairs.

The *Elba Medal*’s final iconographic element can now be fully appreciated: Cosimo as Neptune. It is Neptune/Cosimo, wielding his

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<sup>575</sup> This medal was re-struck as part of Pietro Paolo Galeotti set of medals from 1565 to 1570 lauding the achievements of Cosimo, see Galeotti, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and the fortification of Portoferraio Elba*, Tuscan Medal 208, CM George III, British Museum, London.

trident, who is guarding the entrance to the bay of the city (soon to be renamed, Cosmopolis). The choice of Neptune, though, is much more significant. The leader of Genoa, Andrea Doria, a celebrated admiral, had been depicted as Neptune by Bronzino in 1530.<sup>576</sup> Doria was to be again in the guise of Neptune for a statue over a public fountain commissioned from Baccio Bandinelli in around the same year (following Doria's expulsion of the French from the city).<sup>577</sup> With the *Elba Medal*, Cosimo was marking his own claim on the rich imagery of Neptune, taking up Doria's mantle, and declaring his own maritime prowess and ambitions.

### *The Elba Medal in Circulation*

Evidence of the wide circulation of the *Elba Medal* is almost immediate. By December 1550 an *Elba Medal* had found its way to Don Ippolito, a Milanese courtier, who had been twice Abbot General of the Olivetan Order. The Florentine ambassador in Milan, Francesco Vinta, wrote with some surprise that:

[Don Ippolito, the] old courtier, man of letters, and lover of antiquity, has shown to me a medal done where there is an impression of His Excellency [Cosimo I] and on the reverse Elba with the port. I could have advantage to its value, but I doubt that the effigy does amount in the way it was desired. Truly, His Excellency has grown more beard and I can not rightly judge it, and consequently when Your Lordship [Pier Francesco Riccio] finds himself less busy, would you be so kind as to write to me

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<sup>576</sup> Bronzino, *Portrait of Andrea Doria as Neptune*, ca. 1530, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

<sup>577</sup> The work was never completed, only the statue remains, abandoned in the Piazza del Duomo in Carrara. See Waldman, *Baccio Bandinelli and Art at the Medici Court: A Corpus of Early Modern Sources*, p. 99.

about it and specify to me if that medal is held good and approved.<sup>578</sup>

Despite Vinta's doubts, the importance of this medal is confirmed when the Florentine ambassador, Onofrio Camaiani, when leaving for his post in Rome requested explicitly from his Duke the *Elba Medal* to present to the curia.<sup>579</sup> Though it is with another diplomatic agent, Pedro de Toledo – a relation of the Duchess, not her father – that we have an intriguingly undated document in which Pedro is sent three medals: the *Elba Medal*, one of Caterina de' Medici, queen of France, and one depicting the late Duke Alessandro.<sup>580</sup> Given the first and second medals' commemorations, it must be dated to after 1549, and though we know that Pedro de Toledo spent at least a month on Elba in 1552 (before becoming the ambassador to the Papal court in 1558). Thus it would seem that the Elba Medal remained important well into the 1550s if it merited such inclusion in the commemoration of three pillars of Medici pretension: Cosimo's legitimacy as the heir to Duke Alessandro; his family's royal connections; and his own political achievements.

Understandably, as a diplomatic gift, commemorative medals were similarly deployed by other rulers to the court of Cosimo I de' Medici. In December 1550, at the height of Cosimo's activities on Elba, his erstwhile imperial ally, Ferrante I Gonzaga, governor of Milan, sent

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<sup>578</sup> "Don Hippolito [Milanese], monacho olivetano et già due volte abbate generale di quello ordine, cortigiano vecchio, litterato et amatore dell'anticaglie, mi ha mostrato una medaglia fatta costì, dove è impromptata S. E. [Cosimo I] et il roverscio è l'Elba con il porto. Potrei havere commodità di quella et valermene, ma dubito che nell'effigie non l'assomigli in quel modo che desidero. È ben vero che S. E. ha messo più barba et non posso rectamente farne iudicio et perciò V. S. quando la si troverà meno occupata mi farà grazia scrivermene un verso et specificarmi se quella medaglia è tenuta buona et approvata." Letter from Francesco di Paolo Vinta to Pier Francesco Riccio, 20 December 1550, vol. 1176, ins. 1, fol. 21, MAP Doc ID# 3044.

<sup>579</sup> Letter from Onofrio Camaiani to Pier Francesco Riccio, 28 February 1552, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 9, fol. 20, MAP Doc ID# 3175.

<sup>580</sup> Letter from Pedro de Toledo to Pier Francesco Riccio, date unknown, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 4, fol. 191, MAP Doc ID# 2420.

medals bearing the images of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Gian Galeazzo Sforza with the Florentine ambassador.<sup>581</sup> The despatch of medals of Milan's former rulers to Cosimo was a statement in no uncertain terms that the Gonzaga were the custodians of Milan's former patrimony. Similarly, Pope Julius III gifted three medals to Eleonora de Toledo, including a medal of her son, Prince Giovanni de' Medici tonsured as he prepared for a career in the church, with a portrait of himself, and another of Philip II of Spain. To be viewed together, these batches of medals declared a message – that the Pope and Spanish King were together in guaranteeing the future of the house of Medici.<sup>582</sup>

Commemorative medals thus held a significant status, and must be understood as an important means of communication in early modern European diplomacy. The *Elba Medal* represents an important moment in the diplomatic policy of Cosimo I. The coins he ordered to be struck and the medals that he had commissioned to be cast, provide an important illustration of how he wanted to project himself to an audience outside of Florence and outside of the traditional Florentine *dominio*. Indeed, the circulation of Florentine currency, although nowhere near the importance it had in the centuries before, was still a tool with which to communicate his image and his policies around Europe. His medals, which he now would be gifted and shown through diplomatic channels, represented his political and diplomatic policies to the court elites of Europe (but not exclusively). With the *Elba Medal*, Cosimo was not simply demonstrating an achievement, but staking a claim (over Elba), even an ambition (to become a major seapower).

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<sup>581</sup> Letter from Francesco di Paolo Vinta in Milan to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 20 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 1, fol. 21, MAP Doc ID# 2044.

<sup>582</sup> Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 24th of October 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 11, fol. 27, MAP Doc ID3221. Indeed, Julius took diplomatic commemorative medals seriously, so much so that his enemies cast an 'anti-Julian' medal in the same year which circulated at the imperial court at Augsburg, see Summary of Letters to Cosimo I de' Medici, 31st of January 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 364, MAP Doc ID, 6873. Medals such as these were amongst the Protestant medals and books burnt by Charles IX in 1568, see News from Cosimo Bartoli in Venice to Francesco I de' Medici in Florence, 29th of December, 1568, ASF, MdP 3080, fol. 486, MAP Doc ID# 21788



Moreover, Cosimo was declaring the permanence and durability of his hold over his great prize – the city which bore his name – that could not be taken away as easily as he had lost Piombino the year before. All of this was possible because Cosimo knew his medal would be gifted and disseminated throughout Italy and Europe.

## 7. COSIMO TRIUMPHANT, 1550-1565

### 7.1 HABEMUS PAPAM

#### *The Conclave of 1549-1550*

In 1549, with the death of Pope Paul III Farnese – Cosimo’s foe since his refusal to marry Vittoria Farnese in 1538 – Cosimo had an opportunity to dramatically improve his position in Rome, long obfuscated by Paul III’s opposition.<sup>583</sup> As it would transpire, the conclave of 1549-50 would set Cosimo on a trajectory which would dramatically alter his diplomatic activities and his territorial ambitions. This change in direction was rooted in the politics of Florence of the 1530s. Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, governor of Siena and imperial ambassador in Rome, supported Cardinal Salviati – a man whose family had been one of the most stalwart in their opposition to Cosimo’s rule – as the imperial candidate for the throne of St. Peter’s. Instead, Cosimo, along with his wife’s kinsmen, advocated the candidacy of Cardinal Juan de Toledo.<sup>584</sup> Indicative of Cosimo’s

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<sup>583</sup> Cosimo wrote to his ambassador at the imperial court a week following Paul III’s death, complaining: “[...] et vi prometto così morto questo diavol del papa con spacci, corrieri et lettere non ci lascia dormire, et hacci mezzo morti [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Pisa to Bernardo de’ Medici in Brussels, 17 November 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 178, MAP Doc ID# 21011.

<sup>584</sup> Hernando Sánchez, “Naples and Florence in Charles V’s Italy”, p. 170.

diplomatic pragmatism, he made overtures to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (keen to hold onto his family's papally bestowed patrimony) to support the Medici-Toledo candidate.<sup>585</sup> Whether or not the viceroy of Naples, Pedro de Toledo, made the right choice to support his brother's attempt to become Pope by marshalling Spanish troops on the border of the papal states during the conclave, Juan's ambitions were thwarted; but not Cosimo's. As Pedro wrote to Cosimo on 9 February 1550:

Thanks be to God. We are out of the conclave, and we have a pope, and in my view, we could not have asked for anyone better, in terms of what matters to Your Excellency. [He is] someone who only talks of the great obligation that he has to Your Excellency. He knows that Your Excellency has made him pope [...]<sup>586</sup>

Cosimo's reaction to this news is enlightening. Writing back to his ambassador in Rome upon hearing news of Julius's elevation and that the new pope would be celebrated in Florence as Leo X and Clement VII had been, as Cosimo said "His Holiness was a creature (*creatura*) of

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<sup>585</sup> Galluzzi, *Istoria del granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici*, I, pp. 177–178. For Cosimo initial diplomatic actions after the death of Paul III, see Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Bernardo de' Medici in Brussels, 17 November 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 178, MAP Doc ID# 21011.

<sup>586</sup> "[...] bendito sea dios. Somos fuera del conclave con un papa que a mi parecer no le podíamos pedir mejor para lo que a vuestra excelencia toca El qual jamas habla sino en la grande obligacion en que es a vuestra excelencia. Conoce que vuestra excelencia le a hecho papa [...]" Letter from Pedro de Toledo in Naples to Cosimo I de' Medici in Tuscany, 9 February 1550, ASF, MdP 3969, fol. 17, cited and translated in Hernando Sánchez, "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy", p. 172.

our state, who had always demonstrated affection to us.”<sup>587</sup> In Julius III, Cosimo believed he had affected the creation of the third Medici pope. The question remains, how had Cosimo been able to influence the election?<sup>588</sup>

The conclave of 1549-1550 was the best-attended in the sixteenth century. Fifty-one cardinal electors were at times present. It was also one of the least cloistered: news and people moved freely between discussions and the outside world.<sup>589</sup> This was perhaps a reflection of the deep factionalism between the French and imperial parties, exacerbated by Henry II’s personal animosity towards Charles V since Henry’s time spent as hostage in Spain years before.<sup>590</sup> This factionalism had divided equally the college of Cardinals. This meant that members were open to compromise and persuasion in order to reach the two thirds majority required to install a new pope. Part of this

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<sup>587</sup> “[...] Di quanto contento et allegrezza sia stata a noi la promotione del [cancelled: nostro R.mo] ^nostro Mons. di^ Monte [Giovanni Maria Ciocchi dal Monte, elected pope as Julius III] al sommo Pontificato. A voi che sapete il gran desiderio che ne habiamo hauto, sarà facile il giudicarlo, lo conoscerà facilmente ogni altro che considererà che habiamo [cancelled: un] papa [cancelled: unreadable] ^una creatura^ dello [cancelled: nostro] stato ^nostro^ [...] Qui intesa la nuova [cancelled: si son fatte] ^habiam fatto fare^ e medesimi segni et offitii d’allegrezza che furon fatti alla creatione di Clemente [Clemens VII] et Leone [Leo X] di Santa memoria, perché così richiede l’esser Sua Beatitudine creatura di questo stato, l’affettione che ci ha sempre dimostra [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Averardo Serristori in Rome, 10 February 1550, ASF, MdP 12, fol. 377, MAP Doc ID# 21030.

<sup>588</sup> Frederic Baumgartner has conceded that Cosimo I had “some influence” but believes that Gianmaria del Monte’s election was a victory for the French party, see Baumgartner, F., “Henry II and the Papal Conclave of 1549” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 163, (1985), pp. 301–314 (p. 302). For Cosimo’s instrumental role in the election of Julius III, see Canestrini, G. (ed.), *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori ambasciatore di Cosimo I a Carlo V e in corte di Rome (1537-1568)*, (Florence: Le Monnier, 1853), pp. 305-306; de Leva, G., “La elezione di Papa Giulio III,” *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 1 (1884), pp. 21-36. On the politics of early modern conclaves, see Visceglia, M. A., *Morte e elezione del papa. Norme, riti e conflitti. L’Età moderna* (Roma: Viella, 2013).

<sup>589</sup> Baumgartner, “Henry II and the Papal Conclave of 1549”, pp. 305-306.

<sup>590</sup> Henry had been a hostage offered in exchange for his father, Francis I, who had been captured at the battle of Pavia in 1525.

ability to persuade was in the giving of gifts and favours. The Florentine Cardinal, Niccolò Gaddi, who wrote to Cosimo two weeks into the conclave on 13 December 1549, asked the Duke to take care of his brother's debts accrued from the Apostolic Camera.<sup>591</sup> For Cardinal Cornaro, Cosimo was able to procure a bust of "Scipione [Africanus?]" which he had coveted from the collections of the recently deceased Cardinal Ridolfi.<sup>592</sup> In this way, Cosimo was able to use gifts to help influence the conclave.

The more pressing matter was to convince Juan de Toledo to give up his ambitions, despite his status as *papabile*. This was likely achieved through the influence of Don Pedro, who continued his letter to Cosimo, informing him that:

[...] The Cardinal of Burgos [Juan de Toledo] has behaved in this election with such goodness and wisdom that it seems that God has enlightened him. This election has gone utterly against the purposes of don Diego [de Mendoza] and against those of Mantua [Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga] and Pacheco, and it happens that Pacheco protested strongly to the Cardinal of Burgos last night.<sup>593</sup>

Clearly, at the critical final moment, the Toledo party had swung behind Ciochi del Monte, who, as the conclave dragged on into its second

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<sup>591</sup> Letter from Niccolò Gaddi in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 13 December 1539, ASF, MdP 3719, fol. 541, MAP Doc ID# 23875.

<sup>592</sup> "[...] Farò l'opera che Mons.r R.mo [Andrea] Cornaro desidera per farli havere la testa di Scipione, ma dubito non sia difficile perché ne fanno una grandissima stima. [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Pedro de Toledo in Naples, 3 February 1550, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 354, MAP Doc ID# 21025.

<sup>593</sup> "El cardenal de burgos se a portado en esta elección con tanta bondad y cor- dura que parece que dios le a alumbrado. Esta elección ha sido totalmente contra la voluntad de don diego [de Mendoza] y qontra la de mantua pacheco y queva el qual pacheco hizo anoche grandes protestas al cardenal de burgos." Letter from Pedro de Toledo in Naples to Cosimo I de' Medici in Tuscany, 9 February 1550, ASF, MdP 3969, fol. 17, cited and translated in Hernando Sánchez, "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy", p. 172.

month, had provided a viable alternative for the French faction to their original preferred candidate, Ippolito d'Este.<sup>594</sup>

Cosimo had taken advantage of the division between French and imperial parties, acting independently, to achieve his own ambitions. This was possible not only because of the gifts and favours given during the conclave, or because of Juan de Toledo's sudden shift in voting intentions, but because Cosimo had been regularly making presentations of gifts to the College of Cardinals, in particular, gifts of Tuscan specialities – *marzolino* cheese and *trebbiano* wine – the two almost always given together, and by far the most frequently gifted types of food and wine by Cosimo.<sup>595</sup> These gifts certainly seemed to be paying off by the papal conclave of 1549, when Giovanni Maria del Monte's election on 7 February 1550 ended the second longest conclave of the century. A month later, Lorenzo Pagni wrote to Pier Francesco Riccio:

The Cardinals of Rome have remembered the tribute that is given to them every year of fruit, marzolino cheeses, and trebbiano wine, etc., and that they have merited it more for having done well in making the Pope [Julius III].<sup>596</sup>

In asking for these gifts, the cardinals clearly felt that had served Cosimo's ambitions and should be recompensed for their efforts (interestingly, they desire foods and wines for the table, as opposed to

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<sup>594</sup> Baumgartner, "Henry II and the Papal Conclave of 1549", pp. 304, 306. Hollingsworth, M., *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition and Housekeeping in a Renaissance Court* (London: Profile Books, 2004), p. 265.

<sup>595</sup> Letter from Benedetto Buonanni in Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 23 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 19, MAP Doc ID# 3250.

<sup>596</sup> "Li Car.li di Roma hanno ricordato il tributo che si suol dare loro ogni anno di frutte, marzolini, trebbiano, ecc., et poi che l'hanno molto ben meritato havendoci fatto un sì buon Papa [Julius III]. Dice Sua Ecc.a che V. S. lo prepari per mandarlo quanto prima, che se mal non si ricorda le pare che V. S. le habia detto che lo haveva in ordine [...]" Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 3 March 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 2, fol. 33, MAP Doc ID# 3072.

gems or artworks). Remarkably, it seems that Cosimo's gifts had played an important role in the election of Julius III.

### *The Pope and the Prince*

As a consequence of Cosimo's actions, Julius III understandably felt obliged to the duke of Florence. This obligation was manifested in the sending of gifts. On the day of his coronation, Julius instructed Cosimo's ambassador in Rome, Averardo Serristori, to invite Cosimo and Eleonora to Rome to celebrate the Jubilee planned for that year. As an extra encouragement, Serristori informed Cosimo that the Pope would give the Duchess the promised crucifix, and moreover, would dedicate the intercessory prayers to her, as Paul III had never done.<sup>597</sup> Indeed, Cosimo's status in the new Julian Rome was much more prominent than it had ever been during Paul's papacy: Serristori, as Cosimo's ambassador, even carried the papal mantle during Julius's coronation.<sup>598</sup> A few days later, Serristori also informed Cosimo that Cardinal Gonzaga – who had angrily visited Juan de Toledo on the night of Julius's election when his candidate (the imperial candidate), Reginald Pole, had lost – had been gifted a magnificent

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<sup>597</sup> "[...] E' sicurissima Sua Beatitudine [Julius III] che Vostre Eccellenze [Cosimo I and wife Leonor de Toledo] habino a venire a Roma in questo Anno Santo perché quando si volesser pur ritirare dalla promessa fattale del venire a settembre prossimo, è resoluta di venir lei stessa nel dominio loro, e di cavarnele con l'aiuto di [Juan Álvarez de Toledo cardinal de] Burgos, quando pur le bisognasse. E quando si partiran di qua Vostre Eccellenze, promette Sua Beatitudine di dare alla Duchessa mia Signora [Leonor de Toledo], non solamente il crocifixo promessole, ma di concederle quelle gratie ch'ella vorrà, senza le clausule che Paulo [III] di santa memoria faceva mettere nei brevi che se le mandavano a sua intercessione. [...]" Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 22 February 1550, ASF, MdP 3467, fol. 5, MAP Doc ID# 23998.

<sup>598</sup> Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 22 February 1550, ASF, MdP 3467, fols. 6-8, MAP Doc ID# 24001. In another demonstration of the power of medals as communicative tools, in the same letter, Averardo informs Cosimo that he will send him copies of all the commemorative medals struck for the coronation.

engraved emerald of the Emperor Honorius.<sup>599</sup> This gift was an important indicator that Julius III was trying to end any bitterness caused by the conclave before he began his papacy.

The bond between pope and prince was strengthened continuously in the early months of 1550. On 1 March, Cosimo asked Julius to become godfather to Prince Ferdinando de' Medici who was to be baptised on the feast of St. John the Baptist that year (ever a symbolic day in the Medici-Florentine calendar).<sup>600</sup> Cosimo was clearly proud of his role and association with Julius, asking Serristori to send coins bearing Julius's portrait and asking for Julius to commission a painting (which he asks to a certain Giorgio [Vasari] from Arezzo).<sup>601</sup> Such an action was well-calculated to flatter the pope, who said to Vasari, while being painted, how much affection he had for Cosimo.<sup>602</sup> Indeed, when the Florentine delegation sent under Piero Vettori to support Serristori during the papal coronation were preparing to depart, they were honoured by Julius III upon departure with titles of "Cavalieri et Conti"

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<sup>599</sup> Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 26 February 1550, ASF, MdP 3467, fol. 9, MAP Doc ID# 24013: Julia Vicioso has identified this stone as an emerald found in 1544 in the tomb of Honorius: see de Rossi, G. B., "Disegni d'alquanti vasi del mondo muliebre con Maria moglie di Onorio imperatore" *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 7 (1863), pp. 53-54.

<sup>600</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Averardo Serristori in Rome, 1 March 1550, ASF, MdP 12, fol. 473, MAP Doc ID# 21043.

<sup>601</sup> Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 17 March 1550, ASF, MdP 3467, fol. 18, MAP Doc ID# 24025.

<sup>602</sup> "[...] Per quel che ritraggho da Giorgino Pittore [Giorgio Vasari], che è spesso a gli orecchi di Sua Santità [Julius III] et molto dimestico di casa del Signor Baldovino [del Monte], nostro Signore aspettava che Sua Eccellenza [Cosimo I] gli facesse un presente della sua terra, et lo desiderava molto, che mi dice non si potrebbe credere quanta affezione ei n'ha [...]" Letter from Pier Vettori in Rome to Lelio Torelli in Florence, 2 May 1550, ASF, MdP 397, fol. 463, MAP Doc ID# 6318.



and each member with chains worth one hundred *scudi*.<sup>603</sup> In return for having commissioned a painting of him, Julius ‘reciprocated’ the honour by asking for portraits of the ducal family in November of 1551.<sup>604</sup> In November and December of 1551, Cosimo sent to Rome the contents of the chapel of Cardinal Benedetto degli Accolti, who had died in 1549.<sup>605</sup> The rich contents of Accolti’s chapel were sent as

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<sup>603</sup> “[...] Dal medesimo intesi che Sua Beatitudine ancora ha in animo di honorare le persone nostre con titoli di Cavalieri et Conti, et con tutti i privilegi aspettanti a tale dignita, et di più con donare a ciascuno una catena di [scudi] 100 [...]” Letter from Pier Vettori in Rome to Lelio Torelli in Florence, 2 May 1550, ASF, MdP 397, fol. 463, MAP Doc ID# 6318.

<sup>604</sup> “[...] Si darà ordine a ritratti che N. S.re [Julius III] desidera et si manderanno poichè le piace farci questo favore di volerli apresso di se et vederli. [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Livorno to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Rome, 26 November 1550, ASF, MdP 16, fol. 104, MAP Doc ID# 9550.

<sup>605</sup> Letter from Benedetto Buonanni in Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 17 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 17, MAP Doc ID# 3248.

magnificent gifts to furnish Julius's private sacristy.<sup>606</sup> Despite its material sumptuousness, Cosimo may have had a political and symbolic intention with this gift. Accolti, who had died in exile in Florence, had been expelled from Rome by Paul III in 1543.<sup>607</sup> Finding common cause with Cosimo I, the two men became close, often corresponding about esoteric matters of natural science.<sup>608</sup> In sending his possessions to Rome, Cosimo may well have been making a statement, avenging the wrongs of the Pauline papacy and announcing a new era in Roman-Florentine relations.

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<sup>606</sup> "Con questa sarà la confession d'un ministro del sacrista della ricevuta delle robe della Cappella di Ravenna [Benedetto degli Accolti] [...] Robbe della cappella della bo. me. del R.mo de Ravena [Ravenna] consignatie allo sacrista di S. S.tà a dì XXIII di dicembre 1550, quale consignò Benedetto palafrenieri del Amb.re dello Ill.mo di Fiorenza. In prima uno calice indorato con la coppa di argento et el piede de ramo con sua patena di argento. Item duoi paia di corporali usati. Uno [proposed reading: veletto] da calice con doi purificatori. Una borsa di damasco bianco vecchia. Uno messale novo a stampa de [proposed reading: scoto] coperto di corame turquino. Uno messale a stampa vecchio [vecchio]. Uno palio novo de damasco a fiori d'oro et [illegible] con fregio figurato della madonna et angeli in tela di oro con [illegible] di seta et oro con l'arme in mezo [mezzo] del prefato cardinal fodrato di fustano. Uno pianetta del medesimo drappo et fodero con l'arme del prefato. Stola et [proposed reading: mamperlo] del medesimo con francie oro et seta. Uno camiso di ministri con [proposed reading: fombri] del medesimo drappo con uno amisto. Uno palio vecchio bianco di damasco con sue arme. Uno panetto di rosato con una croce in mezo da [proposed reading: filo] d'oro. Una pianetta vecchia damasco bianco. Uno camiso vecchio da cappellano con suo [proposed reading: mitto]. Stolla et [proposed reading: mamiorno] di damasco vecchio. Doi cotte da cappellano vecchie. Io Benedetto Cataldi substituto di Mons.re sacrista fo fede haver ricevute le soprascritte robbe in sacristia di S. S.tà hoggi alli XXIII di dicembre per mano di m. Benedetto Guicciardi, ^staffier del S.or Amb.or di Fiorenza^ [...]" Letter from Benedetto Buonanni in Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 17 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 19, MAP Doc ID# 3250.

<sup>607</sup> For a general overview of the life of Benedetto Accolti, see Caponetto, S., "Marco Antonio Flaminio e il cardinale di Ravenna" *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, 97 (1976), pp. 71-76. When Accolti died on 21 September 1549, he left his possessions to Cosimo, see "Istruzioni di Cosimo I a Pier Francesco del Riccio in merito all'inventario dei beni del cardinale Accolti", Porto Ferraio 24 April 1550 & 24 August 1550, ASF, MdP 638, fols. 293r-295r.

<sup>608</sup> See Letter Benedetto degli Accolti in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 5 February 1549, ASF, MdP 3719, fol. 273, MAP Doc ID# 23726.

Gift exchanges continued throughout the winter of 1550-1551, forging ever closer bonds and amicability between Cosimo and the new pope.<sup>609</sup> The most important of these gifts arrived in Pisa in early January 1551.<sup>610</sup> Julius sent to Cosimo the papal cap and sword – *berrettone pontificio* (or *berrettone ducale*) and the *stocco benedetto* – the symbolic gifts of being a defender of the faith.<sup>611</sup> Since the fourteenth century, popes had gifted these objects to the kings, princes, and republics, in recognition of their loyalty to the church and service to the pope's person.<sup>612</sup> The presentation of the *stocco* (a two-handed sword, elegantly adorned with gold filigree and embossed with the papal arms, and on the blade was inscribed the pope's name<sup>613</sup>), was a highly ritualised ceremony. The sword and hat had to be blessed on Christmas Eve, and then either given directly to the recipient if in attendance or sent immediately to them. The courier too was especially chosen for the

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<sup>609</sup> Barrels of cheese were sent to Rome, a medallion bearing Julius III's portrait, not sent by the pope, or anyone from the Curia, but from a goldsmith, identified only as Jacopo (perhaps Jacopo Antonio Pallavicini), see Attwood, P., *Italian Medals c. 1530-1600 in British Public Collections* (London: British Museum Press, 2003), p.153. See Letter from Benedetto Buonanni ij Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 17 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 17, MAP Doc ID# 3248.

<sup>610</sup> "[...] Avisa la venuta di ms. Lorenzo dal Monte mandato da S. S.ta [Julius III] per honorare le Ecc. V. [Duke Cosimo I, Eleonora di Toledo] di quello stocco. [Rescript: Che è venuto et domani si farà la cerimonia] [...]" Summary of Letters dated 2 January 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 8, MAP Doc ID# 6685.

<sup>611</sup> For a general history of this gift, see Pinti, P., "Lo stocco pontificio: immagini e storia di un'arma," *Saggi di apologia del Circolo culturale armigeri del Piave*, 12 (2012), pp. 3-52.

<sup>612</sup> See Wickman Legg, F., "The Gift of the Papal Cap and Sword to Henry VII, " *Archaeological Journal*, 57, 1, (1900), pp. 183-203. Burns, C., "Papal gifts and honours' for the earlier Tudors" in Fois, M., Manachino, V. & Litva, F. (eds.), *Dalla Chiesa antica alla Chiesa moderna. Miscellanea per il Cinquantesimo della Facoltà di storia ecclesiastica della Pontificia Università Gregoriana* (Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1983), pp. 173-197; Mary I Tudor, queen of England, received a blessed sword and hat from Julius III in 1555 for having restored the primacy of Rome over the English church, see *Ibid.*, pp. 195-197. Another papal gift was the Golden Rose: see also Burns, C., *Golden Rose and Blessed Sword: Papal Gifts to Scottish Monarchs* (Glasgow: Burns, 1970).

<sup>613</sup> Pinti, "Lo stocco pontificio : immagini e storia di un'arma," pp. 19-31.

event, instructed to wait a day's journey before entering the recipient's state in order to have an entourage, then present the appropriate letters to the recipient, before permitting a sung papal mass *extra curiam* to be officiated by a preselected bishop.<sup>614</sup> As a sign of Cosimo's standing, Julius had sent his own brother, Lorenzo. Lorenzo del Monte arrived in Florence on January 1st, but finding neither the traditional escort, nor indeed, the duke himself, he travelled to Pisa.<sup>615</sup> On January 4th, in the Duomo of Pisa a solemn mass of the Holy Spirit was observed before a second sung mass. The ceremonies climaxed with Cosimo on his knees and the archbishop of Pisa (Onofrio Bartolini de' Medici) crowning him with the "berretta", (described in the chronicle as ringed with pearls and made of ermine with pendants), all the while orations were being said.<sup>616</sup> The archbishop then placed in his hand the blessed sword

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<sup>614</sup> Moroni, G., "Stocco e berrettone ducale," in *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica* LXX. (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1854), pp. 39–61.

<sup>615</sup> "add'1 primo di gennaio 1551 et fino alli 27 di dicembre 1550, vennero di Roma sei poste mandate da papa Giulio 3o a sua Eccellentia, onde non 'l trovando quello in Firenze, subito presono il cammino per la volta di Pisa et arrivati presentorno a sua Eccellentia un berrettone cerimonia della chiesa et con quella era uno stocco, come nel processo intenderete." Coppi, E., (ed.), *Cronaca fiorentina, 1537-1555*, (Firenze: Olshcki, 2000), p. 124.

<sup>616</sup> "[...] we appoint you, holy prince, as another sword of the Holy See, which has, we declare by this fine gift, a most devout son in you, and also by this hat we declare that you are a fortification and bulwark to protect the holy Roman Church against the enemies of the Faith. Therefore, may your hand remain firm against the enemies of the Holy See and of the name of Christ, and may your right hand be lifted up, intrepid warrior, as you remove them from the earth, and may your head be protected against them by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the pearly dove, in those things deemed worthy by the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen." Cited and translated from the latin in Warmington, F., "The Ceremony of the Armed Man: The Sword, the Altar, and the L'homme armé Mass," in Higgins, P. & Busnoys A. (eds.), *Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 89–130.

covered in cloth-of-gold, accompanied by yet more *orationi*.<sup>617</sup> The entire mass was accompanied by the choirs of the churches of San Giovanni (the baptistry) and Santa Maria di Fiore (the Duomo), which Lorenzo Pagni reported had pleased the people very much.<sup>618</sup>

As Pisa celebrated, Cosimo had experienced his first coronation. This was a fitting consequence of his machinations to replace an irascible foe in Paul III with a stalwart friend in Julius III. As the anonymous chronicler describes, “[t]he significance of such a ceremony, many say, was as a confirmation of his state and that he was a good son of holy church.”<sup>619</sup> The thirty-two year old Cosimo had indeed achieved something which had been denied him during the long reign of Paul III: with the gifts from Julius III, Cosimo was finally papal confirmed and legitimised. And yet, just as one new bulwark was added to support his rule, another was in flux: Cosimo’s relationship with the Habsburg Empire.

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<sup>617</sup> “Alli 4 di gennaio 1551 nel duomo di Pisa si canto` una solenne messa dello Spirito Santo et subito cantata la messa, sua Eccellenza si inginocchio a’ piedi dell’arcivescovo di Pisa et cos`i gli fu messa tal berretta, la quale era ricamata con di molte perle et foderata di ermellino et due ermellini et quelli pendenti; con di molte orationi gli fu messa tal berretta, di poi gli messe in mano detto stocco coperto di teletta d’oro con di molte orationi.” Coppi, (ed.), *Cronaca fiorentina, 1537-1555*, p. 124.

<sup>618</sup> “[...] In questo punto son tornato dal Duomo, dove con una messa pontificale cantata da Mons.re l’Arcivescovo [Onofrio Bartolini de’ Medici] s’è fatta la cerimonia della spada et del berrettone solennemente. Et la musica delle voci mandata da Vostra Signora ha rallegrato tutto questo populo [...]” Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 4 January 1551, ASE, MdP 1176, ins. 8, fol. 11, MAP Doc ID# 3149. On the musical arrangements for the mass, see Canguilhem, P., “La cappella fiorentina e il duca Cosimo primo,” in Piperno, R., Biagi-Ravenni, G., & Chegai, A. (eds.), *Cappelle musicali fra corte, stato e chiesa nell’Italia del Rinascimento* (Florence: Olschki, 2007), pp. 231-44 (pp. 239-241).

<sup>619</sup> “Et poi, ritornato a casa, ne fu fatto molta festa. Il significato di una tale cerimonia dicevano molti che era ad confermatione del suo stato et buono figliuolo di santa chiesa, altro di ciò non si intese, intendendo ne darò avviso.” Coppi, (ed.), *Cronaca fiorentina, 1537-1555*, p. 124.

## 7.2 THE CONQUEST OF SIENA

### *Imperial relations: the next generation, 1550-1554*

Charles V's betrayal of Cosimo's ambitions to annex the state of Piombino in 1548 and Don Mendoza's support of Cardinal Salviati during the conclave of 1549-1550 (albeit against Charles's own designs) had weakened Cosimo's ties to the house of Habsburg. Despite these reversals, Cosimo continued to strengthen his relationship with the Perrenot de Granvelle family. In November 1549, in a letter conveying the news of Paul III's death, he sent an emerald to be given to the bride of Nicolas de Granvelle's son, Thomas.<sup>620</sup> When another son, Frédéric, was studying at the university of Padua, Cosimo warmly wrote to him, declaring his affection for the family.<sup>621</sup> Clearly, Cosimo was investing in the next generation of Habsburg imperial administrators. It was to another of Nicolas's sons (he had five in all) to whom he would address the most lavish gifts. As the conclave got underway in Rome in December 1549, Cosimo was preparing to send to Antoine de Granvelle portraits by Bronzino of himself and Eleonora.<sup>622</sup>

These paintings were important for Antoine too who sought to place himself as his father's heir with regards his family's role in

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<sup>620</sup> Not knowing the name of the bride, Cosimo's leaves a blank space on the presentation letter for Bartolomeo Concini to write it when the gift arrived. Interestingly, in the same letter, Eleonora wanted it to be clear that the emerald came from her and not Cosimo, see Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Bernardo de' Medici in Brussels, 9 November 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 123, MAP Doc ID# 20999.

<sup>621</sup> "[...] Havendo inteso che V.S. si trova nel Studio di Padova, ho voluto che la sappia che [cancelled: sicome] l'affettione ch'io portavo al S.or padre suo [Nicolas Granvelle] era grande et che non è punto minore quella ch'io porto a Mons. d'Aras [Antoine Granvelle] [cancelled: a V.S.] et alli altri fratelli suoi [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Frédéric de Granvelle in Padua, 21 October 1550, ASF, MdP 16, fol. 63, MAP Doc ID# 9545.

<sup>622</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 21 December 1549, ASF, MdP 1175, ins. 4, fol. 43, MAP Doc ID# 523.

Habsburg diplomacy. As such, he wrote to urge their hasty dispatch.<sup>623</sup> Similar to the honour paid by the mutual commissioning of portraits between Julius III and Cosimo in the same period, Antoine's insistence to be sent the portraits as soon as possible could be interpreted as a compliment, demonstrating an enthusiasm to possess the portraits of people with whom he wished to ingratiate himself.<sup>624</sup> Eleonora again took the leading role in deciding how the portraits should depict herself, and also, when a third painting was added to the set, that of how Prince Francesco should appear.<sup>625</sup> The inclusion of Francesco's painting is significant for two reasons. These paintings, while directed to Antoine, would have been seen at the imperial court. Indeed, Antoine may even have re-gifted them in support of his own diplomatic activities. As such, the circulation expected of the portraits was high, and just as Cosimo was building relationships with the next generation of the Granvelle family, so too was it important to promote the role of his son and heir. Francesco had already undertaken a diplomatic mission on behalf of his family in September 1548 when he went to meet Philip II in Genoa. During the visit, he made his own lavish gift to the prince of Spain, again signalling the construction of bonds and friendships for the next generation of Europe's ruling families. As this meeting with Philip in Genoa had been his debut on the European political stage, Eleonora made her wishes clear for Bronzino's portrait of her son to be "in the clothes in which he was seen

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<sup>623</sup> "[...] Scrive il Vescovo di Furlì [Bernardo de' Medici] in una sua lettera a me che Mons.re d'Aras [Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle] sollecita et fa grande instantia d'havere quei ritratti, onde il Duca nostro signore [Cosimo I] m'ha comandato ch'io gli ricordi a V. S. [Riccio] et li dica facci opera che non si perda tempo a finirli et mandargli con la prima occasione. [...]" Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 18 January 1550, ASF, MdP 1170a, ins. 4, fol. 611, MAP Doc ID# 6401.

<sup>624</sup> Tracey Sowerby has recently discussed diplomatic portraiture, emphasising the portrait's power to express a physical connection between two people over a long distance, see Sowerby, T., "'A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith': Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture" *English Historical Review*, 129 537 (2014), pp. 296-331.

<sup>625</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 20 January 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 1, MAP Doc ID# 3243.

in Genoa".<sup>626</sup> The gifts of portraits to Antoine de Granvelle was therefore a far more complex transaction than as it first appears. When at least one of the paintings finally arrived at the imperial court in August 1550, the Medici ambassador, Bernardo de' Medici, commenting that it was "bello et ben fatto", before presenting it to Antoine, and sharing with the duke of Alba and Nicolas de Granvelle the cheese and wine which had accompanied the artwork.<sup>627</sup> These gifts were a timely investment. Nicholas de Granvelle died six days later on August 26th.

Increasingly, Philip of Spain became the focus of gifts from Cosimo. In early 1550, Cosimo was planning on gifting a pair of horses to Philip, commissioning from Milan fine saddles at the cost of two-hundred scudi.<sup>628</sup> Sending this gift required the logistical support of the Toledo family: Don Antonio de Toledo was Philip's stable master, while the duke of Alba offered to provide the riders to bring the horses to

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<sup>626</sup> "[...] Parlando con la Duchessa n.ra s.ra [Eleonora de Toledo] per haver il saio di velluto rosso di Don Francesco et una robba di raso del medesimo colore di S. Ecc.a per mandar'l'al [Agnolo] Bronzino, come V. S. m'ordinava con la carta sua di questa mattina, hebbi da lei questa risposta in queste o simili parole, cioè, "Come puede il Bronzino hazer el retratto di Franzischillo sin haverlo a delante?" Io replicai che non sapevo altro che quel che V. S. mi domandava per dar fine a' ritratti che con molta instantia domandava Mons.re d'Aras [Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle]. Allora S. Ecc.a soggiunse ch'io scrivessi alla S. V. facesse intender a detto Bronzino che quanto al saio di Don Francesco ne pingesse uno di tertio pelo rosso il più bello che sapebbe et potesse ma che l'accompagnasse con una robba fodrata di martore o zibellini, non li parendo che questo signore horamai s'habbi a ritrarre in solo saio, ma in una robba come fu visto a Genova. Et circa alla robba che si domandava da S. Ecc.a, mi disse il medesimo che del saio di Don Francesco, cioè, che il Bronzino ne pintasse una a suo modo di quel colore [...]" Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 20 January 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 1, MAP Doc ID# 3243.

<sup>627</sup> Letter from Bernardo de' Medici in Augsburg to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 21 August 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 5, fol. 9, MAP Doc ID# 3113.

<sup>628</sup> "[...] Vi mandiamo con questa una lettera di credito di 200 scudi. È perchè possiate pagare le selle et i fornimenti che vi si è dato ordine facciate far costì per i cavalli che mandiamo a donare al Ser.mo principe di Spagna." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Francesco Vinta in Milan, 23 March 1550, ASF, MdP 16, fol. 296, MAP Doc ID# 9583.



Germany.<sup>629</sup> It was a gift well chosen. Cosimo knew that Philip was a keen jousting, as reported to him by his diplomatic agents earlier that year.<sup>630</sup> Cosimo was also keen to meet Philip, announcing his intention to attend the Prince's departure from Genoa in 1551 with his court.<sup>631</sup> Preparations were already well underway when Cosimo wrote again to his contact in Genoa, Tommaso di Negro, replying to the information sent to him that his usual accommodation in Genoa was to be given to Prince Philip's farriers. While saying that rumours of war had also persuaded him not to make the journey, that he sent in his stead an envoy (a relatively minor diplomat, Ippolito da Correggio<sup>632</sup>), demonstrates his feelings that he had been snubbed and disregarded by

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<sup>629</sup> “[...] che Don Antonio de Toledo dice che V. Ecc.a può mandare i cavalli per il Principe [Felipe II] a quella volta, il quale manderà a lei duoi ginetti, et 4 il Duca d'Alva [Fernando Álvarez de Toledo] [Rescript: che si darà ordine di mandargli, et però scrivasi al maiordomo [Pier Francesco Riccio] che ordini siano menati qua a mostrare a S. Ecc.a [Cosimo I de' Medici][...]” Summary of letters dated 27 February 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 501, MAP Doc ID# 19601.

<sup>630</sup> Letter from Francesco Vinta in Milan to Cristiano Pagni in Florence, 27 October 1550, ASF, MdP 3102, fol. 181, MAP Doc ID# 17780.

<sup>631</sup> “[...] Abbiamo ^questa mattina^ lettere per le quale ci vien significato che il Ser.mo Principe di Spagna alli vi del presente si troverebbe in Trento et che in quattro giorni se ne anderebbe poi a Mantova et seguitando il viaggio a buone giornate sene verrebbe quanto prima a cotesta vostra città per imbarcarsi ^per fare il passaggio suo a Spagna^ [cancelled: Dove havendo noi disegna] ^et havendo^ deliberato noi di venir ^costi^ come già vi scrivemo per fare la reverentia a Sua Altezza et haven già fatti i nostri perparamenti et tenen perciò le nostre galee a ordine per venir in un subito ci è parso darvi aviso di tal nostro deliberatione di nuovo, acciò vi piaccia pigliar il carico solito di farci dare et riservare lo alloggiamento per la nostra persona et quelli che saranno necessariii per la nostra corte et a questo effetto si espedisce la presente staffetta per avvisarvene per acciò che all arrivo de nostri furrieri i loggiamenti sieno disegnati [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Tommaso di Negro in Genoa, 8 June 1551, ASF, MdP 195, fol. 12, MAP Doc ID# 7550.

<sup>632</sup> For his diplomatic instructions on this mission, see Contini & Volpini, *Istruzioni*, pp. 154-159, and his embassy to the emperor in August 1552, see *Ibid.*, pp. 184-198.

not being able to occupy his usual accommodation in Genoa.<sup>633</sup> As it appears, Philip did not send a gift in return for the fine horses and equipage sent to him, nor did he honour Cosimo with any special accommodation at the proposed meeting in Genoa (indeed, as we have seen, quite the opposite). Within this context, it is understandable that Cosimo could have felt under-appreciated by the Habsburg family. Philip's approach to dealing with Cosimo was likely directed by Charles V's letter to Philip in 1548 in which he describes his relationship with Cosimo. Charles V clearly felt that Cosimo was still hugely indebted to him for having made him duke of Florence, and while he told Philip to treat Cosimo well, it is apparent that Charles V

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<sup>633</sup> “[...] Per conto della mutatione dell'alloggiamento nostro che volevon fare i furrieri di Sua Altezza, la quale in vero quando fussino venuti ci saria dispiaciuta et per la commodità della stantia [cancelled: et per] di San Giovanni che è buona et per esser vicina al palazzo del Principe ma come havete inteso per le le nostre precedenti et dal S.or Hippolitto di Correggio, quale habiamo mandato a fare reverentia a Sua Altezza, rispetto a questi romori di guerra ci siamo resoluti non venire altrimenti [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Tommaso di Negro in Genoa, 18 June 1551, ASF, MdP 195, fol. 33, MAP Doc ID# 7547.

felt no need to reciprocate, and worse, did not fully appreciate the ambitions of the duke of Florence.<sup>634</sup>

This may well have been a significant oversight as events in 1552 would demonstrate. Over the course of 1551, Don Diego de Mendoza had been constructing the imperial citadel to control the city of Siena.<sup>635</sup> Ill throughout much of the construction, and not trusting Sienese doctors, Mendoza returned to Rome in September 1551.<sup>636</sup> Cosimo had sent him an engineer, munitions, and even doctors, to ease his predicament, with Mendoza sending in return to Cosimo an

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<sup>634</sup> “Ever since I provided him with the State, the duke of Florence has always shown himself to be very partial towards me and my affairs. And I believe he will continue that friendship with you, for he has received so many favors and doing so would be in his best interest, and because of the French claims to his territory. Additionally, he is indebted to the House of Toledo. Therefore, it would be wise to show good will in your dealings with him and assist him in all his affairs because, in addition to what I have already stated, he is a man of prudence and good judgment, and he keeps his State in order and well provided for, and it also matters because of the location of the aforementioned State” (“El duque de Florencia se me ha siempre mostrado, desde que le proveí del Estado, muy aficionado, y también a mis cosas, y creo que continuará esta amistad con vos, pues ha recibido tantas buenas obras, y que haciéndolo así será su propio bien, y por las pretensiones de franceses de su Estado; demás desto, por el deudo que tiene con la Casa de Toledo. Y así será bien que lo entretengáis en su buena voluntad y favorezcáis todas sus cosas porque, demás de lo dicho, él es de buen seso y juicio y tiene su Estado con buena orden y proveído, y en parte que importa y puede, por estar donde el dicho Estado está situado.”). Letter from Charles V in Augsburg to Prince Philip of Spain, the so-called “Augsburg Instructions”, 1548, transcribed in Fernandez Álvarez, M., (ed.), *Corpus documental de Carlos V*, vol. 2, (1539–1548) (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1975), 2., pp. 577–578. Translated and published by Hernando Sánchez, “Naples and Florence in Charles V’s Italy: Family, Court, and Government in the Toledo-Medici Alliance,” pp. 174-175, n. 123.

<sup>635</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Pisa to Bernardo de’ Medici at the imperial court, 15 January 1551, ASF, MdP 16, fol. 189, MAP Doc ID# 9566.

<sup>636</sup> Letter from Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in Siena to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 22 September 1551, ASF, MdP 1852, fol. 574, MAP Doc ID# 21465.

arquebus upon his departure.<sup>637</sup> With Mendoza gone, Habsburg rule over Siena and its territory was significantly weakened. Then, on the night of 27 July 1552, the Sienese rebelled against the imperial garrison who either fled the city or retreated to the incomplete fortress. Upon hearing the news, Cosimo dispatched a Florentine force under Otto da Montauto, who reached the city only to surrender with the remaining imperial troops on August 3rd.<sup>638</sup> Realising that Cosimo was his only hope to a quick restoration of Habsburg rule, Charles encouraged the duke of Florence to launch an attack on the French-backed Sienese by again offering temporary control over Piombino on August 12th.<sup>639</sup> There was, though, a critical flaw in Charles's plan: Cosimo no longer trusted him, and feared that Charles was planning to take both Piombino and Siena as directly-ruled Habsburg states (such as the duchy of Milan), thus hemming in any hope Florentine Tuscany had to expand. As a consequence, rather than mobilising his forces, Cosimo declared his neutrality, seeking a diplomatic solution to the Sienese rebellion.<sup>640</sup>

With Cosimo playing the peacemaker, French troops from the duchy of Castro (a Farnese fief in alliance with France, which, thanks to Julius III's attempt to appease Charles, had become the base of the dislocated Ottavio Farnese, the unthroned duke of Parma and Piacenza) arrived in Siena with the promise of more support from Henry II, while Pedro de Toledo arrived on 13 January 1553 in Livorno with the

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<sup>637</sup> On the engineer, Giovanni Battista Pelori, see Letter from Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 12 July 1551, ASF, MdP 1852, fol. 542, MAP Doc ID# 21460. On his receipt of munitions from Cosimo, see Letter from Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 4 August 1551, ASF, MdP 1852, fol. 549, MAP Doc ID# 21462.

<sup>638</sup> Letter from Bastiano Guidi da Volterra in Siena to the Florentine court (?), 3 August 1552, ASF, MdP 410, fol. 106, MAP Doc ID# 21139.

<sup>639</sup> Ninci, G., *Storia dell'isola dell'Elba* (Portoferraio: Broglia, 1815), p. 90.

<sup>640</sup> Cantagalli, R., *La guerra di Siena* (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1962), pp. 95-137.

vanguard of his Neapolitan imperial army.<sup>641</sup> The Sienese rebellion had quickly become the Sienese war.<sup>642</sup>

These exertions proved too much for the Viceroy who died in Florence in February 1553. Charles offered Cosimo the role of Imperial Captain-General, but the expenses required for the reconquest would not justify the compensation offered in the permanent annexation of little Piombino. Instead, Cosimo's brother-in-law, Garcia de Toledo, took command, leading the Neapolitan imperial army to invest Montalcino in March. The next month, a desperate Charles V offered to sell Piombino for as much as he could get.<sup>643</sup> By this point, events had overtaken diplomacy: the Turkish allies of the French had sent a fleet to Italy, Don Garcia was forced to abandon his siege and march to protect Naples, and Cosimo, along with his cousin, the young Jacopo VI d'Appiano, readied themselves to defend the Tuscan coast (namely, Piombino and Cosmopolis).<sup>644</sup> Successfully defending his fortresses from the Turkish-French fleet in the summer of 1553, any elation of victory for the imperial cause was scuppered when Bernardo da Bolea, the imperial auditor, set the price of Piombino at an impossibly high 900,000 scudi, along with the clause that Charles V was free to repossess the state at will. Medici-Imperial relations had reached a nadir when imperial reinforcements did not arrive, some of Cosimo's advisors even whispered of changing to the French-side, but then, in November 1553, Henry II dispatched his new commander of the war in Tuscany: Piero Strozzi, the leader of the Florentine republicans.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> Hernando Sánchez, "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy", p. 179.

<sup>642</sup> For a full account of the war, see Cantagalli, *La guerra di Siena* and D'Addario, A., *Il problema senese nella storia italiana della prima metà del cinquecento: (la guerra di Siena)* (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1958).

<sup>643</sup> See Role, R., "The Naval Bases of Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici: Livorno, Piombino & Cosmopolis" *Fort*, 36 (2008), pp. 119, 123.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-125.

<sup>645</sup> D'Addario, *Il problema senese nella storia italiana della prima metà del cinquecento*, p. 203.

## *The Siege of Siena, 1554-1555*

On 26 January 1554, Cosimo dispatched three columns of soldiers in the dead of night to invade Siennese territory, thus starting the Florentine-Siennese War that would drag on for five years. To take on the threat of a Strozzi leading a French-backed Siennese army, Cosimo had employed Gian Giacomo Medici, marquis of Marignano, who had long served his father and supported Cosimo's rule.<sup>646</sup> Despite this track-record of Medici partisanship (though not related, thanks to the Medici surname, a sense of kinship was often evoked between them), the gifts Marignano received from foreign powers while in Cosimo's service was the subject of some scrutiny at court. For example, in September 1554, Bartolomeo Concini reported to Cosimo that Marignano had been sent by Julius III a "beautiful litter" which Marignano claimed, oddly, augured that his brother, Giovanni Angelo de' Medici, would be elected to the throne of St. Peter's.<sup>647</sup> On 2 January 1555, Concini wrote to the duke, telling him that Don Juan de Luna – an old adversary of Cosimo's – had gifted in person to the Marquis a small silver pail ("vago secchiolino d'argento dorato") said to be worth one hundred scudi.<sup>648</sup>

More worryingly still, but admittedly, reported by Marignano himself in a letter dated 23 August 1554, Cosimo's general had been exchanging gifts with one of the leaders of the French defenders of Siena, Blaise de Monluc:

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<sup>646</sup> For a biography of Gian Giacomo Medici, see Missaglia, M., *Vita di G. G. de Medici*, (Milano: 1605).

<sup>647</sup> "[...] Venne hieri meser Spinello con una lettica bellissima, mandata dal papa [Julius III Ciochi del Monte] al Marchese [Giangiacomo Medici di Marignano] che n'ha tanta allegrezza che non capè nella pelle, augurando da questo il pontificato al Rev.mo suo fratello [Giovanni Angelo de' Medici di Marignano] [...]" Letter from Bartolomeo Concini in Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 23 September 1554, ASF, MdP 1854, fol. 205, MAP Doc ID# 8623.

<sup>648</sup> "[...] Il S.r Don Giovanni [de Luna] mandò hier mattina a [proposed reading: presentare] al Marchese [di Marignano] un vago secchiolino d'argento dorato, di valore di scudi cento o più [...]" Letter from Bartolomeo Concini in Montecchio to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 2 January 1554, ASF, MdP 1854, fol. 278, MAP Doc ID# 20467.

Monsieur di Monluc in Siena has found himself unwell, and he has sent to ask me for medicine, and other honest commodities, of which I have sent, and each day I send to him small birds, and other small things, and one of my *trombetti* [an object for letting blood], which they leave at the entrance of the city, and one sees how the people are in a bad way, with few shops open, and without wine and fresh meat.<sup>649</sup>

This may have been chivalrous behaviour between two commanders on the battlefield, but it could also be interpreted as an unnecessary fraternisation with the enemy. (Though such gifts could also be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate goodwill and civility to encourage the French to surrender.) In any case, Blaise de Monluc was grateful, sending in November a small gift (apologising for not having anything better to send), and promising in the future to find a way to demonstrate his gratitude.<sup>650</sup>

Cosimo may well have been justified about monitoring the gifts presented to Marignano during the siege. In 1548, Cosimo had been informed by his agent in Milan, Francesco Vinta, that Ferrante Gonzaga, the governor of the city, had been accused of treachery by the Spanish for having accepted a gift of a silver credenza sent by the king

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<sup>649</sup> “[...] Monsignor di Monluc in Siena si trova malato, e mi ha mandato a chiedere medicine, et altre honeste commodità, al quale le ho mandate, et ogni giorno mandandogli o beccafichi o altre simili cosette per uno dei miei trombetti, il quale lasciano entrare dentro la città, intendo qualche cosa, et referisce egli che si vede la gente di mala voglia, et poche botteghe aperte, mancavi il vino, e la carne fresca [...]” Letter from Giangiacomo Medici in Siena to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 23 August 1554, ASE, MdP 1853, fol. 552, MAP Doc ID# 20792.

<sup>650</sup> “[...] Se io havessi in questa città la commodità conforme alla volontà mia, io non visiterei V. Ecc.a con sì debil presente qual è quel che io le mando, nel quale la prego che voglia più tosto considerare l’animo mio che risguardare la cosa istessa, tenendo per certo che sì come io me le tengo grandemente obbligato per le molte cortesie et amorevoli dimostrazioni sue verso di me, così desidero haver occasione di mostrarmene grato [...]” Letter from Blaise de Moluc in Siena to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Isola d’Arbia, 10 November 1554, ASE, MdP 1853, fol. 750, MAP Doc ID# 20829.

of France.<sup>651</sup> Hired generals, *condottieri*, had a long history of betraying their paymasters, or at least pursuing their own interests first and foremost. Indeed, in the recent past, this had often been to the advantage of the Medici family: Malatesta Baglioni had betrayed the Republicans during the siege of Florence of 1529-1530; Lorenzo il Magnifico's life was saved in 1478 when the *condottiero* hired by the Pazzi refused to help assassinate a man inside a church.<sup>652</sup> This fear may have been on his mind when he sent Bartolomeo Conini to report almost daily on the progress of the siege and the activities of Marignano. Certainly, any serious doubts as to Marignano's conduct would have been set aside on 3 August 1554 when he sent to Cosimo 154 battle flags taken the day before from the defeated French and Sienese forces at the battle of Marciano (Scannagallo) as proof of the extensive victory he had won.<sup>653</sup> More importantly, on 17 April 1555, he delivered to Cosimo the city of Siena.

#### *The Annexation of Siena, 1556-1559*

From January 1556, Charles V started to divest his lands between his two heirs, Philip, his son, and Ferdinand, his brother. While the latter took Austria, Germany, and Bohemia, along with the title of Holy Roman Emperor, the former would rule as king of Spain an empire covering Iberia, the new world colonies, Burgundy, the Netherlands, and the Vicariate of Italy (which comprised most of the

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<sup>651</sup> Letter from Francesco Vinta in Milan to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 31 August 1548, ASF, MdP 3101, fol. 87, MAP Doc ID# 23311.

<sup>652</sup> On Malatesta Baglioni, see below, pp. 330-333; on Giovan Battista da Montesecco, see Falcioni, A., "Giovan Battista da Montesecco" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* - Volume 76 (2012).

<sup>653</sup> "[...] Vostra Excellentia havrà a quest'hora inteso la vittoria che per gratia d'Iddio et valor di questo exercito si è acquistata, la quale hogn'hora e tutta via truovo essere maggiore, et però m'è parso mandar da Lei Marco da Emps mio nepote con 154 insegne tra le di piedi et di cavallo acciò Vostra Excellentia le possa mostrare et far vedere a quelli che non credeno [...]" Letter from Gian Giacomo de' Medici in Marciano della Chiana to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 3 August 1554, ASF, MdP 1853, fol. 508, MAP Doc ID# 20787.



peninsula, whether imperial fiefs or crown lands, with the exception of the Papal States and the republic of Venice). As such, Philip also inherited the situation in Tuscany with regards Cosimo, Piombino, and Siena.<sup>654</sup> While Charles V was in the process of his abdication, the war in southern Tuscany continued. Piero Strozzi had escaped to Porto Ercole, the Sienese government had retired to the hilltop town of Montalcino, and the Turks had invaded Piombino and Elba.<sup>655</sup> On 17 March 1556, Cosimo dispatched Alfonso Tornabuoni, bishop of Saluzzo to treat with the emperor.<sup>656</sup> In part, the embassy's mission was to make clear that the terms of the 1553 offer (900,000 scudi with no longterm guarantee) was impossible, but it was also to inform Charles and his administration that with the defeat of the Franco-Turkish fleet and the subjugation of Siena, Charles was indebted to Cosimo to the sum of 1,500,000 scudi.<sup>657</sup> With the government of the Habsburg Empire already in transition, Tornabuoni's mission was able to find a resolution to the reconfiguration of Habsburg Italy which Cosimo's victories necessitated. In June 1556, Cosimo wrote directly to Philip II, informing him that Siena was ill-supplied and inadequately prepared for any future war (a Turkish or French invasion, for example).<sup>658</sup> Again, even with immediate threats to the security of Tuscany, no solution was to be found.

The issue facing Medici-Habsburg relations was one of money. Charles V had used Cosimo's ambition to take Piombino as a tool with

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<sup>654</sup> Charles V abdicated in stages, in 1554 his brother Ferdinand took control of the Holy Roman Empire, in October 1555, he abdicated his sovereignty over the Netherlands to Philip of Spain, then in January 1556, Spain and the American Empire. He formally abdicated from the title of Holy Roman Emperor in August 1556. See Kohler, A. (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1990), pp. 466-68, 480-82.

<sup>655</sup> Role, "The Naval Bases of Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici: Livorno, Piombino & Cosmopolis", pp. 124-125.

<sup>656</sup> Contini & Volpini, *Istruzioni*, pp. 234-237.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>658</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici at Poggio a Caiano to Philip II in Spain, 1 June 1556, ASF, MdP 325, fol. 22, MAP Doc ID# 338.

which to leverage loans from the duke in the late 1540s. Cosimo had likewise used the same tactic on Charles and Philip, offering loans to the Habsburg crown and covering the costs of the Sienese war on their behalf. The total cost of the war is difficult to estimate due to the informality of the Medici “treasury” with no single state institution or court functionary responsible for public expenditure. As such, historians have made estimates varying from 1,200,000 scudi to over 2,000,000 scudi.<sup>659</sup> These sums are not unjustified given the length of the campaign and the multiple fronts on which the war was fought. As Giuseppe Parigino has described, the threat of calling in this debt was a strong bargaining chip, allowing Cosimo to declare his neutrality (not being able to afford another war) should any new conflict arise between France and the Empire, an increasingly likely scenario with the anti-Habsburg Paul IV Carafa elected pope in 1555.<sup>660</sup>

In 1556, Cosimo was in physical possession of Siena (not to mention Piombino and Elba). Negotiations were stalling due to Philip’s intransigence, and so Cosimo sent a Castilian, his brother-in-law, Luis de Toledo, to negotiate on his behalf in February 1557.<sup>661</sup> Luis’s negotiations were a success. Philip’s state debts (not private debts) for the recovery of Siena would be written off, Philip would retain the *Stato dei Presidi* (the Tuscan coastal towns of Porto Ercole, Orbetello, Talamone, Monte Argentario and Porto Santo Stefano), but Cosimo would be formally enfeuded with Siena and her *dominio*. This solution was readily accepted by Cosimo, who wrote to Philip: “On the 19th it was assigned to me the possession of the city of Siena and its castle, conceded to me through the benignity and liberality of Your Majesty

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<sup>659</sup> Armando D’Addario estimates the cost at 1,200,000 scudi, see D’Addario, A., *Burocrazia, economia e finanza dello Stato fiorentino alla metà del Cinquecento* (Firenze: Olschki, 1963), p. 382; Anne Teicher places it at 1,600,000 scudi, see Teicher, “Politics and Finance in the Age of Cosimo I”, pp. 359-362, Eric Cochrane places it at around 2,000,000 scudi, see Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*; while Giuseppe Parigino puts it at over 2,000,000 scudi, see Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, p. 74.

<sup>660</sup> Parigino, loc. cit.

<sup>661</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Luis de Toledo in Florence, 16 February 1557, ASF, MdP 325, fol. 63, MAP Doc ID# 18505.

that neither pen nor tongue can thank you enough.”<sup>662</sup> Cosimo had conquered Siena in war, but he thanked Philip for the city as though it were a gift.

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<sup>662</sup> “[...] Alli 19 fu assegnatomi il poseso dela cita di siena con il suo castello concesomi dalla benignità et liberalità di Vostra Maestà ne basta pena [penna] o lingua arringratia [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Philip II of Spain in Spain, ASF, MdP 325, fol. 93, MAP Doc ID# 339.

### 7.3 DEI GRATIA FLORENTIAE ET SENARUM DUX

*Siena, October 1560*

On 28 October 1560, Cosimo entered the city of Siena in triumph. Described as an “entrata reale” in contemporary accounts, the event was cultural diplomacy on a grand scale, allowing Cosimo to consolidate his rule and initiate a new foreign policy that would come to dominate the 1560s: the acquisition of royal status.<sup>663</sup> The visit was also a means to build a bond with the Sienese, converting their status from subjugated citizens to loyal subjects of the Medici family. The loss of the city’s freedom had caused a profound disjuncture with the city’s long traditions of independent government and the ceremonies associated with this autonomy. Early in 1559, Cosimo’s governor of the city, Agnolo Niccolini wrote to inform him that Siena would make its triennial traditional gifts of obedience to the Abbey of Saint Anastasius (Tre Fontane) in Rome in recognition of the city’s fealty to the pope and the Holy See.<sup>664</sup> On March 2nd, Niccolini again wrote to Cosimo

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<sup>663</sup> See Davis, C. (ed.), “La reale entrata: invention, programme, inscriptions, and description for the entry of Cosimo de’ Medici into Siena, 1560: Anton Francesco Cigni: La reale entrata dell’Eccellentissimo Signor Duca et Duchessa di Fiorenza, in Siena, con la significatione delle latine inscriptions, e con alcuni sonetti, scritta per Anton Francesco Cigni Corso. In Roma per Antonio Blado Stampator Camerale [1560]” in *Sources and documents for the history of art* (2010), Fontes 48. See also Martellini, A., *La solenne entrata del lo illustrissimo, et eccellentissimo Signore il Signor Duca di Fiorenza et Siena, fatta a XXVIII. d’ottobre, MDLX, in Siena* (Firenze: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1560). For secondary literature on the visit, see Acidini, C., “Due episodi della conquista cosimiana di Siena”, *Paragone*, 29, 345 (1978), pp. 5, 17-20, 21; Testaverde Matteini, A.-M. “La decorazione festiva e l’itinerario di ‘rifondazione’ della città negli ingressi trionfali a Firenze tra XV e XVI secolo” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 34, 2 (1990), pp. 165-198: 166-173; and Pellegrino, A., “Per l’arrivo di Cosimo I a Siena (1560)” *Bulletino senese di storia patria*, 10 (1903), pp. 165-182.

<sup>664</sup> The city intended to give a chalice: “[...] Il giovedì santo in cena Domini, quando si fanno al papa et alla sede apostolica l’oblazione de’ censi, questa repubblica per l’adietro [...] era tenuta a offerire ogni tre anni alla Badia et Abati di Santo Anastasio fuori di Roma, che vulgarmente si dice delle Tre Fontane, un calice con una patena dorata, per recognitione de luoghi che sono nominati nello istrumento che si manda [...]” Letter from Agnolo Niccolini in Siena to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 19 February 1559, ASF, MdP 1869, fol. 25, MAP Doc ID#9100.

informing him that Cardinal Ranuccio Farnese had refused the gifts, saying that Paul IV had decided to end the tradition without giving further reason.<sup>665</sup> This diplomatic snub was calculated to underline that Siena, now in the possession of Cosimo, was no longer free to bestow its own diplomatic gifts.

Cosimo's triumphal entry to Siena was therefore calculated to restore the city's antique dignity. Upon his arrival, the Duke passed under a triumphal arch constructed by Bartolomeo Ammannati under the direction of Vincenzo Borghini. While rich in symbols of the recent war, the attention of the crowds was on marble statues of Augustus Caesar and Clementia, flanking the inscription: *Cosmo Medici Duci Florentiae, et senarum ob servatam Civitatem, cives patriae restitutos, et pacem Domi forisque partam. S. P. Q. S.* The message was clear: Cosimo was Siena's duke as much as Florence's.<sup>666</sup> While the bells of the city rang out, Cosimo was presented with keys to the city from a woman dressed as an allegory of Siena and accompanied by the Captain of the People.<sup>667</sup> In attendance were not only the Cosimo's own captains, generals, nobleman, and kinsmen, but ambassadors from Lucca, Ferrara, Venice, Naples, the Papal States and Spain, along with the Tuscan bishops and other notables, making the acts of fealty to Cosimo a message to be communicated throughout the diplomatic channels of

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<sup>665</sup> Letter from Agnolo Niccolini in Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 2 March 1559, ASF, MdP 1869, fol. 30, MAP Doc ID#9103.

<sup>666</sup> Davis, (ed.), "La reale entrata: invention, programme, inscriptions, and description for the entry of Cosimo de' Medici into Siena, 1560: (Cirni, *La reale entrata*, fols. 4-5), p. 10.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid., p. 10, see also Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, p. 380.

Europe.<sup>668</sup> The climax of the procession was in the Piazza del Campo, where in front of the Palazzo Pubblico, Ammannati had erected a seated statue of Cosimo being jointly crowned by Fiorenza and Siena, while at his feet, a lion (representing Florence) and a she-wolf (representing Siena) each crossed a paw together in union over a Medicean *palla rossa*.<sup>669</sup>

The propaganda of the event conveyed the principles of a new reciprocal relationship between Florence and Siena. As the procession continued to the Duomo, the archway positioned at the gate of the

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<sup>668</sup> “Gli honoratissimi Signori Chiappino Vitelli, Aurelio Fregoso, il Conte di Bagno, il Conte Clemente Pietra, Giulio de Medici, don Pedro, e Don Hernardo de Toledo, Marco Colonna, Honorio Savello, Sforza Aragona, Fabbiano del Monte, il Conte San Segundo, il Conte Ugo della Ghirardesca, Il Conte Geronimo Crivelli, Montaguto[,] Gio. Battista del Monte, Sansonetto, Pier Antonio da Vernio, Pirro de la Sassetta, Il cortese Mondragone, il Commissario Pandolfini, Francesco de Medici, Il Cole nel Simeone, Luigi Dovara, Michel da Trento, e tutti gli altri Capitani, e Gentilhuomini, che perdonar mi dovranno se io non gli nomino, che io gli tengo tutti per honorevoli, e lo faccio per brevità. Dietro poi venivano gl’Imbasciatori di Siena, di Lucca, di Ferrara, il Vescovo Tornabuoni, il Vescovo Nerli, il Secretario di Venetia, il Nuntio di Sua Santità, il generosissimo Signor Don Luigi de Toledo, il Conte d’Altamira Cavaliere d’honoratissime qualità, che corrisponde con gli effetti al nome.” Davis, (ed.), “La reale entrata: invention, programme, inscriptions, and description for the entry of Cosimo de’ Medici into Siena, 1560: (Cirni, *La reale entrata* ,fol. 6), p. 12.

<sup>669</sup> “Nella piazza dritto alle porte de Signori di Palazzo sopra una base grande dipinta con fregi vi erano cinque statue finte di marmo il Duca a sedere sopra la Toscana di sei braccia, e le altre di cinque, sostenuto parimente da un triton marino per il mar Tireno. Fiorenza da man dritta con un elmo sotto a piedi, e un braccio armato con una corona ducale in mano e nell’altra un giglio per l’arma sua. Siena da man destra havendo sotto al piede un pesce, per il suo mare, con una corona Ducale in una mano, e nell’altra il terribile [= turribulo] per la religione, Dietro nella medesima base vi era un Leone, e una Lupa con una zampa di ciascuno sopra una palla rossa per segno d’unione.” Davis, (ed.), “La reale entrata: invention, programme, inscriptions, and description for the entry of Cosimo de’ Medici into Siena, 1560: (Cirni, *La reale entrata* ,fol. 8), p. 13. For the full significance of the lion and the wolf in Cosimo’s iconographic program and as gifts, see below, Chapter 8. *Gifting the Marzocco*, pp. 325-366.

Captain of Justice conveyed Cosimo as a lawgiver.<sup>670</sup> At the Palazzo de Petrucci, a painted facade depicted Cosimo and Eleonora. While the duke offered in his hand a diamond, the duchess presented a basket of diverse fruits – bearing the inscription: *Pulcra te faciet prole parentem* – while the children of the ducal family were painted below.<sup>671</sup> The gifts of Medici rule were justice, prosperity, plenty, and a secure future. Already during this event, the benefits of Cosimo's rule were being dispensed: wine flowed freely from a statue of Noah, food was handed out at the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, and the ducal servants threw coins to the crowds.<sup>672</sup> (Niccolini had been concerned in 1559 to make sure the new coinage bearing the ducal title of COS. MED. FLOR. ET SENAR. DVX II. was already brought into circulation as soon as

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<sup>670</sup> In Cosimo's reform of the Sienese government of 1561 (N.S.), the new constitution "Reformazione del Governo della Città e Stato di Siena, fermata per Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima. Il dì primo Febbraio MDLX" was presented as a gift to the city: "[...] a ciascheduno indifferentemente venisse amministrata buona, & ugual giustizia, pensando che da questi capi & ordini principali, avesse a nascere la sicurezza, tranquillità, & contento pubblico, Imperò per le predette & altre giuste cagioni, e per mostrare più evidentemente il buon animo nostro, per dono, grazia, e concessione nostra speciale e favorevole, abbiamo come appresso ordinato e stabilito [...]" in Cantini, L. (ed.), *Leggi di Toscana riguardanti affari di Stato* (Firenze, 1778), vol. I, 1560.

<sup>671</sup> "A man dritta eran dipinti il Duca con un diamante in mano, e la duchessa che gli presenta una rama con diversi frutti con inscrizione: *Pulcra te faciet prole parentem*, alludendo al matrimonio d'essi. Sopra era dipinta la felicissima loro famiglia, il Cardinale, il Principe, Don Gratia, Don Hermando, e Don Pedro, con inscrizione: *Qui iuvenes quantas ostendent aspice vires*, alludendo al loro fortunato ascendente." Davis, (ed.), "La reale entrata: invention, programme, inscriptions, and description for the entry of Cosimo de' Medici into Siena, 1560: (Cirni, *La reale entrata*, fol. 9), p. 13

<sup>672</sup> "Dirimpetto alla Chiesa vi era una statua a giacere più grande di tutte le altre finta di marmo ch'era Noè, che con le mani mostrava spremere dell'uva gettando vino in un vaso per chi ne voleva, dinotando l'abbondantia. Nell'hospedale era da mangiar per chi v'andava [...] gli staffieri del Duca, e insino all'hora per tutta la strada sempre furono gittati danari." Ibid., (Cirni, *La reale entrata*, fol. 11), p. 15.

possible.<sup>673</sup>) The entire entrance can be read as a symbolic gift-exchange: Siena offered herself freely (not as a conquered city), and in return, Cosimo reciprocated by sharing the benefits of his rule. As Anton Francesco Cirni's ode for the occasion, dedicated to Cosimo, makes explicit:

L'Antica SIENA, ch'altamente attende  
Il Magnanimo COSMO, e giusto, e vero  
Con trionfi d'honore, archi d'impero,  
Qual Sposa in gioia, & in amor s'accende.

Il Nobil pegno del suo corpo prende,  
E di ben mille cori un cor sincero  
Unisce, e dona in fede al Sire altero,  
E si gloria, e leal Serva si rende.

[...]

E con la prole sua v'inchina, e dice  
Questa Ninfa [Siena] gentil, famoso Sire,  
V'offro, e dono per segno certo, e vero

Di dar, tosto ch'io possa, ò me felice  
come devo, all'alter vostro desire,  
Il mio lauro, il bel regno, e l'almo impero<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> See Letters from Agnolo Niccolini in to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, ASF, MdP 1869: 15 January 1559, fol. 7, MAP Doc ID# 8999; 28 January 1559, fol. 17, MAP Doc ID# 9001; and 11 February 1559, fol. 29, MAP Doc ID# 9004. See also Orzini, *Storia delle monete de' granduchi di Toscana della casa de' Medici*, p. 10: Cosimo also identified himself with a coin which bore his portrait along with the Siena's heavenly patron, the Virgin Mary (see *Ibid.*, p. 17), it is tempting to think that this was the coin distributed in 1560. In any case, at around the time of his visit, the use of the Sienese *quattrini* and *baielle* was banned, see Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Siena to Bartolomeo Concini in Rome, 4 November 1560, ASF, MdP 1687, fol. 29, MAP Doc ID# 26499.

<sup>674</sup> Davis, (ed.), "La reale entrata: invention, programme, inscriptions, and description for the entry of Cosimo de' Medici into Siena, 1560: (Cirni, *La reale entrata*, fols. 11-12), pp. 16-17.



*Rome, November-December 1560*

After a few days in Siena, Cosimo and Eleonora departed for Rome to visit the new Pope, Pius IV de' Medici, brother of Gian Giacomo, and by extension, a Medici retainer. On their journey, the court was hosted by the Farnese (an indication of how high Cosimo's status now was), and was met at the gate of Rome by the highest ranking cardinals before being conducted to the Pope.<sup>675</sup> Lodged in the Palazzo Apostolico itself, in the apartments of Innocent VIII, it was much remarked upon how Cosimo was received as though he was a king or emperor, especially when Pius IV hosted a grand levee in the Sala Regia where it was remarked that the duke of Florence received the dignitaries, and not the pope as protocol demands. Of all the groups who paid fealty to Cosimo, the Florentine community, long associated with *fuoriusciti* politics (though with the Strozzi's flight from Italy after the siege of Siena, all hope in the republican cause was finally extinguished) came "ad onorare il loro Principe."<sup>676</sup>

Cosimo's visit to Rome was not mere theatre. The occasion allowed for Cosimo and Pius IV to discuss in depth the issues confronting the Italian peninsula, namely, the reform of the Church and war against the Turks. Cosimo was at the centre of these discussions, indeed, to such an extent that he complained, "we are visited here almost everyday by His Beatitude [Pius IV] and at every hour by these Cardinals and His Lordship, the Duke of Urbino [Guidobaldo II della Rovere]."<sup>677</sup> It did not help that he was ill (in fact, it was rumoured that he had been poisoned), with Prince Francesco so concerned that he sent his physician.<sup>678</sup> Despite his poor health, the results of the discussions

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<sup>675</sup> Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, p. 381.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 382.

<sup>677</sup> "Siamo visitati quasi ogni dì da S.B.ne [Pius IV Medici] et a ogn'hora da tutti questi R.mi et dal S.r Duca d'Urbino [Guidobaldo II della Rovere] ." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Rome to Piero Gelido in Venice, 30 November 1560, ASF, MdP 639, fol. 330, MAP Doc ID# 9476.

<sup>678</sup> Letter from Francesco de' Medici in Florence to Bartolomeo Concini in Rome, 3 December 1560, ASF, MdP 1687, fol. 37, MAP Doc ID# 26504.

were a success. The Council of Trent was reopened by a Papal Bull.<sup>679</sup> Cosimo championed a new crusade led by Philip II of Spain against the Turks, and to this end, Pius sent Cosimo another blessed sword and bonnet.<sup>680</sup>

Cosimo's eventual departure from Rome was marked with regal gifts, not only from the assembled princes, but from the Pope himself:

In the time of his stay in Rome, Cosimo chose many valuable monuments from hallowed antiquity, and many were gifted from the Pope, amongst which [...] taken from Rome in 1560 was a Wild Boar and two hounds, a Diana in marble, and a stupendous pillar of grey marble.<sup>681</sup>

While these gifts followed the theme of hunting – one of Cosimo's greatest pleasures – their preciousness represents the acknowledgement

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<sup>679</sup> “Noi volevamo partir' per ritornarcene in Siena dove lasciamo pendenti tutti li negittii, ma Sua Santità che ci honora e carezza troppo ci ritiene con dir che che sì come siamo stati certo modo authore ch'ella apra il concilio universale che fu la causa della chiamata nostra qua , vuole ancora che ci troviamo al atto e alla messa solemne ^dello spirito santo^ la quale a Dio piacendo celebrerà Sua Beatitudine la domenica ^a otto^ che viene” Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Rome to Fabrizio Ferrari in Milan, 16 November 1560, ASF, MdP 214, fol. 40, MAP Doc ID# 22354. The Papal Bull was *Ad Ecclesiae Regimen*, (November, 1560), the council reassembled in January 1562 for its final sessions until the council's conclusion in December 1563.

<sup>680</sup> Letter from Iacopo Guidi in Pietrasanta to Antonio Serguidi in Florence, 3 March 1561, ASF, MdP 1212a, fol. 41, MAP Doc ID# 7488.

<sup>681</sup> “Nel tempo della sua permanenza in Roma quel Principe raccolse molto pregiabili Monumenti della bella Antichità, e molti n'ebbe in dono dal Papa, fra' quali, secondo la citata lettera dell'Odradi, che fu impressa in Roma nel 1560 un Porco con due Cani da Campagna, una Diana di Marmo, che erano considerate le più belle Statue di Roma, e una stupenda Pila di Marmo misc[h]io.” Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, pp. 385-386.

of Cosimo's high status, as well the Duke's role in his election.<sup>682</sup> As such, the gifts were passed down as heirlooms of the house of Medici: the wild boar was copied by Pietro Tacca as the *Fontana del Porcellino* in 1612, while the two Molossian hounds have stood guard in the Uffizi for centuries.<sup>683</sup> The greatest gift given to Cosimo during his visit to Rome was one that would be used as a public monument to himself and to his rule: a massive marble column from the antique Baths of Caracalla.

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<sup>682</sup> See Setton, K., *The Papacy and the Levant* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1984), vol. IV, pp. 726, 729, 735; Cosimo had allied with the family of the late Pauli IV, the Carafa to insure Pius's election (p. 738), much as he had used the Farnese to have Julius III elected.

<sup>683</sup> Mansuelli, G., *Galleria degli Uffizi: Le sculture* (Roma, Istituto poligrafico dello stato, 1958), vol. I, pp. 77-78.

## 7.4 LA COLONNA DELLA GIUSTIZIA

### *The Papal Columns*

The column gifted in the winter of 1560 is not the granite column erected in Piazza Santa Trinita in Florence named the *Colonna della Giustizia*.<sup>684</sup> That column was gifted to Prince Francesco during his stay in Rome in 1561.<sup>685</sup> This makes little difference to discussing the *Colonna della Giustizia* as a gift to Cosimo as the massive granite column was widely understood to be a gift to the Duke from the Pope.<sup>686</sup> The marble column gifted to Cosimo in 1560, is likely the column now in Piazza San Felice in Florence, which fits the contemporary description of the column as being *Marmo mischio*.<sup>687</sup> This confusion is justified, both columns, and a third column, intended for Piazza San Marco, were to be Cosimo's gifts to his city in an ambitious programme to beautify Florence with monumental spolia: an idea possibly originating from his time in Rome in 1560, (when he had toured the ruins of the city with Ammannati in attendance). Nor was this Cosimo's first column. He had already erected a column by Pierino da Vinci in Pisa's Piazza Cairoli in 1550, aping Donatello's *Dovitia* raised by the Florentine republic in 1430

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<sup>684</sup> This confusion is clearly explained in Belli, G., "Un monumento per Cosimo I de' Medici. La colonna della Giustizia a Firenze" *Annali di architettura*, 16 (2004), pp. 57-78; see also Belli G. & Melchiorri, E., "Materiali, cantieri e maestranze nell'architettura di Bartolomeo Ammannati," *Bollettino Ingegneri*, 6 (1989), pp. 17-18.

<sup>685</sup> Belli, "Un monumento per Cosimo I de' Medici. La colonna della Giustizia a Firenze", pp. 57-58.

<sup>686</sup> Domenico Mellini wrote in 1565: "Poco piu oltre, quasi che à rincontro alla Chiesa di Santa Trinita, si vedeva una delle meravigliosa Colonna della stupenda fabbrica delle Terme Antoniane di Roma, donata dal Santissimo Papa Pio VIII nostro signore, all'Eccellentissimo Signor DUCA quand'è fu là l'Anno MDLX", *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria: et dell'apparato, fatto in Firenze nella venuta, & per le felicissime nozze di S. Altezza et dell' illustrissimo & eccellentiss. S. Don Francesco de Medici, principe di Fiorenza, & di Siena*, (Firenze: Giunti, 1566), p. 47. See also Du Pérac, "[...] et non molti annj sono fu donato da Papa Pio VIII una di detti colonne al gran Duca quale fu da lui mandata in fiorenza" *I vestigi dell' antichita di Roma raccolti et ritratti in prospettiva con ogni diligentia da Stefano Dv Perac parisin*, (Rome: Lorenzo della Vaccharia, 1575).

<sup>687</sup> See above, n. 681.

in the Mercato Vecchio.<sup>688</sup> Cosimo's new project of three monumental columns would be on a quite different scale, and with a much grander message to communicate to the city of Florence and the wider world.

*From the Baths of Caracalla to the Ponte alla Carraia*

The ancient Roman Baths of Caracalla provided a quarry for just this type of massive worked stone. In the 1540s, at least six giant columns were still in place.<sup>689</sup> It also had an immediate political significance to Cosimo, having been the property of Paul III Farnese during his papacy.<sup>690</sup> As Cosimo would have known, the famed Farnese Bull and Farnese Hercules were found over the course of a single month (August) in 1545.<sup>691</sup> By being gifted this column from the former Farnese property may not have evoked a second thought in many people's minds, in the heady months after Cosimo's triumph in Siena and papal reception in Rome, it would have seemed yet another testament to Medicean victory. So much so that the Florentines estimated the strength and glory of their city as surpassing that of

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<sup>688</sup> See Ostrow, S., "Paul V, the Column of the Virgin, and the New Pax Romana", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 69, 3 (2010), p. 360. For the political symbolism of Donatello's *Dovitia*, see Wilkinson, D., "Donatello's lost *Dovizia* for the Mercato Vecchio: Wealth and Charity as Florentine Civic Virtues," *The Art Bulletin*, 65 (1983), pp. 401-423; and Blake Wilk, S., "Donatello's *Dovizia* as an Image of Florentine Political Propaganda" *Artibus et Historiae*, 14 7 (1986), pp. 9-28. Donatello's *David* was also on a column, see Cole, M., "Perpetual Exorcism in Sistine Rome" in Cole, M. & Zorach, R. (eds.), *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 61-63.

<sup>689</sup> On the spoliation of the Baths of Caracalla for columns, see Kinney, D., "Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla in Sta. Maria in Trastevere," *The Art Bulletin*, 68 3 (1986), pp. 379-397 (p. 384); and Bosman, L., *The Power of Tradition: Spolia in the Architecture of St. Peter's in the Vatican* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2004), p. 102.

<sup>690</sup> Lanciani, R., *Storia degli scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità*, (Roma: E. Loeschler & Co, 1903), vol. II, pp. 179-184.

<sup>691</sup> Marvin, M., "Freestanding Sculptures from the Baths of Caracalla" *American Journal of Archaeology*, 87 3 (1983), p. 349, n. 16.

ancient Rome, as one poem of the time extolls: “how far Florence excels that city [Rome], how superior Flora’s beauty is to Rome’s.”<sup>692</sup>

This thesis has maintained that the context of a gift’s presentation is often as important, and occasionally more so, than the actual gift itself. This is certainly the case with the papal columns, not for the context of 1560 and 1561, but for the logistics of their transportation.<sup>693</sup> In December 1561, Vasari undertook the measurements of the column, both its dimensions and its weight (around 155,000 *libbra fiorentina*). The effort to take the column from the Baths of Caracalla called upon the support of all the Florentines then present in Rome. Averardo Serristori, the ambassador, took care of expenses and employed the “foreman of work”, Nanni di Baccio Bigio, and even Prince Francesco liaised with the Roman authorities through Cardinal-Nephew Borromeo.<sup>694</sup> Cosimo may have even seen this labour as something as a test for Francesco as he reached maturity. As one would image, this cost was borne by the Ducal Treasury, with regular payments sent to Serristori of between 100 and 300 scudi throughout 1562.<sup>695</sup> These payments covered the completion of the excavation by May, by July it was well on its way to the Tiber, travelling 120m a day at the cost of thirty scudi a week.<sup>696</sup> While the column likely arrived on

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<sup>692</sup> The poem, by Ser Giovanbattista Giordani, is quoted and translated in Butters, S., *The Triumph of Vulcan: Sculptors’ Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence* (Firenze: Olschki, 1996), vol. I, p. 94.

<sup>693</sup> See Vasic Vatovec, C., *L’impegno di Cosimo I de’ Medici nel reperimento dei marmi e il ruolo dell’Ammannati*, in Rosselli del Turco, N. & Salvi, F. (eds.), *Bartolomeo Ammannati Scultore e Architetto 1511-1592, atti del convegno (Firenze-Lucca, 17-19 marzo 1994), a cura di N.* (Firenze 1995), pp. 329-341; see also Zangheri, L., *I marmi dell’Ammannati*, in *Ibid.*, pp. 321-327.

<sup>694</sup> Belli, “Un monumento per Cosimo I de’ Medici. La colonna della Giustizia a Firenze”, p. 59.

<sup>695</sup> “[...]Ad Averardo Serristori ambasciatore a Roma per conto della Colonna Antonina scudi 107, lire 5.10 [...]” Entries in the *Depositeria Generale*, 31 August 1562, ASF, MdP 609, fol. 973, MAP Doc ID# 14127; and Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Pisa to Averardo Serristori in Rome, 8 December 1562, ASF, MdP 216, fol. 155, MAP Doc ID# 1190.

<sup>696</sup> Belli, “Un monumento per Cosimo I de’ Medici. La colonna della Giustizia a Firenze”, p. 61.

the banks of the Tiber by August 1562, it was not until November that it was placed onto a barge. This delay was necessary in order to construct a massive ramp between the embankment and the boat's deck.<sup>697</sup>

At the end of December the ship was met with its flotilla, which was loaded with other cargo, namely gifts sent by the pope and other cardinals, including a bust of Christ gifted from Cardinal Giovanni Ricci to Prince Francesco and four green columns with their capitals gifted from Pius IV to Eleonora.<sup>698</sup> After much difficulty navigating the Tiber, the barges had reached Civitavecchia by February 9th to rendezvous with their galley escort.<sup>699</sup> At Livorno on March 3rd the responsibility for hauling the column to Florence was handed to Bartolomeo Ammannati, who guided it to Ponte a Signa on May 1st.<sup>700</sup> The problem remained, however, of the column's offloading from the barge to the shore. This was an issue discussed back in Rome. Serristori wrote to Cosimo with a design of Nanni di Baccio Bigio, involving two boats, one higher than the other.<sup>701</sup> Thereafter, it was transported overland from Signa (leaving around the end of July) to the Porta San Frediano of Florence (arriving September 21st) upon a giant moving platform pulled by horses and mules. The scene of its arrival in Florence, especially in the last weeks, had drawn crowds of curious and amazed Florentines. Indeed, this spectacle alone justified the ever-mounting expenses: if the Florentines wanted a sign of their city's greatness under Cosimo rivalling the monumentalism of Rome, this

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<sup>697</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>698</sup> Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 16 January 1563, ASF, MdP 3282, fol. 201.

<sup>699</sup> Belli, "Un monumento per Cosimo I de' Medici. La colonna della Giustizia a Firenze", loc. cit.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>701</sup> Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 16 January 1563, ASF, MdP 3282, fol. 201.

was it.<sup>702</sup> Somehow (it is not clear from either historical correspondence or secondary literature), the column was manoeuvred through the streets of Florence and over the Ponte alla Carraia, arriving in Piazza Santa Trinita on September 27th.

*The Cosmian Trinity: Peace, Religion, Justice*

While the work slowed on the column, it was raised upon its plinth in time for Joanna of Austria's arrival into the city in 1565.<sup>703</sup> Given these logistical achievements, it is easy to forget that Cosimo's intention with this column was that it was to be part of a series of three columns representing the consolidation of Medici power.<sup>704</sup> The three monuments would have provided Florence with a monument to Cosimo's recent victory over Siena, and the choice of Piazza Santa Trinita has long been touted as the place where Cosimo first heard of Filippo Strozzi's defeat at the battle of Marciano in 1554. As such, it fits in neatly with the idea of Cosimo's self-aggrandisement and increasingly autocratic cultural programme and self-representation. Yet, this clouds the fact that this column was not a statue of Cosimo, but a monument with a strong republican tradition. Moreover, while Cosimo was at one point tempted to place a statue of himself upon its capital, it was always intended to be Justice, as the column in Piazza San Marco would depict Religion (an interesting choice given the Savonarolan heritage of San Marco, though Cosimo was more likely thinking of his

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<sup>702</sup> "[...] Il far difficultà donde habbino a uscire li denari per condurre la colonna, non rileva cosa alcuna, perchè finalmente tutto è uno et ogni cosa s'ha da ridurre a dovere. Il modo che proponete per finire di condurla a Fiorenza ci piace [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Bartolomeo Ammannati in Ponte a Signa [?], 7 May 1563, ASF, MdP 219, fol. 108, MAP Doc ID# 362.

<sup>703</sup> See below, p. 273.

<sup>704</sup> See Richelson, P., *Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence*, pp. 131-146. See also, Heikamp, D., "Die Säulenmonumente Cosimo I," in *Boboli 90: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi per la salvaguardia e la valorizzazione del Giardino* (Florence: Edifir, 1991), 1: 3-17; Butters, S., *The Triumph of Vulcan: Sculptors' Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence*, vol. 1, pp. 80-83.



namesake's patronage of the convent of San Marco), and in Piazza San Felice, the column of Peace.

While Gianluca Belli believes their virtues were chosen because they represented the good government Cosimo wished to portray, there could be greater significance to the three columns when read within the diplomatic and political context of the time.<sup>705</sup> First, all three columns were to come from Rome as gifts from the Pope, conveying a sense that Florence was the sanctified heir of Rome. Second, the column itself was viewed as a gift to the city, as Giovanbattista Cini describes:

[...] that ancient and most grand column [...] that was this glorious Duke's concession, and although for him at no small expense, was conducted to Florence, and he magnanimously and for the public good also made it a courteous gift [to the city].<sup>706</sup>

Connected to this gesture of gifting to the city, there is one further context which underlines the concept of the three columns. This is the politics of the late 1550s, during which Cosimo had given *Peace* to Tuscany by finally defeating the old enemy of Siena, had supported Pius IV to reopen the Council of Trent to defend the *Religion* (Cosimo also founded the Knights of St. Stephen in 1561), and crucially, from 1559, began extensive reforms of *Justice*.<sup>707</sup> All of these activities were

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<sup>705</sup> "Tuttavia la Giustizia posta a coronamento della colonna allude ugualmente, anche se in modo più discreto, alla sovranità del committente; al tempo stesso costituisce il primo elemento di una trilogia allegorica che avrebbe dovuto essere completata con le figure della Religione e della Pace sulle colonne di San Felice e di San Marco, simbolizzante l'età dell'oro nuovamente instaurata grazie alle virtù del buon governo mediceo." Belli, p. 71.

<sup>706</sup> "quella antica & grandissima Colonna [...] stata a questo glorioso Duca concessa; & da lui benche con non piccolo dispendio, a Firenze condotta; a lei magnanimamente, & per publico di lei decoro fattone anche cortese dono." Vasari [Cini], *Le vite* (2nd ed. 1568), p. 900.

<sup>707</sup> "Il bene dello Stato occupò grandemente in quell'Anno [1560] il Duca Cosimo, e di ciò ne abbiamo una luminosa testimonianza nelle diverse ottime Leggi, che furono da lui emanate per proteggere la Giustizia, che è il Cardine principale sopra di cui posa la pubblica contentezza." Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, p. 363.

represented in the *apparato* for his entrance into Siena in 1560 and his activities during his stay in Rome afterwards. As such, the intended columns were a way of celebrating these victories in Florence, as the *Colonna di Giustizia* declares: IVSTITIA VICTRIX. Cosimo was thus transforming an intangible event into a tangible object, a victory into a monument, just as he was able to use gifted-objects to make tangible his diplomatic relationships.

## Epilogue

In the National Gallery of London is kept one of the most studied artworks to come from the court of Cosimo I de' Medici: Agnolo Bronzino's *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid*.<sup>708</sup> The artwork's curious composition and symbolism has attracted the attention of numerous scholars.<sup>709</sup> Part of the object's biography is that it was a diplomatic gift from Cosimo I to Francis I at some point in or around 1545. The painting's status as a gift is repeated thanks to its citation in two of the most important pieces of scholarship to approach the

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<sup>708</sup> Bronzino, *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid*, 1543, oil on wood, The National Gallery, London.

<sup>709</sup> See, for example, Conway, J., "Syphilis and Bronzino's London allegory," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49, (1986), pp. 250-255; Keach, W., "Cupid Disarmed, or Venus Wounded?: an Ovidian source for Michelangelo and Bronzino," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 41, (1978), pp. 327-331; Hope, C., "Bronzino's Allegory in the National Gallery" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45, (1982), pp. 239-243; Keith, L. & Plazzotta, C., "Bronzino's 'Allegory': new evidence of the artist's revisions," *The Burlington Magazine*, 141, (1999), pp. 89-99; Cox-Rearick, J., "Friendly rivals: Bronzino and Salviati at the Medici Court, 1543 - 1548," *Master Drawings*, 43, (2005), pp. 292-315; Levey, M., "Sacred and profane significance in two paintings by Bronzino," in Kitson, M. & Shearman, J. (eds.), *Studies in Renaissance & baroque art: presented to Anthony Blunt on his 60th Birthday*, (London: Phaidon, 1967), pp. 30-33; Moffitt, J., "A Hidden Sphinx by Agnolo Bronzino, 'ex tabula Cebetis Thebani'" *Renaissance Quarterly*, 96 (1993), pp. 277-307; Moffitt, J., "An exemplary humanist hybrid: Vasari's 'Fraude' with reference to Bronzino's 'Sphinx'" *Renaissance Quarterly*, 49, (1996), pp. 303-333; Healy, M., "Bronzino's London 'Allegory' and the art of syphilis" *The Oxford Art Journal*, 20 1, (1997), pp. 3-11; Smith, G., "Jealousy, pleasure and pain in Agnolo Bronzino's 'Allegory of Venus and Cupid'" *Bruckmanns Pantheon*, 39 (1981), pp. 250-258; Pierguidi, S., "Dalla Veritas filia Temporis di Francesco Marcolini all'Allegoria di Londra del Bronzino: il contributo di Francesco Salviati," *Artibus et Historiae*, 26 51 (2005), pp. 159-172, 166-170; Cheney, I. "Bronzino's London Allegory: Venus, Cupid, Virtue, and Time," *Source*, 6 2 (1987), pp. 12-18; Bosch, L., "Bronzino's London Allegory: Love Versus Time" *Source*, 9 2 (1990), pp. 30-35; Gaston, R., "Love's sweet poison: a new reading of Bronzino's London Allegory," *I Tatti Studies*, 4 (1991), pp. 249-288; Pierguidi, S., "Sull'iconografia della 'Fraude' dell'Allegoria di Bronzino alla National Gallery di Londra," *Bulletin de l'Association des Historiens de l'Art Italien*, 7, (2000-2001), pp. 17-21.

painting.<sup>710</sup> This veneration of the art historical canon has blinkered some scholars from wondering why Cosimo would gift his enemy (indeed, with Queen Caterina's support for the Strozzi brothers, his most dangerous enemy), such a painting. This is not to say that Cosimo would not make such a gift. As this chapter has shown, Cosimo's diplomacy and foreign policy are inherently audacious. Indeed, as Maria Ruvoldt's work has shown, around 1545 was just when the Strozzi were gifting to Francis I the two statues of Michelangelo's slaves.<sup>711</sup> It is tempting indeed to think that Cosimo may have entered into an 'art war' to outshine the Strozzi, or indeed, the duke of Ferrara, whose precedence continued to proceed his own at the Valois court. Had this been the case, Vasari would surely have mentioned something about the context of the paintings dispatch, but he does not<sup>712</sup> While such an art-object, if properly understood as a gift would provide a fascinating study, this part of the thesis has chosen to focus on tangible objects, well evidenced in the sources as having been a gift to or from the court of Cosimo. The case of the Bronzino's *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid* remains open.

Instead, this chapter has attempted to show how Cosimo used objects throughout his diplomatic activities. A consequence of this has been to re-evaluate artworks, not as a connoisseur, but as a diplomatic historian. As such, it does not matter whether or not the San Giovannino of Úbeda is or is not by Michelangelo, what matters for Cosimo's gift-giving in diplomacy is that St. John and Michelangelo are two highly emotive symbols with which to engage some of the most important men in the world. Likewise, it is not important to know whether or not the student sent by Innocenzo Cybo to Cosimo was or was not Vincenzo de' Rossi, the interesting contribution that exchange demonstrates is how Cybo appealed to the veneration of Cosimo's past (which, as a grandson of Lorenzo il Magnifico, he shared) in order to re-

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<sup>710</sup> Panofsky, E., *Studi di iconologia. I temi umanistici nell'arte del Rinascimento* (New York 1939/Torino 1975), pp. 114-128, and Cox-Rearick, J., *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator, 1995), pp. 227-234.

<sup>711</sup> Ruvoldt, "Michelangelo's *Slaves* and the Gift of Liberty", pp. 1048-1052.

<sup>712</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, IV, pp. 486-487.

ingratiate himself into Cosimo's good-graces. In the altarpiece sent to Nicolas de Granvelle, it does not matter whether Bronzino intended to depict his brother artists or the ducal family, the point is that Antoine de Granvelle valued the gift so highly – and the connection to Cosimo it represented – that he had it copied, placing himself into the scene. These diplomatic histories of artworks demonstrate the sophistication with which diplomacy was conducted, equalling any other intellectual activity in which Cosimo (or any other early modern prince) engaged.

The emerging themes from tracing Cosimo's life through gifts is to trace the great arch of his life story which reveals how he was able to realise his ambitions, and how gifts helped him to do obtain his objectives. The prologue started with recalling Cosimo's youth and establishing historical models of gift exchange, namely Duke Alessandro's public gifts, but also the imperial court and his own family. It is poignant to reflect on just how far Cosimo had suppressed some aspects of his predecessor's legacy, while at the same time trying to preserve and use his memory as part of the bulwark of tradition with which he created the Medici state around his dynasty. Demonstrating this change, when Cosimo travelled to Naples with his cousin, we recall the *fuoriusciti* graffiti mocking his low birth – VIVA ALESSANDRO DA COLLEVECCIO – twenty-five years later, when Cosimo was next in Rome, he too was lampooned with writing under the statue of Pasquino, but this time it joked: COSMVS MEDICES PONTIFEX MAXIMVS.<sup>713</sup> By 1560, Cosimo really had appeared to have become the hero-prince of his age.

This chapter has traced how gifts helped him to get to this plateau. It has demonstrated first and foremost that Eleonora de Toledo played a profoundly important role. Beyond her familial and social connections, Eleonora was involved in more gift exchanges than Cosimo (a pattern which will be discussed in the next chapter). She proved again and again an able diplomat in her own right when organising the Medici-Toledo contingent at the papal-imperial congress

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<sup>713</sup> Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici primo Gran-Duca di Toscana*, p. 383; and Cini, G., *Vita del serenissimo signor Cosimo de Medici primo granduca di Toscana* (Firenze: Giunti, 1611), p. 457.

in Lucca in 1541, and she was involved with all of the details regarding the paintings sent to the Granvelle family. Indeed, it was by focussing on these major relationships with Granvelle, with Charles V, with the Popes, that Cosimo was able to win diplomatic supporters. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the major gifts of artworks would often give way to smaller more intimate gifts in order to maintain longterm relationships. Likewise, the next chapter will also greater detail the change which this chapter has traced: that Cosimo, from being a net-giver of gifts from the 1530s and 1540s, became a net-receiver of ever more important gifts as his power power in the 1550s – the *Colonna della Giustizia* being the perfect example. Whatever archival research reveals about Bronzino's *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid* in years to come, this second part of the thesis has provided a basic framework in which to situate that future study within the life of Cosimo I as a giver and receiver of diplomatic gifts.

CHAPTER III

GIFTS AND THE DECORATION OF  
THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

## Prologue



On 16 December 1565, Joanna of Austria, the bride of Francesco de' Medici, solemnly entered the city of Florence.<sup>714</sup> Under the artistic direction of Giorgio Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini, the Habsburg princess wended her way through a series of elaborate gates erected along the route of the

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<sup>714</sup> The entry of Joanna of Austria to the Florence is recorded in two printed accounts by participants: Domenico Mellini, *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d' Austria: et dell' apparato, fatto in Firenze nella venuta, & per le felicissime nozze di S. Altezza et dell' illustrissimo & eccellentiss. S. Don Francesco de Medici, principe di Fiorenza, & di Siena*, (Firenze: Giunti, 1566), and by Giovanni Battista Cini, "Descrizione dell'apparato fatto in Firenze per le nozze di Francesco de' Medici e Giovanna d'Austria" commissioned by Giorgio Vasari to preserve a record of his work and published in Vasari, G., *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori et architettori scritte, & di nuouo ampliate da M. Giorgio Vasari, pit. et archit. aretino; co' ritratti loro, et con le nuoue vite dal 1550. insino al 1567; con tauole copiosissime de' nomi, dell'opere, e de'luoghi ou' elle sono* (Firenze: Giunti, 1568), III, 2, pp. 881-979. Mellini is more engaging of the two accounts, although Cini, writing for Vasari, is more fastidious in his attention to detail. The fullest account in modern scholarship is Starn, R., & Partridge, L., *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 149-213, see also their detailed appendix describing every feature of the *apparato*, pp. 267-305. Starn and Partridge replace much of the extant scholarship, such as: Nagler, A., *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539-1637* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 13-48; Acidini, C., "Invenzione borghiniane per gli apparati nell'età di Cosimo I," in *La nascita della Toscana. Dal Convegno di studi per il IV centenario della morte di Cosimo I de' Medici*. (Firenze: Olschki, 1980), pp. 159-167; and Scorza, R., "Vincenzo Borghini and invenzione: The Florentine *apparato* of 1565," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), pp. 57-75. The most concise treatment can be found in van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 93-103. Since Starn and Partridge's publication, the diary of Prince Ferdinando of Bavaria has come to light: Katritzky, A., "The Florentine *entrata* of Joanna of Austria and other *entrate* described in a German diary", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 59 (1996), pp. 148-173; and later elaborated in Katritzky, A., *The Art of Commedia: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte 1560-1620 with Special Reference to the Visual Record* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 59-74.



procession.<sup>715</sup> Her betrothed was not a member of the entourage, but a spectator to an event dedicated not to himself, nor to Joanna, but to his father, Cosimo I. At the Porta al Prato, the procession assembled:

[...] together with our lordship, the Duke, was the Cardinal de' Medici dressed pontifically, the most illustrious and most excellent Duke Ferdinand of Bavaria, nephew of Her Highness, the most illustrious lordship Don Pietro de' Medici, the Duke's younger son and my lord, the most illustrious and most excellent Paolo Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, the most illustrious Don Luigi de Toledo; the the most illustrious Marquis of Massa, and the most illustrious Giulio de' Medici, and many other illustrious counts and marquises from the state of Siena and Florence, and all of the courts of their most illustrious Excellencies. There were similarly [...] Reverend Abbot Bernardini Brisegno, nuntio of His Holiness, and of the Holy Apostolic chair close to our Duke. The Ambassador of the most excellent Duke of Ferrara, two ambassadors from the Republic of Lucca, and many magnificent lords from lands held by his most illustrious excellency, and the counsellors of the supreme magistracy of the city, his lordship, Alamanno Salviati and Jacopo, his son [...] all the bishops of the states, the Senate of forty-eight, Knights, His Excellencies Auditors, the college of

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<sup>715</sup> As noted above, Vasari was proud enough of this event to ask Cini to write a description, on which he said of the unnamed author, “[una] persona oziosa, e che della nostra professione non poco si diletta, ad amico stretto e caro che queste feste veder non potette”, Vasari, *Le vite*, p. 881. Vincenzo Borghini's participation is well documented in his own letters, see: Bottari, G. & Ticozzi, S., *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura scritte da' più celebri personaggi dei secoli XV, XVI, e XVII* (Milano: G. Silvestri, 1822), vol. 1, pp. 125-204; Lorenzoni, A., *Carteggio artistico inedito di D. Vinc. Borghini* (Florence, 1912); and his unpublished papers, BNCF, *Magliab.* MS. 2.10.1000. See references throughout in Starn & Partridge, op cit., but especially pp. 192-200.

Florentine notaries, and perhaps three hundred other gentlemen magnificently dressed and turned out.<sup>716</sup>

With diplomatic representatives in attendance and the nobles of Medicean Tuscany, this was a diplomatic event with both impressive international and local audiences.<sup>717</sup> United behind Cosimo were not only his own family and representatives of the bridal party, but his

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<sup>716</sup> “[...] insieme col signor Duca nostro, il Cardinal de’ Medici, vestito pontificalmente & l’illustrissimo, & Eccellentissimo Duca Ferdinando di Baviera, nipote di sua Altezza, & l’illustrissimo signor Don Pietro de’ Medici minor figliuolo del Duca, & mio signore, l’illustrissimo, & Eccellentissimo signor Paolo Giordano Orsini Duca di Bracciano, l’illustrissimo signor Don Luigi di Tolledo; & l’illustrissimo signor Marchese di Massa, & & l’illustrissimo signor Giulio de Medici, & molti altri signori illustri, Conti, e Marchesi dello stato di Siena, & di Fiorenza, et tutta le Corte di loro Eccellenze Illustrissime. Erano i similmente l’illustre, & molto Reverendo signor Abate Bernardino Brisegno Nunzio di sua Santità, & della santa sedia Apostolica appresso al Duca nostro. L’Ambasciadore dell’Eccellentissimo Duca di Ferrara, due Ambasciadori della Republica di Lucca, & i molto Magnifico signori luogotenente di sua Eccellenza Illustrissima, e’ Consiglieri, supremo Magistrato della città, e l signor Alamanno Salviati, e l signor Iacopo, suo figliuolo, come parenti di quella, tutti i Vescovi degli stati, e’l Senato de Quarantotto. Cavalieri di piu Religioni. Gl’Auditori di sua Eccelen. e’l Collegio de nottori Fiorentini, & forse trecento altri gentil’huomini, magnifiamente vestiti, & ornati,” Mellini, *Descrizione dell’ entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d’Austria*, p. 15. The description continues in great detail, including the representatives from the Habsburg territories in the Tyrol and Germany.

<sup>717</sup> In this way, Cosimo was enacting precisely the combined internal and external diplomacy described in Contini, “Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century” in Frigo, *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, pp. 59-60.

rivals, the ambassadors of Ferrara and Lucca.<sup>718</sup> Accompanied by four-thousand infantry, fifteen-hundred cavalry, and seventy knights of St. Stephen, the mock battle staged outside of the gate heralded that this procession was not so much leading a virgin to the altar, but Cosimo's celebratory triumph.<sup>719</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> The precedence crisis between the Medici and Este has already been discussed, though it should be remembered that the crisis was still such a concern that it influenced some elements in the Sala Grande, see Williams, R., "The Sala Grande in the Palazzo Vecchio and the Precedence Controversy between Florence and Ferrara" in Jacks, P. (ed.), *Vasari's Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 163-182. Indeed, the Ferraran ambassador had even tried to divert the imperial party from their itinerary while journeying to Florence, see Katritzky, *The Art of Commedia: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte 1560-1620 with Special Reference to the Visual Record*, p. 126, n. 126, citing the "Diary of Ferdinand of Bavaria" Geheimes Hausarchiv, *Korrespondenzakte* 924, fols.43r-v, 48r-49r, & 70r-v. Cosimo's relationship with Lucca is detailed in Hewlett, M., "A republic in jeopardy: Cosimo I de' Medici and the Republic of Lucca," in Eisenbichler, K., *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 9-22; and more recently, Sabbatini, R., "La diplomazia come strumento di autoconservazione: considerazioni sulla politica estera della Repubblica di Lucca" in Volpini, P., & Sabbatini, R. (eds.), *Sulla diplomazia in età moderna. Politica, economia, religione. Annali di storia militare europea III* (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2011), pp. 101-123. Incidentally, the Luccans and Ferraran ambassadors were shown personally by Cosimo the newly completed Fountain of Neptune in the Piazza della Signoria, see Cellini, B., *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, [trans. by John Addington Symonds] (New York: Garden House, 1927), p. 387.

<sup>719</sup> The battle is described by Mellini and gives some sense of the day's atmosphere: "[...] con lo scaricamento, & tiri di tanta artiglieria, che fra lo inesplicabile, & tremendo rimbombo di quella, et il suono delle molte trombe, e'l romore de' tamburi, et delle liete, et festeggianti voci, et del plauso del popolo il quale con altissime, & allegrissime grida pregando a' nostri signori, & alle nuova serenissima sposa, ogni felicità, dicevano Palle, palle, & Austria, austria [...]", *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria*, p. 17. Given the time lapse since the last Florentine victory [the Battle of Scanagallo in 1554], this aide memoir was prescient for the audience to recall that the event was about celebrating martial success, as indeed was the decoration of the Sala Grande, see van Veen, H., "Cosimo I e il suo messaggio militare nel Salone de' Cinquecento," *Prospettiva* 27 (1981), pp. 86-90. With regards the background of the triumph itself, Starn and Partridge give a strong if convoluted account of the ancient background to the Renaissance triumph, in op. cit., pp. 157-162. It should be noted that this was not Cosimo's first triumph, his own wedding celebrations were a similar event, see pp. 285-289.

Upon entering the city, the procession passed under the arch representing the city of Florence, the most elaborate of all the arches that day, which celebrated the city revitalised as a daughter of Rome restored to antique dignity, complete with emblems and effigies representing the ancient origins of the city, such as Augustus (whose Capricorn symbol had been adopted by Cosimo), the god Mars, the martian lion of the old Republic, the Marzocco, the Florentine achievements in Arms and Letters, all surmounted by the heraldic devices of Joanna and Francesco under the shadow of Cosimo's own.<sup>720</sup> In front of this ceremonial portal, embossed with GLORIA POP[ULI] FLOREN[TINI] and FIDES POP[ULI], Joanna was crowned by the archbishop of Siena and the bishop of Arezzo with the *mazzochio* – a cylindric crown – an event mirrored on the arch's depiction of Flora kneeling as two Roman emperors (Cosimo I and Maximilian II) crown her.<sup>721</sup> The procession then continued under the gate of Austria and Tuscany spanning the width of Borgo Ognissanti, with each realm personified in massive statues of a female Roman soldier (Austria) and a Roman priestess (Florence); then to the Ponte alla Carraia, where the union of Francesco and Giovanni was represented by the wedding of Peleus and Thetis; before proceeding to the Ponte della Trinita, destroyed by a flood eight years before, but hidden (ironically) with a

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<sup>720</sup> Mellini, *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria*, p. 29, Vasari [Cini], *Le vite*, 8 p. 520.

<sup>721</sup> Starn & Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 169; van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, p. 94. The archbishop of Florence, Antonio di Bindo Altoviti had been hostile to the Medici since his appointment by Paul III Farnese in 1548, although forgiven by Cosimo in 1565, he did not return to the city until 1567, there is very little scholarship on his life or his episcopate-in-exile (1548-1567), though his own ceremonial entry to the city was written about: see Fanfani, P., *Ingresso di Antonio Altoviti* (Firenze: Tipografia all'Insegna di S. Antonino, 1868). By 1569 he was reconciled enough with Cosimo to celebrate a high solemn mass in the Duomo on 12 December 1569, "[...] l'Arcivescovo Antonio Altoviti cantò in Duomo una solennissima Messa per ringraziamento dell'avere il Pontefice Pio V. dato titolo di Granduca di Toscana a Cosimo, che vi assistè con tutti i suoi figliuoli, il Nunzio, gli Ambasciatori, i Quarantotto, i Magistrati, ed i più principali Uomini della Città", Richa, G., *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine divise ne' suoi quartieri*, (Firenze: Pietro Gaetano Viviani, 1756), vol. 6, p. 252.

declaration of Medici-Habsburg maritime mastery, namely over the Tyrrhenian Sea and Atlantic Oceans respectively.<sup>722</sup>

Turning to the left, they passed by one of two specially designated Roman monuments, connecting the progress of the parade with its original theme of antique restoration as declared on the Arch of Florence. In front of them now was the column of Justice, Cosimo's diplomatic gift from Pius IV, which Mellini describes:

A little further over, almost as one meets the Church of Santa Trinita, one sees the marvellous column of stupendous construction from the Antonine Baths in Rome, donated by the most saintly Pope Pius IV our lordship, to the most excellent Lord DUKE when it was the year 1560, and it was by his commandment that with beautiful artifice that it was ordered to be erected in such a place to beautify it still more, that it was placed on this site and worked upon here in time for the arrival of the most Serene Princess being nonetheless one of the first to be officially received in this place after His Most Illustrious Excellency, where the column is placed as a perpetual ornament of the city, and an expression of the Duke's most noble idea, as a sign of his prudence, and his justice.<sup>723</sup>

As though to emphasise the point made by the presentation of the magnificent gifted column erected just in time for the celebrations of the wedding, passing under an arch celebrating the broad family tree of the house of Habsburg, there was a theatre erected at the canto de' Carnesecchi, to similarly honour the house of Medici, so that both

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<sup>722</sup> Starn & Partridge, op. cit. p. 171.

<sup>723</sup> "Poco piu oltre, quasi che à rincontro alla Chiesa di Santa Trinita, si vedeva una delle meravigliosa Colonna della stupenda fabbrica delle Terme Antoniane di Roma, donata dal Santissimo Papa Pio IIII nostro signore, all'Eccellentissimo Signor DUCA quand'è fu là l'Anno MDLX. & stata per suo comandamento con bellissimo artificio, & ordigno ritta in cotal luogo, per abbellirlo ancora piu di quello, che egli e per lo suo sito, & per le fabbriche, che quivi sono all'intorno nella venuta della Serenissima Principessa essendo nondimeno molto prima stata da Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima destinata nello stesso luogo, dove l'è posta, à perpetuo ornamento della città: & ad espressione d'un suo nobilissimo concetto, & degno della sua prudenza, & del sui giudicio." Mellini, *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria*, p. 47.

monuments were twinned, each surmounted by their living patriarchs, the father-of-the-bride, Maximilian II, and the father-of-the-bridegroom, Cosimo I. Cini described Cosimo:

[...] above the cornice and the frontispiece [apex?] one sees with beautiful majesty seated in that place the valorous and most prudent Duke Cosimo, great father of the most fortunate bridegroom [Francesco] with his motto at his feet, which says with a wolf and a lion, that are in the place of Florence and Siena, and from his care they stay together in friendship and at rest.<sup>724</sup>

Upon the next triumphal monument, an arch dedicated to Religion, Cosimo again featured, this time as a crusading knight in the habit of the order he had founded four years before.<sup>725</sup> This preceded the climax of the parade: the arch of Prudence. Surmounted by a quadriga, *Prudentia* was declared Cosimo's crowning virtue, as illustrated by twelve scenes representing his roles "as commander of troops and galleys, victor on land and sea, peacemaker and marriage broker, lawmaker and judge, model husband and father, [and] sanctified and just ruler."<sup>726</sup> From via de' Gondi, the procession entered the Piazza della Signoria, where the newly completed Fountain of Neptune proclaimed Cosimo's victories at sea (in the opinion of Vasari), and passing under the final arch representing security, placed at the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio, which was "consciously attuned to

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<sup>724</sup> "[...] sopra alla cornice, & a frontespitii, si vedeva con bella maestà a seder posta quella del valoroso & prudentissimo Duca Cosimo padre ottimo del fortunatissimo sposo con il suo motto a piedi anch'egli, che diceva PIETATE INSIGNIS ET ARMIS & con una Lupa, & un Leone, che in mezzo lo mettevano prese p[er] Fiorenza, & per Siena, che da lui rette, & accarezzato, insieme amichevolmente di riposarsi sembravano." Ibid., p. 907.

<sup>725</sup> "Il Duca COSIMO da man destra, vestito con l'habito di Cavaliere della sua Religione di S. Stefano, della quale egli è autore, fondatore, & primo Gran Maestro [...]" Mellini, *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria*, p. 82.

<sup>726</sup> Starn & Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

that of Florence at the beginning of the *apparato*[:] Security, Peace, and Concord, which it visualised.”<sup>727</sup>

The procession then entered the cortile of the Palazzo Vecchio filled with trophies and spolia, representations of the capricorn, and coloured representations of the medals he had made of his achievements, set into the lunettes.<sup>728</sup> Another showed again the Marzocco of Florence and the she-wolf of Siena pacified with the olive-branch of peace.<sup>729</sup> Here too were the cities of Austria. The procession then continued, ascending the newly constructed monumental staircase:

[...] to the Sala Grande, which is of such a scale, beauty, and richness, of splendour and magnificence that it wins over not only every other ornate and rich place in Europe, but in all the world.<sup>730</sup>

The arrival into the Sala Grande not only marked a transition from a public triumph to a closed celebration, but a change in the tone of the entertainments as one would expect for the more exclusive audience of the Medici and Habsburg courts, and the members of the diplomatic

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<sup>727</sup> van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, p. 97-98.

<sup>728</sup> Mellini, *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria*, p.119. These achievements were reflected in some of the real medals coined by Cosimo's minters, Domenico Poggini and Galeotti. Though much degraded today, one can still see the lunette of his defence of Elba and the construction of Portoferriao, as already discussed in this thesis, as has been the *Colonna della Giustizia*.

<sup>729</sup> Mellini, loc. cit.

<sup>730</sup> “[...] nella Sala Grande, la quale di grandezza, di bellezza, di ricchezza, di splendore, & di magnificenza vince non pure qualunque altro ornatissimo, & ricchissimo luogo si sia in Europe, ma in tutto'l mondo [...]”, Mellini, *Ibid.*, p. 123.

corps.<sup>731</sup> The triumph had been organised to emphasise the mutual accord between the people and their prince.<sup>732</sup> The events in the Sala Grande would communicate the same message to an elite audience.

While the entertainments would continue for some days, in particular on the Feast of St. Stephen, upon first entry into the hall following the triumphal procession, the reduced party was confronted with a platform displaying the foundations of the city, the old constitution of Florence, and the martial victories of the city.<sup>733</sup> Beyond the raised dais of the throne and niches containing the marble statues of Cosimo's ancestors, this diorama was framed:

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<sup>731</sup> The events and celebrations inside the Sala Grande of the Palazzo Vecchio are described in a separate contemporaneous accounts; Mellini, D., *Descrizione dell'apparato della comedia et intermedij d'essa recitata in Firenze il giorno di S. Stefano l'anno 1565 nella gran sala del palazzo di Sua Ecc. Illust. nelle reali nozze dell'illustriss. & eccell. s. il s. don Francesco Medici, principe di Fiorenza & di Siena, & della regina Giouanna d'Austria, sua consorte* (Firenze: Giunti, 1566); and d'Ambra, F., *La cofanaria comedia di Francesco d'Ambra, con gl'Intermedij di Giouam Batista Cini; recitata nelle noze dell'illustrissimo S. principe don Francesco de Medici, & della serenissima regina Giouanna d'Austria* (Firenze: Torrentino & Pettinari, 1566). The events are also detailed in Cini's description in Vasari, *Le Vite*, III, 2, pp. 934-978. The influence of this event on the design of the Sala Grande is detailed in Cecchi, A., & Allegri, E., *Palazzo Vecchio e i Medici. Guida storica* (Firenze: S.P.E.S, 1980), pp. 32-39, 223-285, & 368-376; and on the ceiling, see Muccini, U., *Pittura, scultura e architettura nel palazzo Vecchio di Firenze* (Firenze: Le lettere, 1997). The copious historiography on the Palazzo Vecchio, in particular the Sala Grande/Salone dei Cinquecento is copious, including work by Nicolai Rubinstein, Paola Barrocchi, Edmund Pillsbury, Cristina Acidini, and Henk van Veen, for the most recent bibliography, see Gáldy, A., *Cosimo I de' Medici as Collector: Antiquities and Archaeology in Sixteenth-century Florence* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 450-550. Of particular relevance to this thesis, Cosimo's relationship with the Sala Grande is well presented in Campbell, M., "Observations on the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Time of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, 1540-1575," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983), vol. 3, pp. 819-30.

<sup>732</sup> "[...] it is the duty of your people to express not only the contentment that they have from the prosperous and felicitous successes of Your Excellency, but also with this demonstration to declare with a most perfect and most wise deed all that which is done by them [...]" Borghini to Cosimo in Bottari & Ticozzi, *Raccolta di lettere*, doc. LVI, 1:141.

<sup>733</sup> Mellini, *Descrizione dell' entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d'Austria*, p.123.



[...] over this most grand facade, in which with gracious division (not without poetic licence) one sees paintings of the principal squares of the most noble cities of Tuscany, and farther, the most vivid and grand curtain of diverse animals being hunted [...]<sup>734</sup>

These cities featured too in the completed ceiling, flanking the triumphal tondi of the trophies and apotheosis of Cosimo, each depicting their rivers (personifications) and bounty (cornucopia), which would, had the Ammannati's designs been realised, mirrored not only in the temporary scenes of the Tuscan cities, but also the permanent fountain of Juno, Ceres, Prudence, and Arno – the embodiments of prosperity and plenty – that would have sat on an axis with the ducal throne had it been completed (and installed).<sup>735</sup> Instead, there was hung in front of this wall a giant curtain depicting a hunting scene painted by Federico Zucchari.<sup>736</sup> The climax of this triumph then unfolded, as Cini continues:

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<sup>734</sup> “[...] oltre alle grandissime facciate, in cui con gratiosi spartimenti (non senza poetica inventione) si vedevano da natural ritratte le principali piazze delle piu nobili Città di Toscana; & oltre alla vaghissima, & grandissima tela di diversi animali in diversi modi cacciati [...]” Vasari [Cini], *Le vite* (2nd ed. 1568), p. 934.

<sup>735</sup> Mellini cites the artists of the city scenes: “Et delle dieci Tele delle Piazze, che sono nella Sala, di disegno di M. Giorgio, furono condotte eccellentemente da Alessandro del Barbieri Fiorentino, siena, Pisa, & Montepulciano, & Cortona, il Borgo & Prato da maestro Giovanni Lombardi Viniziano. & Fiesole & Pistoia da maestro Bastiano Veronese, & Arezzo da Turino Piamontese [...]” *Descrizione dell’ entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d’Austria*, pp. 156-157. The definitive work on Ammannati’s interior fountain remains, Heikamp, D., “Ammannati’s Fountain for the *Sala Grande* of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence,” in *Fons Sapientiae, Renaissance Garden Fountains* (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1978), pp. 117-173.

<sup>736</sup> Mellini describes the hunt scene: “Et la tela grande alta 16 braccia et larga 22 con la quale si copriva la Scena dipinse, singendovi dentro una grandissima Caccia fatta un bellissimo Paese, Federigo Zucchri [Federico Zuccari], sa S. Agnolo in Vado: mostrando in cio la gran cognizione, che egli ha dell’Arte della Pittura, et come’ faccia bene, & di lei sia ottimo maestro.” *Descrizione dell’ entrata della sereniss. reina Giouanna d’Austria*, p. 157. Clearly, Federico Zucchari’s hunting scene was considered a masterpiece. See Fig. 16.

[the painted curtain] was supported by a great cornice, hiding behind it the prospect, in such a guise as the busts were making, that the Sala Grande was seeming of smaller proportions than they were, although there were seats, they were going about in such vagueness that day, the ornate women, in such a great number, and some of the most beautiful, and the most noble, and the richest guests, such were too the lords and knights, and the other gentlemen that were remaining from before who were seated but without doubt being lit by the most whimsical chandeliers until the aforementioned curtain fell, uncovering a light which illuminated a scene of Heaven with choirs of angels and who at that instant began to sing: of this trick, was marvellously grown a most loud sound, very majestic, and very full with one hundred instruments and voices.<sup>737</sup>

As the choirs of angels sang and the instruments rang out to the music of Francesco Corteccia and Alessandro Striggio, the same light which illuminated this scene of paradise also shone onto the ceiling: at that instant, Cosimo too ascended into heaven. Depicted in the central tondo of the arrangement as a triumphant Roman general, Cosimo was Jupiter Victor. Just as in ancient Rome when the spoils of war were deposited at the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline at the end of triumphal procession, so too did Cosimo lay out his own trophies in his own Temple of Jupiter: the Sala Grande. In doing so, Cosimo realised his intention to imitate Augustus, surrounded by his supporters on the floor of the hall, gazing up at the trophies: “four shields, sixteen standards, two *marzocchi*, four Medici *palle*, three coats of arms, twenty-one insignias of the guilds, the chains of the Order of the Golden Fleece

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<sup>737</sup> “[...] che da un gran cornicione sostenuta, nascondendo dietro a se la prospettiva in tal guisa l’una delle teste formava, che pareva che la gran sala la debita proportione havesse, tali furono, & si bene accomodati gradi, che intorno la rigravano, & tal vaghezza resero quel giorno l’ornatissime donne, che in grandissimo numero, & delle piu belle, & delle piu nobili, & delle piu ricche convitate vi furono, & tale i Signori & Cavalieri, & gl’altri gentil’huomini, che sopra essi, & per il restante della stanza accomodati erano, che senza dubbio, accese le capricciosissime lumiere al [fine] cascar della prescritta tela, scuoprendosi la luminosa Prospettiva ben parve, che il Paradiso con tutti i Cori degl’angeli si fusse in quello instante aperto: la qual credenza fu meravigliosamente accresciuta da un suovaissimo, & molto maestrevole, & molto pieno con cento d’istrumenti, et di voci [...]”, Vasari [Cini], *Le vite*, pp. 934-935.

and the Order of St. Stephen, and the ducal sceptre and crown.”<sup>738</sup> Indeed, Cosimo had re-enacted the achievement of Augustus as described by Suetonius, the writer who influenced him more than any other:

He [Augustus] restored sacred edifices which had gone to ruin through lapse of time or had been destroyed by fire, and adorned both these and the other temples with the most lavish gifts, depositing in the shrine of Jupiter Capitolinus as a single offering sixteen thousand pounds of gold, besides pearls and other precious stones to the value of fifty million sesterces.<sup>739</sup>

The entry and celebration of the wedding of Francesco and Joanna was one of the high points of Cosimo’s career and undoubtedly the most extravagant diplomatic event in Florence in the sixteenth century. Not only did it mark the elevation and future security of his dynasty, but it provided an event in which his achievements could be recognised by both his subjects and the wider world: as we have seen, his role as a giver and receiver of gifts were a key component in this programme.

This chapter expands on the role of gifts in three themes which emerge from the artistic decoration of the Sala Grande on 16 December 1565. As such, this chapter will trace from this artistic details of a diplomatic event the gift-giving patterns of diplomatic practice at the court of Cosimo I de’ Medici. These elements are: first, the importance of good governance provided under the Medici as the providers of

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<sup>738</sup> Starn & Partridge, op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>739</sup> Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars: The Life of Augustus*, (Cambridge: Loeb, 1913), 30.2. Rick Scorza discusses how Suetonius provided Cosimo not with exemplars of imperial rule, but Borghini with a scheme with which they can be presented: Scorza, R., “Imprese and medals. Invenzioni all’antica by Vincenzo Borghini,” *The Medal* 13 (1988), pp. 24-25. Cosimo also followed Augustus in building a temple to victory, *Tempio di Santo Stefano della Vittoria*, to commemorate the victory over the French and Sienese and the Battle of Scannagallo in 1554 at the battlefield. Completed in 1569, it was the product of a joint-work of two of the most important collaborators of the 1565 celebrations, Bartolomeo Ammannati and Giorgio Vasari. See Borri-Cristelli, L., “Un’architettura da restituire al Vasari: il tempio di S. Stefano della Vittoria,” in *Storia architettura*, 7 (1985), pp. 37-42; and Belli, G., “La cupola del Tempio di Santo Stefano della Vittoria a Foiano della Chiana”, in Conforti, C. (ed.), *Lo specchio del Cielo* (Milano: Electa, 1997), pp. 177-189.

bounty and plenty – as represented by Ceres and the cornucopia in the allegories of the Tuscan cities on the completed ceiling of the *Sala Grande* – and how this artistic motif is reflected in the gifting of food by Cosimo and Eleonora; the second, the taming of the *marzocco*, the symbol of the Republic, as depicted throughout the *apparato*, but also at the centre of the two lateral tondi on the ceiling of the *Sala Grande*, and how lions – living *marzocchi* – were bred and gifted by Cosimo I; and third: taking as its connection the massive hunting scene painted by Federico Zuccari to discuss how hunting played a key role in Medicean diplomacy, not only as an artistic motif (Cosimo as Hercules), or as a theatric prop (as with Zuccari's curtain), but through the gifting of hunting equipment and the hunt itself to visiting princes as a form of elite diplomacy between the courts of Europe.

## 8. GIFTS OF FOOD

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

#### *The Wedding Feast of 1539*

On 6 July 1539, as part of Francesco Cortecchia's *musica del banchetto* for Cosimo and Eleonora de Toledo, in the courtyard of the Palazzo Medici, the cities of Tuscany each presented their gifts to the newly married ducal couple.<sup>740</sup> As Cosimo and Eleonora sat with their noble guests, "the servants of the great banquet were infinite, with each one bearing many sorts of food (*vivande*)[...] enough to say that

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<sup>740</sup> The principal source for the wedding of Giambullari, P., *Apparato et feste nelle nozze dello illustrissimo signor duca di Firenze [et] della duchessa sua consorte, con le sue stanze, madriali, comedia, [et] intermedij, in quelle recitati*, (Florence: Giunta, 1539); a more precise ottavo was printed in Rome, written by an "Ma. Ge.", *La solenne et triomphante entrata della illustrissima S. duchessa di Firenze, dappoi la partita sua di Napoli, in Liorno, Pisa, Empoli, Poggio [et] Firenze*, (Rome: 1539). Manuscript accounts abound, such as *Apparato de'; feste nelle nozze del Duca de Fiorenza*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat., 12.230. The music was printed in September of that year: see Cortecchia, F., *Musiche fatte nelle nozze dello Illustrissimo Duca di Firenze, il Signor Cosimo de Medici, e della Illustrissima Consorte Sua, Mad. Leonora di Tolieto* (Venezia: Gordano, 1539). Historical studies on the wedding celebrations have been many. A translated and annotated edition of Giambullari's account was completed by Minor, A., & Mitchell, B., *A Renaissance Entertainment: Festivities for the Marriage of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, in 1539* (University of Missouri Press: Columbia, Missouri, 1968). On the role of the Palazzo Medici, see Gabero-Zorzi, "Lo spettacolo nel segno dei Medici," in Cherubini, G. & Fanelli, G. (ed.), *Il Palazzo Medici Riccardi di Firenze*, (Firenze: Giunti, 1990), pp. 200-219. Most recently, see Fenlon, I., "Theories of Decorum: Music and the Italian Renaissance Entry," in Mulryne, J., *Ceremonial Entries in Early Modern Europe: The Iconography of Power* (Ashgate: Farnham, 2015), pp. 135-149.

whatever one desired the prince provided.”<sup>741</sup> After a divine medley of muses and gods<sup>742</sup>, Apollo sang an ode to Cosimo, of “your *patria*, Fiorenza”, praising the many beauties of the provincial towns, and not least its “sweet oil and noble wine,” before announcing: “they have come today with the beautiful Flora, to honour you, Cosimo and Eleonora.”<sup>743</sup> Flora, the goddess of the city – already on ‘stage’ – then led her nymphs, allegories of the cities of Tuscany, to the space in front the ducal couple. The personification of Pisa, dressed in red velvet and adorned with the white cross of the city came forward with her attendants. Each attendant was dressed to represent a different ‘quality’ of the city: one in mountain green, “bringing a goatskin”, another of pasture green, garlanded, bringing “white ricotta in a basket”, followed by a long-haired and bearded man wielding a trident and bearing a shell “full of seafood” and a finally, a delicate nymph carrying a “palla rossa, with citrons and oranges.”<sup>744</sup> As the Pisan band arranged themselves, Apollo sang out:

Gaze at your lovely and fertile land,  
Triton, Gorgona, Teti, and Galatea,  
Which all can be heard to call,  
With many beautiful gifts each one has,  
Of the wedding spirits, with more to join in hope,  
They come to devote themselves and honour you together.  
[...]  
For to honour you with more dear gifts,

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<sup>741</sup> “I serviti del gran convito furono infiniti con molte sorti vivande per ciascun servito [...] basta che non vi fu desiderata cosa alcuna che à tanto alto Principe si convenisse.” Giambullari, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

<sup>742</sup> This element of the entertainments was composed by Giovanni Battista Gelli.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid., 47-48

That from their culture give you goods and utilities.<sup>745</sup>

Pisa was followed by Volterra, Arezzo, Cortona, and Pistoia, each with gifts to present to the ducal couple. As Giambullari<sup>746</sup> describes:

All the nymphs and those of the other countries [Tuscan cities under Florentine rule], they bring presents of the most dear things of their countries, made of sugar and natural colours, as were the plates of sugar and vases in which they were presented.<sup>747</sup>

Not all the cities gave only foodstuffs (Volterra gave fire, Arezzo gave horses, Pistoia gave silk), they did also gift cheese (Arezzo), fruit (Pistoia), and fodder (Cortona). For all the cities, Apollo, acting as narrator for this public act of the *dominio* paying homage to Cosimo and Eleonora, described their unique agricultural bounties, and in particular their rivers and other economic strengths: Volterra, for her salt; Arezzo, blessed by Ceres with the rivers which cultivate “i dolci colli” of Chianti; Cortona, for her fertile plains, rich fodder and fine

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<sup>745</sup> Vagheggia il suo leggiadro & fertil sito  
Triton, Gorgona, Teti, & Galatea  
Le quli hor tutte il chiaro grido udito  
Co i piu bei don', che ciascheduna havea,  
Delle Noze alme, con piu salda speme,  
Vengon' divote ad honorarti insieme.  
[...]  
Per honorarti co piu cari doni,  
Ch'a suoi cultor' ne porge utili & buoni. Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>746</sup> Pier Francesco Giambullari was a historian and close associate of the Medici family, see Vitali, F., *Pier Francesco Giambullari e la prima storia d'europa dell'età moderna. Radici politico-religiose di un'idea*, Ph.D. Thesis, Università "La Sapienza" di Roma, 2011.

<sup>747</sup> “Tutte queste Nynfe, & quelle dell'altre compagnie, portavano presenti delle piu care cose de loro paesi, fatte di zuccheri et colorite al naturale: et di zucchero anche erano i piatti, i bacini, et gli altri vasi ne i quali venivano i presenti.” Ibid., p. 51.

grain; and Pistoia, for her fertile plain on the banks of the river Ombrone, and her milk and chestnuts.<sup>748</sup>

These gifts of foods were symbolic acts of homage to Cosimo, duke of Florence. In the year following the battle of Montemurlo and the Medicean victory over the Republican exiles, the ceremony sent a clear message that Cosimo was the undisputed master of his harmonious and prosperous realm. As discussed earlier in this thesis, Cosimo's receiving of gifts from the cities under Florentine rule was a continuation of his predecessor's festivities for the feast of the city's patron, St. John the Baptist, at the *festa degli omaggi*. Moreover, the lavish feast for Florence's nobility was in itself a re-gifting of the produce of the realm to the city's elite: in so doing, Cosimo placed himself at the fulcrum of this flow of benefits from countryside to the capital. While the traditional festival of homage of the *dominio* to Florence was ancient – the *feste degli omaggi* on the morning of the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24) – Cosimo did not revitalise this civic event until 1545, and again in 1563.<sup>749</sup> This establishes the ceremony of fealty at the wedding feast as even more important. Indeed, the decision to enact this ceremony, as we will see, was very much connected to Cosimo's need to convey the stability of his rule to an imperial audience (indeed, Giambullari's rich account is written in the form of a missive to the Medici ambassador at the imperial court). After the civil war(s) of

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<sup>748</sup> Apollo's panegyrics of the Tuscan *dominio* is heavy with agrarian references, such as Volterra: "Quell'altre due [fiumi], il zolso, è l Sal'ne danno.", p. 53; Arezzo, A Cerere la Dea, ch' apre il ben seno, a chi piu l'ama, piu di frutti pieno [...] Quell'altra [fiume] fa del chianti coltivare, I dolci colli [...]" pp. 54-55; Cortona: Ha cura all'alte chiane, à i fertil' piani; [...] Per poi di biade colmi & di bei Grani, p. 57; Pistoia: Ombron' è, che la bagna il fetil piano [...] Et la pasce di Latte, et di Castagne. L'altra, la valle tiene che da Natura, Ricca è di Seta, et d'Animali, et piante", p. 59.

<sup>749</sup> van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 42-43, 149. For a general overview of Florentine civic ceremonies, see Trexler, R., *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). On the reinvigoration of the Feast of St. John the Baptist, see Plaisance, M., "The Cultural Policy of Cosimo I and the Annual Festivities in Florence from 1541 to 1550" in Plaisance, M., ( trans. by Carew-Reid, N.), *Florence in the Time of the Medici: Public Celebrations, Politics, and Literature in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2008), pp. 101-140.



Florence and the *dominio*, Cosimo's political manifesto was to bring peace and accord, as Apollo sings even to Pistoia, an infamously divided city: "Le sue discordie, et la Civil' ruina: Pur' hoggi, posto il freno all'empie parti."<sup>750</sup>

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Given the diplomatic significance of both the Medici-Toledo alliance, it is unsurprising that elements of the events of summer 1539 were translated into later artistic programmes.<sup>751</sup> As both Kurt Forster and Claudia Rousseau have noted, the wedding celebrations of Cosimo and Eleonora are reflected in the decoration of the Sala Grande in the Palazzo Vecchio.<sup>752</sup> While their argument strongly connects the earlier part of the entertainment, the Pageant of the Muses, with the pictorial scheme, neither emphasise the connection of the allegories of the cities and their acts of homage with the painted allegories in the ceiling of the Sala Grande. Nor do they make any connections between the acts of homage and the temporary cityscapes painted for the arrival of the wedding party at the end of Cosimo's triumph in 1565. Importantly, this ceremony of fealty enacted by the representations of the Tuscan cities to Florence, as seen in the wedding celebrations of 1537, was also

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<sup>750</sup> Giambullari, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>751</sup> Indeed, given the replication of the *feste degli omaggi* for the wedding feast, Cosimo's intention could well have been to host his wedding on the feast of St. John the Baptist, explicitly connecting his wedding with the traditional ceremony which bonded Florence with her subject cities. This did not happen as the bridal party's journey was delayed due to stormy seas at Gaeta. Furthermore, the connection between Medici weddings and the Feast of St. John the Baptist was already established in the fifteenth century, "Quando Lorenzo il Magnifico sposò Clarice Orsini far molti suoni tirarono alle finestre l'olivo aptato in un vaso a modo degli edifici fatti nelle feste di S. Giovanni Battista. Parea uno trionfo" Codice Nazionale Fiorentina, II, IV, 325, fol. 208.

<sup>752</sup> Forster, K., "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Instituts in Florenz* 15 (1971), pp. 65-104; and Rousseau, C., "The Pageant of the Muses at the Medici Wedding of 1539 and the Decoration of the Salone del Cinquecento," in Wisch, B., & Scott, S. (eds.), *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque* (University Park: Department of Art History, Pennsylvania State University, 1990), vol. 2, pp. 416-457.

replicated with the symbols of their gifts (cornucopia) and prosperity (rivers). Discreetly detailed in each of the sixteen panels on the ceiling of the Sala Grande, almost every city has a cornucopia, and where the city has a river, a vase flowing with water. The allegories of the cities of Tuscany – much increased in number by 1564-5 when the ceiling was executed – are permanent depictions of homage to Cosimo. All three events – the wedding feast of 1539, the ceiling panels in the early 1560s, and the temporary cityscapes of 1565 – celebrate the gifting of food as a loyal bond between Cosimo and the constituent parts of his realm. As an artistic motif of the *feste degli omaggi*, the allegories of the cities of Tuscany were placed permanently in an act of homage on the ceiling of the Sala Grande, not only as a testament to their loyalty to Cosimo, but evidence for us of the highly symbolic power of the gifting of good this chapter discusses.

### *Approaching the Gifting of Food*

For Natalie Zamon Davis, the gift of food from the hand of the prince, especially at a banquet, was the embodiment of princely virtues of magnificence and munificence.<sup>753</sup> From the gifting of food, one may extrapolate one of the most mundane but essential elements in the development of a court society: the ability of the prince to sustain his servants and courtiers, who in turn sustain him.<sup>754</sup> Food was certainly a builder of common trust – the breaking of bread together as ancient symbol of hospitality and accord – but in the Renaissance it was much

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<sup>753</sup> Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, p. 27.

<sup>754</sup> This relationship between a prince and his court is well discussed in Guerzoni, G., “La corte gonzaghesca in età moderna. Struttura, ordini e funzioni,” in Balbi de Caro, S. (ed.), *I Gonzaga. Monete, arte, storia*, (Milano: Electa, 1995), pp. 90-96. The type of food given and when it could be given, reflected the internal hierarchy of the court: see Aurell, M., “Le roi mangeur et les élites à table”, in Aurell, M., Dumoulin, O., & Thelamon, F. (eds.), *La Sociabilité à table: commensalité et convivialité à travers les âges* (Rouen: Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 1992), pp. 118-29; and Hollingsworth, M., *The Cardinal’s Hat: Money, Ambition and Housekeeping in a Renaissance Court* (London: Profile, 2005), pp. 57-58.

more a signifier of social class, with each strata pursuing its own diet.<sup>755</sup> Saying this, within a social group, as Sarah Bercusson and Felicity Heal have found, food was a useful gift to sustain social relations without the recourse to more expensive and extravagant presents.<sup>756</sup> This is not to say that foodstuffs were not often luxurious, but the early modern elite placed ever more importance on the quality of their diet as a way to improve their health.<sup>757</sup> Thus, we must be careful not to assume a gifted vegetable was a mere trifle. Conversely, in an age racked by a fear of poison, gifted food could be as dangerous as it was delicious.<sup>758</sup>

All these studies bring important points for consideration, yet few (with the notable exception of Bercusson) have considered the logistics of how foodstuffs could be given and survive their journey. In an age in which wonderment was as impressive as extravagant expenditure, the arrival of a delicate fruit at a distant court often deserved as much praise for its sender as a golden ornament. Nor do these studies fully grasp, beyond the remits of medicinal use, the gourmand culture of Italian courts in the sixteenth century. Nobles shared an interest in food, and the gifting of food and wine demonstrates an emerging connoisseurship (as will be discussed

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<sup>755</sup> Grieco, A., "Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy" in Flandrin, J.-L., & Montanari, M. (eds.), *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 302-12.

<sup>756</sup> Heal, F., "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England," *Past and Present*, 199 1 (2008), pp. 41-70; and Bercusson, S., *Gift-giving, consumption and the female court in sixteenth-century Italy*, pp. 199-231.

<sup>757</sup> There are a number of studies on food in the Renaissance, and its curative uses, see in particular, Albala, K., *Food in Early Modern Europe* (London: Greenwood Press, 2003); and by the same author, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). These studies draw on sixteenth century texts, such as: Sachetto, H., *Galeno della natura et virtù di cibi, in Italiano. Tradotto dal Greco per H. Sachetto*, (Venice: Giovanni Barileto, 1562); and Pisanelli, B., *Trattato della natura de' cibi et del bere* (Rome: Bartholomeo Bonfadino, 1583).

<sup>758</sup> See for example, Collard, F., "Le banquet fatal: la table et le poison dans l'occident medieval", in Aurell, M., Dumoulin, O., and Thelamon, F. (eds.), *La sociabilité à table: commensalité et convivialité à travers les âges*, (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1992), pp. 335-42.

below), as will Cosimo's own standing a *buongustaio*, but more importantly, the particular significance of food during his reign for all his subjects.

## 8.2 FOOD AND FEALTY

### *Famine and Disorder in Tuscany*

The dominant theme of agriculture and plenty in the allegories of the cities of Florence in both the Sala Grande and especially with the spectacle enacted at the lavish banquet on 6 July 1539 contrasts with the economic reality of Tuscany. While Cosimo offered his guests a feast of infinite variety, the country was in famine:

There went the duke and all the court who were conducted to Florence with great pomp, and they celebrated the marriage with great magnificence, although there was the greatest of famines caused by storms.<sup>759</sup>

Indeed, as Segni notes, the cause of this famine was not only inclement weather, but Cosimo himself, as he continues, “and much more, from the past year the duke gave the trade of grain, of which he took 50,000 florins, emptying the granaries of the *dominio*.”<sup>760</sup> Cosimo had indeed seen the trade and taxation of foodstuffs as a vital source of income. Indeed, while one would expect Cosimo’s early political decisions to have been bringing Alessandro’s assassins to justice, in fact, his first public ordinance after the announcement of his election was a tax on the sale of salt.<sup>761</sup> Galluzzi too mentions that the import of foodstuffs was an important source of profit for Cosimo, as well as necessary

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<sup>759</sup> “Quivi le andò incontro il duca e tutta la corte, e con gran pompa fu condotta a Firenze, e si celebrorno le nozze con gran magnificenza, benché fusse allora una grandissima carestia cagionata dal temporale”, Segni, *Istorie fiorentine*, IX, p. 372.

<sup>760</sup> “[...]”e molto più dall’aver l’anno innanzi il duca dato la tratta de’ grani, de’ quali cavò fiorini cinquantamila, e seccò tutti i granai del dominio.” Ibid., p. 373

<sup>761</sup> “Provvisione del Gennaio 1536 ad Incar. colla quale si ordina un’Imposizione di Sale” in Cantini, *Legislazioni*, pp. 122-125. Salt has long been used to raise money by forcing people to purchase salt at a set price.

given the poor state of Tuscany's farms, dependency on food imports, and declining agrarian population.<sup>762</sup>

Indeed, Tuscany had not recovered since the destabilisation of Italy in 1496 – despite occasional short-term recoveries – and the province of Florence had suffered particularly during the imperial army's siege of the city in 1529-1530.<sup>763</sup> Cosimo's intervention in the trade was essential: with diplomatic overtures for a Toledo marriage guaranteeing the safe passage of grain merchants as a logical move in order to maintain the trade of grain, oil, and wine to this state and city.<sup>764</sup> Cosimo's selling of the grain harvest of 1538 can be understood within this trade. Yet, with the unexpected dearth of 1539, this strategy had been undermined. The saving of Florence, Segni writes was a miracle:

This year Our Lady of Impruneta was brought to Florence so that her grace would repair the great penury of the city, which was finding itself without grain of value or quality and very dangerously reduced the city, such that there was a resolution in Florence to close the gate and abandon the rest of the *dominio* and leave it prey, because one could not find public grain for more than fifteen days. But God, miraculously, saved the city

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<sup>762</sup> “[A] great object of profit for him [Cosimo I] was the trade of grain, wine, and oil that was going continually from the Levant and from Sicily in order to distribute them to his people and other parts of Italy: the deplorable state of Tuscan agriculture, the depopulation of the countryside, and the horrible famines that troubled him and obliged him to take on this business/Oggetto grande del suo profitto era la mercatura del grano, vino, e olio che traeva continuamente dal Levante e dalla Sicilia per distribuirli ai suoi popoli e altre parti d'Italia; il deplorabile stato dell'agricoltura Toscana, la spopolazione delle campagne, e le orribili carestie che l' affliggevano l'obbligarono a intraprendere questo commercio.” Galluzzi, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>763</sup> Galluzzi writes: “Le vicende della Repubblica dal 1494 al 1530 furono fatali per l'agricoltura e il Duca Alessandro nel suo breve governo non poté vedere i frutti della ristabilita tranquillità.” Ibid., I, p. 104.

<sup>764</sup> Galluzzi writes: “Il Duca Cosimo gli mantenne in questo proposito [that commerce was economically more important than agricultural production] se non che l'orribile carestia del 1539 gli suggerì il mezzo d'intraprendere una estesa mercatura di vettovaglie per soccorrere i sudditi e profittare per se stesso.” Ibid., I, p. 104.

and dominio by sending to Livorno, outside of any hope, ten grain ships [...].<sup>765</sup>

Far from divine intervention, the letters of the *Mediceo del Principato* archival collection show that Cosimo took an active part in arranging this shipment:

More I have not to say to you, save that to press on you that for the expedition of grain, it is imperative that you soon get letters [of permission] from His Majesty [Charles V], or there is not hope to deal with the Viceroy of Sicily.<sup>766</sup>

Cosimo certainly made improvements to Tuscany's agriculture over the course of his reign, but the effects of the reforms were only felt long after his wedding in 1539.<sup>767</sup> The celebrations accompanying his nuptials, as we have seen, were a display of fertility and contentment, which is in sharp contrast to Galluzzi's description of Tuscany under the early principate:

[...] the fertile countryside of the Pisans is without inhabitants and covered by stagnant water; in the Pistoian's territory they have broken into factions and the workers are distracted by the spirit of partisanship and seditiously abandon agriculture the

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<sup>765</sup> "Fu condotta questo anno in Firenze la Nostra Donna dell' Impruneta acciocché per sua grazia si riparasse a tanta penuria della città, nella quale non si trovava grano di alcun pregio; e fu di tal qualità, ed in tanto pericolo si ridusse la cosa, che si fece risoluzione in Firenze di serrare le porte, ed abbandonare il resto del dominio, e di lasciarlo in preda, perché non si trovava nel publico grano per più che per quindici giorni. Ma Dio, certo miracolosamente, soccorse la città ed il dominio, essendo a tempo comparse a Livorno, e fuor d'ogni speranza, dieci navi di grano a un tratto, che di levante erano state diseguate da' mercanti per Genova e per Toscana." Segni, loc. cit.

<sup>766</sup> "Altro non vi è che dire, salvo che riscaldarvi per la expeditione di grani, importando assai la prestezza et senza le lettere di Sua M.tà [Karl V von Habsburg] non ci è speranza di haver tratta dal Viceré di Sicilia [Ferrante I Gonzaga di Guastalla]" Minute of letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini at the Imperial Court in Madrid (?), 15 August 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fol. 261, MAP Doc ID #16890.

<sup>767</sup> "[By 1550] In tali circostanze avendo Cosimo provvisto con varie leggi che egli secondo le massime del secolo crede utili a far rinascere l'abbondanza delle vettovaglie della Città [...]" Galluzzi, *Istoria*, p. 104.

fertile province of the Val di Chiana is covered again in forests so that the Pope, the Florentine, and the Sienese have always a buffer-state between their countries.<sup>768</sup>

Indeed, while Cosimo may have arranged for the grain ships, in the midst of the famine, he was channeling food supplies to support his programme of fortification: “without more delay start the walls in that place and it may be conceded and permitted for their work to take one hundred sacks of grain from Pisa.”<sup>769</sup> This seeming contradiction is only further accentuated by the wedding celebrations. Cosimo’s presentation of a loyal and prosperous territory may have played well to an imperial audience, it may also have been a form of propaganda, quieting any murmurs of disquiet from the Florentine nobility, but without doubt, it was an image of Tuscany disconnected from reality.

Cosimo had made a mistake in selling the grain the year before, he pursued his policy of fortification even as his subjects starved, and yet, he still wanted to present the benefits of his rule as an age of stability and plenty. In his letter to his ambassador in Spain a week after the wedding, we read of Cosimo’s impassioned plea for support:

You know already that the grain harvest that occurs at the ends of the next year is against all reasonable doubt and outside all representation, because I know well that it would not be the most nor would it be less than mediocre: and with so few of the old stock located in the *dominio* and the city, that unsurprisingly a famine has occurred in this state, not less than all of the other places close to here which are ordinarily abundant [...] [there has been] some great disorder and dangerous tumult in the city and in the *dominio* which does a disservice to His Majesty [...]I

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<sup>768</sup> “le fertili campagne del Pisano erano senza abitatori e dominate dalle acque stagnanti; nel territorio Pistoiese incrudelivano le fazioni e i lavoratori distratti dalla spirito di partito e di sedizione abbandonavano l’agricoltura; la fertile provincia della Valdichiana era ricoperta dalle legume che il Papa, i Fiorentini e i Senesi aveano sempre reputato come una barriera dei loro Stati.” Galluzzi, op. cit., I, p. 104.

<sup>769</sup> “non altrimenti si cominciera la muraglia in quel loco et che el sia concesso et permesso loro per conto di tale opera trarre del ed dato di Pisa sacca 100 di grano” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to “Capitano di Fivizzano” in Fivizzano, 28 July 1539, ASF, MdP 183, fol. 268, MAP Doc ID #7411.



ask] the usual benevolence and clemency from His Majesty to be shown towards us.<sup>770</sup>

Cosimo feared that this famine would undermine his rule. Therefore, the extended celebration of Tuscany as loyal and fertile was a clever piece of propaganda from the teenage prince, not just an exaggerated attempt to hide his mistake, but an attempt to pacify a hungry populace from becoming a baying mob by presenting them with Cosimo's manifesto for Tuscany as a land of milk and honey.

Immediately following the famine of 1539, Cosimo began implementing stringent laws on the sale and export of foodstuffs, writing to his *primo segretario*, Pier Francesco Riccio in 1540, Cosimo ordered that no foodstuffs should be moved out of his dominion as per his new laws.<sup>771</sup> In later food shortages, Cosimo went to great lengths to

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<sup>770</sup> “Voi senta prima che la cultura del grano che ci sopravvenir’ nella fine dello anno prossimo passato contra ogni dubito di ragione e fuori di ogni ripresentazione: perche so bene lo ricolmi non erano stare abundantissimi erano non di meno stare poi che mediocre: e con qualche poco che prima dal vecchio si trovava nel dominio e nella città non doveva ragionevolmente sopravvenir’ in questo stato alchuna carestia: non di manco essendo universalmente per tutti à luoghi con vicini e in quelli che ne sogliano esser ordinariamente abundantissimi [...] qualche grande disordine con pericolo tumulto nella città e nel dominio e non piccolo diservitio a Sua Maestà [...] la solita benignità e clementia di Sua Maestà universo di noi et da anco di [illegible] molto maggior gratia di questa: e la prudentia vostra che benissimo conoscere la importantia della cosa fa che io non mi retenderò in piu parole circa questa parta de grani [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Giovanni Bandini at the Imperial Court in Madrid (?), 15 July 1539, ASF, MdP 2, fols. 218-219.

<sup>771</sup> “Per che voi ci scrivete che in quel di Cortona si trafuga del grano per condurlo fuor del Dominio nostro ordererete si facci lettere in nome nostro al Capitano di Cortona [Bettino Ricasoli] et altri Capitani rettori et uffitali de luoghi convicini a confini d'esso nostro stato et dominio perchè faccino fare pubblica grida et vietino a qualunque persona di qual grado, o condition si voglia sarà trovato cavare fuor del dominio nostro senza nostra espressa licentia grani, o altre sorte di biade sotto pena che oltra il perdere la mercantia et bestie s'intendino subito cascar in bando delle forche senza guardar huom in viso non osservando detti bandi. Et fatte tali lettere ce le manderete acciò le fermiamo et s'espeditichino più presto che si può.” Letter from Cosimo I de Medici in Florence (Cafaggiolo) to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 9 July 1540, ASF, MdP 638, fol. 15, MAP Doc ID #15250.

alleviate the suffering of his people, as Galluzzi describes, gifting bread to the poor in the winter of 1550-1551:

In 1550 and 1551, Italy was afflicted with a most cruel famine, the Duke, finding himself well provisioned of grain was able to supply his subjects and administer it at high price to the Sienese and the Papal States. In the city of Firenze, for five months continuously to distribute at the toll of the bell each day the bread to the poor of the city, that in the end 9,000 a day came to partake of this beneficence.<sup>772</sup>

Indeed, this large-scale charitable endeavour is further evidenced in a letter from Pier Francesco Riccio to Cosimo in March 1551, saying that 6000 people had taken alms the days before.<sup>773</sup>

The need to cover-up this early mistake in his rule is reflected in the legacy that Cosimo's heirs promoted of the late duke. In Aldo Manuzio's biography, the famines are erased from history:

With great prudence maintained the unity of his people, for in the past they were greatly divided. The city of Florence, with was not having any rest from war and civil contention, for thirty-seven years while he was prince, it enjoyed tranquil

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<sup>772</sup> "Nel 1550 e 1551, essendo afflitta l'Italia da una crudelissima carestia il Duca trovandosi ben provvisto di grano poté alimentare i suoi sudditi e somministrarne a caro presso ai Senesi e alle Città dello Stato Ecclesiastico. Nella Città di Firenze per cinque continui mesi fece distribuire a suono di campana ogni giorno il pane ai poveri della Città che fino in novemila per giorno concorrevano a partecipare di questa beneficenza", Galluzzi, *Istoria*, p. 104.

<sup>773</sup> "[...] li poveri hiermattina alla limosina furno 6000 o meglio con bell'ordine, et con oratione a dio per chi fa loro tal limosina, cioè per il Duca Signore nostro [Cosimo I de' Medici] e per sua casa Illustrissima [...]" Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa, 20 March 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 718, MAP Doc ID #19611.

peace, without dearth, without great famines, without great tumult.<sup>774</sup>

This statement is even more remarkable when we consider that under Cosimo, Tuscany suffered famines in 1539, 1548, 1550, 1557, 1562, 1563, and serious food shortages in 1549, 1551, 1552, 1554.<sup>775</sup> As we have seen, Cosimo's triumphal celebrations for his son's wedding in 1565 emphasise above all other virtues *Prudentia*. That prudence became the prime virtue of Cosimo's rule is indicative of how this early experience affected Cosimo's entire outlook. Importantly, this experience affected how Cosimo presented Tuscany's prosperity (and by extent, quality of the agricultural produce) to others, and how he related with those under his rule by gifting food and receiving it in return.

### *Gifts of Fealty*

Given this context of famine, the gifting of food in sixteenth-century Tuscany takes on greater significance. Cosimo's attempt to improve the prosperity of his realm through agricultural reform – to realise the prospectus he set out at the wedding feast of 1539 – was no mere charade. By 1565, in the run-up to Francesco and Joanna's wedding, the court received numerous consumable gifts from Tuscany's governors, provincial nobility, and the communes themselves. Andrea del Stufa, Podestà of Terranuova, sent on behalf of his commune:

Having received the representatives of this province, they have publicly ordered a small recognition and sign of affection for the marriage of Your Most Illustrious Excellency [Francesco I],

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<sup>774</sup> "Con gran prudenza mantenne uniti i suoi populi, per lo passato fra lor grandemente divisi. La Città di Firenze, la quale non avea mai riposato dalle guerre, e contenzioni civili, trentasette anni continovi, che egli ne ebbe il Principato, si gode una tranquilla pace, senza mortalità, senza grandi carestie, senza tumulti." Manuzio, A., *Vita di Cosimo I de' Medici: granducca di Toscana* (Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1823), p. 277.

<sup>775</sup> Fabbroni, G., *Dei provvedimenti annonari* (Firenze: Guglielmo Piatti, 1817).

and having asked me in their name, I would like to send this package as a humble servant for what their ambassadors send to you: one hundred and sixty bottles of trebbiano wine, two measures of wheat, and thirty capons.<sup>776</sup>

Similar gifts were sent from Figline.<sup>777</sup> The Prior of Pescia, Agnolo Oradini, sent some Trebbiano wine, saying in his own words, “because Trebbiano is traditionally well-received at a wedding, of it I make gift to Your Excellency of some with a three-year vintage, praying humbly that you deign to enjoy it for my love [for you].”<sup>778</sup> Indeed, it was not only cities in the countryside which took advantage of the wedding of 1565 to send gifts, so too did the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella, sending some capers from the convent’s garden, as true mendicants, saying that they did not have anything else to offer because of their poverty.<sup>779</sup>

The ducal wedding of 1565, like that of 1539, provided an opportune moment to make a sign of one’s fealty to the house of Medici. It was also, for the newly recruited Captain Marcantonio Vittorini, an opportunity to express his fealty to Francesco with sixty pounds of truffles, no doubt keen to maintain his position as the head of security for Francesco’s new fortress of Terre del Sole in the

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<sup>776</sup> “Havendo li representanti questa podesteria pubblicamente ordinato un poco di recognitione et amorevolezza per queste nozze di Vostra Eccellenza Illustrissima [Francesco I] et havendomi pregato che in nome loro volessi pigliar questo carico io come humil servitore di quella per il presente loro imbasciatore le mando fiaschi 160 di trebbiano, 2 moggia d'orzo et 30 par di capponi [...]” Letter from Andrea del Stufa in Terranuova to Francesco I de’ Medici in Florence, 10 December 1565, ASF, MdP 518, fol. 716, MAP Doc ID# 22204.

<sup>777</sup> Letter from Podestà of Figline to Francesco I de’ Medici in Florence, December 1565, ASF, MdP 518, fol. 782.

<sup>778</sup> “Et perché il tribiano suole alle nozze esser grato, ne fo dono a Vostra Eccellenza Illustrissima di una soma quale debbe havere tre anni pregandola humilmente che si degni goderlo per mio amore.” Letter from Agnolo Oradini in Pescia to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 21 December 1565, ASF, MdP 518, fol. 793, MAP Doc ID# 22261.

<sup>779</sup> Letter from Agnolo Malatesta in Florence to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 5 December 1565, ASF, MdP 518, fol. 666, MAP Doc ID #22261.

Romagna.<sup>780</sup> In this way, state celebrations for the Medici were occasioned by a great number of gifts, especially from those of lower social status who otherwise would not gift to the Duke or the ducal family. Albeit of lower social status, the senders of gifts are still part of the ducal administration, such as Captain Vittorini, but also like Captain Alessandro Conversini of Pistoia, who gifted both food and a war trophy:

[...] together with twenty salami I have had from Lombardy, I send to Your Most Illustrious Excellency a German glass, brought from the war in Germany and for which it said to me belonged to the Duke of Württemberg.<sup>781</sup>

Indeed, the social status of “capitano” was the furthest position a low-born man might ascend, and as such represents a level of gift-giving, often much simpler than other officials, artists, intellectuals, and professionals seeking Medici favour and patronage. Indeed, Captain Giovanni Oradini da Pescia, stationed in Borgo Santo Sepolcro, gifted two hundred onions to Cosimo I in October 1553. Though he wanted to share the bounty of the harvest with his prince, his lowly gesture was likely never acknowledged: sending the gift via his fellow Pescians, Cristiano and Lorenzo Pagni, the latter wrote to the former, “to me he [Giovanni Oradini da Pescia] has sent two hundred onions for His Excellency: one hundred for you and the rest for me.”<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Letter from Marcantonio Vittorini in Castrocaro Terme to Francesco I de’ Medici in Florence, 10 December 1565, ASE, MdP 518, fol. 715, MAP Doc ID #22203

<sup>781</sup> “Insieme con venti salami ch’io ho hauti di Lombardia, mando a Vostra Eccellenza Illustrissima un bicchieri todesco ch’io portai dalla guerra della Allemagna che per quel che al’hor mi fu detto, era del Signor Duca di Virtimbergh.” Letter from Contarini had had a long and diverse military career, which he may well have chosen to represent in his gifts for Francesco, see Fioravanti, J., *Memorie Istoriche della città di Pistoja* (Lucca: Filippo Maria Benedini, 1758), p. 404.

<sup>782</sup> “[...] mi ha inviato 200 cipolle per S. Ecc.a, cento per voi et altre tante per me [...]” Letter from Lorenzo Pagni to Cristiano Pagni, 20 October 1553, ASE, MdP 417, fol. 301, MAP Doc ID #3292.

Those of a higher stature could represent both themselves and their territory, as was the case with Paolo Maffei of Volterra. From an ancient noble family of that city, Paolo had been one of three ambassadors sent to Duke Alessandro in September 1536 to confirm the city's privileges.<sup>783</sup> Interestingly, it seems that this same group, still resident in Florence during Alessandro's murder and thus known to Cosimo upon his succession, organised the poor relief in Volterra during the famine of 1539.<sup>784</sup> Paolo also chose food as the gift with which to develop a relationship with Cosimo. In 1538, Cosimo wrote to Paolo thanking him for:

The thirty-six pheasants you have had the necessity and solemnity of recollecting the memorial day of the solemn festival of Saints Cosmo and Damien which were received most gratefully [...]<sup>785</sup>

Gifting pheasants on the Duke's name-day became something of a tradition, as Paolo wrote to Pier Francesco Riccio in 1546:

[...] in this his festivity of Saint Cosmo, I address my present to Your Lordship [Pier Francesco Riccio], of which I will deign that you will give to His Excellency with my letters which I send enclosed, that with this more, he enjoys my affection as shown with these four pairs of partridges.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>783</sup> Gamurrini, E., *Istoria genealogica delle famiglie nobili toscane, et umbre* (Firenze: Francesco Onofri, 1668), p. 226. For the full history of the Maffei family (up to 1668) see in particular, pp. 243-271.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>785</sup> "Li 36 fagiani in questa necessita e solemnita del reolendo e memoriale giorno della nostra solemne festa di san Cosmo e Damiano ricevuti ci sono stati molto grati [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Paolo Maffei in Volterra, 30 September 1538, ASF, MdP 182, fol. 112, MAP Doc ID #839.

<sup>786</sup> "[...] in questa sua festività di San Cosimo, et indirizzare il mio presente a V.S., la quale si degnerà per sue lettere darne avviso a S. Ecc.a con mandarli la mia incluse, che contiene altro, et godersi per mio amore 4 paia di starne [...]" Letter from Paolo Maffei in Volterra to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 24 September 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 4, fol. 7, MAP Doc ID #20373.

For someone of Maffei's status, the sending of gifts such as these was not simply an act of fealty, but the construction of a reciprocal relationship between a provincial nobleman and the prince in the capital. In 1539, Paolo asked Cosimo to intercede to support his candidate for the organist in Volterra.<sup>787</sup> In 1545, Cosimo paid a great honour to Paolo, staying at his house [likely the Palazzo Maffei in Volterra] during which time his secretaries reported he much enjoyed a game of *pallacorda*.<sup>788</sup> It would seem, then, that gifts of food played an important role in developing fealty into familiarity, allowing Maffei to maintain a privileged position in Volterranean society by receiving the Duke into his home. Moreover, the gifting of game was chosen to communicate the shared gentlemanly interest of the prince and his noble subject for the shoot.<sup>789</sup>

The sharing of food from the countryside to the court was an important demonstration of loyalty, but also, an attempt to build good relations with the sovereign lord of the duchy. The forming of this bond was not one directional: the ducal family (though rarely, if ever, Cosimo), would send food to personages, religious houses, and for the poor. For example, in 1545, Eleonora presented a gift of eels to the nuns of the Monastery delle Murate.<sup>790</sup> So important was it for Eleonora that the nuns think that they were sharing in the produce of the ducal household – thus connoting a far stronger bond – that she instructed the secretary to lie by saying the eels were from Poggio a Caiano, a

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<sup>787</sup> Letter from Paolo Maffei in Volterra to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 23 April 1539, ASF, MdP 1169, ins. 4, fol. 118, MAP Doc ID #2344.

<sup>788</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Volterra to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, ASF, MdP 1170a, ins. 1, fol. 79, MAP Doc ID#5572.

<sup>789</sup> The theme of hunting and gifts is developed in Chapter 9.

<sup>790</sup> Eleonora thought very highly of the Benedictine order at Le Murate, sponsoring the creation of a sister house, the Santissima Concezione, only realised after her death, see Lowe, K., *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 219-220. Eleonora relationship with Le Murate is also mentioned in Niccolini, G., & Weddle, S. (eds.), *The Chronicle of Le Murate* (Toronto: Iter Inc.; Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011).

Medici country villa, and not from Lake Trasimeno on the Umbria-Tuscan border:

I send this porter to Your Lordship with a basket full of eels, which was given to me by my ladyship the Duchess so that you can send them to the nuns of le Murate, saying that they were fished from here [Poggio a Caiano] and they enjoy them as a token of her affection, but I send them to Your Lordship because you must send them straight away because they have come from the lake of Perugia [Trasimeno].<sup>791</sup>

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<sup>791</sup> “Mando per questo aportatore a V. S. uno paniere pieno d'anguille, el quale m'à dato mia S.ra la duchessa [Eleonora de Toledo] che io le mandi alle monache delle Murate, diciendo loro che è del peschado che si piglia qua et che le se le godino per suo amore. Però le mando a V. S. perché quella le mandi loro subito, perché le sono venute da' lago di Perugia [Trasimeno] [...]” Letter from Vincenzo Ferrini in Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 3 November 1545, ASF, MdP 1170a, ins. 1, fol. 77, MAP Doc ID# 648.



### 8.3 FOOD AND FAMILIAR DIPLOMACY

#### *Feeding the Family*

The gifting of food between family members is a particularly intimate form of communication and exchange. For example, when out hunting in September 1539, Cosimo sent his mother fruit.<sup>792</sup> The Christmas list of Eleonora de Toledo to members of the Medici ducal family and their household in 1546, similarly demonstrates this use of high quality or luxury foods, including amongst many confectionaries, “a box of fruits and animals of sugar.”<sup>793</sup> Riccio also gave gifts of truffles and oysters to the family.<sup>794</sup> Yet, the most regular family and household gifting of food was with members of Eleonora’s family in Naples and to the imperial court. In April 1545, Eleonora’s father, Pedro de Toledo sent to Cosimo olives and “Greek” wine.<sup>795</sup> Later that year, Cosimo sent in reply to Pedro’s gift, eight cases of Tuscan *trebbiano* wine and two barrels of *marzolino* cheese.<sup>796</sup> These frequent exchanges always occurred with other members of the Álvarez de Toledo family, such as Juan de Toledo, cardinal of Burgos, and Francisco de Toledo, but much more often with Pedro, whose *camerlingo* wrote in February 1550 thanking Riccio for the continued rich exchange of edible gifts between

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<sup>792</sup> Letter from Maria Salviati in Florence to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Arezzo, 9 September 1539, ASF, MdP 5926, fol. 57, MAP Doc ID #21740.

<sup>793</sup> Letter from Vincenzo Ferrini in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 25 December 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 7, fol. 37, MAP Doc ID #2468.

<sup>794</sup> Letter from Girolamo Marinozzi in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 24 March 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 6, fol. 299, MAP Doc ID #7167.

<sup>795</sup> One assumes, *vino greco*, the wine made from the *vitigno greco*, of which the *greco di Tufo*, *di Napoli*, and *del Vesuvio* are most well-known. Letter from Bastiano Campana in Livorno to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 13 April 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 7, fol. 306, MAP Doc ID #7171.

<sup>796</sup> Letter from Lope de Mardones in Napoli to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 17 September 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 5, fol. 247, MAP Doc ID# 6867.

the two families.<sup>797</sup> Importantly, the next generation of the Medici-Toledo family maintained this intimate form of exchange

*A mon cousin*

Interestingly, this same familiarity within the ducal clan is extended to diplomatic relations with other dukes, princes, popes, kings, and emperors. In an age where poisoning was a very real threat (one need only bear in mind the mysterious fate of Cosimo's son and heir, Francesco and his second wife, Bianca Capello in 1587, or the death of his daughter, Isabella de' Medici<sup>798</sup>) the ability to gift good within the elites of the Habsburg and Papal hierarchies was an important element in Medici court diplomacy.

At the summit of European society was the emperor Charles V, and it had been Charles who had granted Cosimo his title. The relationship between the two men was of vital importance to both the standing of the Medici family and the security of Tuscany. (They had met in person when Cosimo had welcomed Charles in Genova in 1541 and accompanied him to the congress of Lucca.<sup>799</sup>) The most powerful man in the world, Charles V had vast influence over Cosimo (having rejected his intention to marry Vittoria Farnese) and over Tuscany (garrisoning the region's fortresses, but also as imperial overlord for all the territories adjoining Cosimo's *dominio*). Communication directly between monarchs was rare, instead intermediaries would manage the chain of communication. As such, while also dependent on intermediaries, one of the more direct lines of communication was gift exchange. In the case of Cosimo and Eleonora with Charles, this seems

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<sup>797</sup> Letter from Lope de Mardones in Napoli to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 17 September 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 5, fol. 247, MAP Doc ID# 6867.

<sup>798</sup> For the most recent take on the murder at the Medici court, see Mori, E., "Isabella de' Medici: Unraveling the Legend" in Benadusi, G., & Brown, J. (eds.), *Medici Women: The Making of a Dynasty in Grand Ducal Tuscany* (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2015), pp. 91-129.

<sup>799</sup> See pp. 192-198 in this thesis.

to have been an annual gift of plums to the Emperor.<sup>800</sup> For example, in September 1551, Bartolomeo Concini wrote:

The plums were brought here very well and were well packed in the box in which they were presented, seeming that they have come from the garden this very hour. His Majesty said they were very dear, and to me it was revealed that My Ladyship the Duchess could not have been more courteous than the way they were most gratefully received.<sup>801</sup>

Something as simple as a basket of plums may appear a rather lowly present for the ruler of most of the known world, and yet they had been well-received. Perhaps more importantly, as Charles V had no shortage of plums in his realm; Eleonora's gift was symbolic. At one level, it was an act of homage, sharing the fruits of the harvest. On another, it was demonstration of the lengths Eleonora, and by extension, her husband, would go to please the emperor in even the smallest matter. Of course, sending plums over one thousand miles and for them to arrive in such good condition was in itself a point of wonderment and pleasure for the receiver – to taste the fruit of Tuscany while in southern Germany. Indeed, given the misfortune of famines, and with 1550-1551 looking likely to repeat the deprivations of the great famine of 1539, a small token of prosperity could dissuade the imperial court of concerning itself with the internal stability of Tuscany. Most of all, as with Maria Salviati (Cosimo's mother), or with Pedro de Toledo (Eleonora's father), the gifting of fruits was a familial gesture replicating with Charles V the same gifting patterns as used with their own parents.

After the death of the hostile pope, Paul III, his successor, Julius III, offered Cosimo an opportunity to rebuild their relations with the

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<sup>800</sup> Letter from Bernardo de' Medici in Augsburg to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 26 September 1550, ASF, MdP 1179, ins. 1, fol. 33, MAP Doc ID# 5927.

<sup>801</sup> "Le susine si condussero tanto bene et si ben furno composte nella scatola che nel presentarle pareva che venissino pur all'hora dal giardino. S. M.tà [Karl V] l'hebbe molto chare, et mi fece intender che mia S.ra la Duc.sa [Eleonora de Toledo] non poteva usar le cortesia che le fusse più grata [...]" Letter from Bartolomeo Concini in Augsburg to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 5 August 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 11, fol. 24, MAP Doc ID# 7990.

Apostolic See. These food gifts often followed the ecclesiastical calendar, namely Lent and times when meat was prohibited. As such, Cosimo intended to gift lampreys, the favoured Lenten fish amongst the European early modern and medieval elite due to its meaty texture<sup>802</sup>, to Julius III in 1550 which the Duke himself had fished for.<sup>803</sup> This gift cycle had been initiated by Eleonora's uncle, Juan de Toledo, cardinal of Burgos, who had praised the lampreys that Cosimo caught to the new pope, who said he was keen to try them.<sup>804</sup> Both Cosimo and Eleonora sent a lamprey, caught from the river Serchio, in 1551, with further lampreys being sent to the Pope during Lent.<sup>805</sup> Fish were not the only food stuff sent, wine and cheese was dispatched regularly, the barrels of wine from the Val d'Arno and Casentino were sent to Julius III in 1550, packed in cloth embroidered with the Medici coat-of-arms.<sup>806</sup> Clearly, the ducal couple were proud of what they sent to Rome, and were keen that their gift was recognised as distinct, and that the curial court received a message connoting Medici rule with

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<sup>802</sup> Most famously, Henry I of England was said to have died after eating lampreys, Green, J., *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>803</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pietrasanta to Vincenzo de' Nobili in Rome, 8 March 1550, ASF, MdP 12, fol. 445, MAP Doc ID# 21037. The lampreys were sent later that month: Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cristiano Pagni in Florence, 1 April 1550, ASF, MdP 397, fol. 15, MAP Doc ID# 6303.

<sup>804</sup> "Il cardinale [Juan Álvarez] Burgos disse hoggi a Sua Santità le buone lamprede c'ha Vostra Eccellenza nel suo dominio. Però mi ha detto ch'io li faccia intendere ch'ella ne vuol la parte sua quando sarà il tempo e che le si mandino in certi bariglionini pieni d'acqua come suol farsi." Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 22 February 1550, ASF, MdP 3467, fol. 5, MAP Doc ID# 24001. Importantly, this letter also gives us information as to how fish could be transported great distances and still remain edible.

<sup>805</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Prato, 28 February 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 9, fol. 18, MAP Doc ID# 7945; and Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cristiano Pagni in Pisa, 24 March 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 782, MAP Doc ID# 6965.

<sup>806</sup> Letter from Tommaso de' Medici in Livorno to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 14 April 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 4, fol. 7, MAP Doc ID# 3095.

prosperity. In 1554, she sent in her own name a gift of lampreys to Pope Julius III, who enjoyed the gift very much, as it was reported to Cosimo:

I presented in the name of Her Ladyship, the Duchess, the lampreys to His Holiness which were more gratefully received and appreciated very much by His Excellency, who blesses the water of the mill [from whence they came] and that much more did they please him to be of first to come [this year]; and moreover, that they come as present from the most lovely lady in the world.<sup>807</sup>

Eleonora also took a familial approach, perhaps as one would expect, with Italy's leading sovereign houses in order to lay the foundations for the future marriages of her children. Eleonora's status encouraged gifts of asparagus from Ferrante I Gonzaga, imperial governor of Milan, in 1549.<sup>808</sup> But such gifts were not always well received, a gift of fish from Ferrante later that year was met with Cosimo's reply that neither he (who did not like fish very much) nor Eleonora (on a diet) could enjoy the gift.<sup>809</sup>

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<sup>807</sup> "Presentai a nome della S.ra Duchessa [Eleonora de Toledo] le lamprede a S. B.ne [Pope Juilius III] alla quale furono gratissime, ne ringratia assai S. E. et benedice l'acque di quel mulino, et che tanto più erono per piacerle per esser delle primitie, et che li venivano presentate da una Signora, che è l'amorevolezza del mondo [...]" Letter from Camillo Titio in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 30 January 1554, ASF, MdP 418, fol. 442, MAP Doc ID# 3394.

<sup>808</sup> "È stato non men grande che grato et accetto il favore che ^l'Ecc.a V. [Ferrante I Gonzaga] m'ha fatto^ [cancelled: è piaciuto all'Ecc.a V. di farmi] con la scatola delli sparagi che m'ha inviato per la posta, et veramente ha cagione di farmi tai favori, poiche non ha persona alcuna che li sia piu affetionat servi d'ora di me, et che piu desidero di dar servitio all'Eccellenza Vostra dalla Illustrissima Signor Principessa sua consorte. Goderommi io li sparagi per amor suo et rendendogliene per hora quella gratia che devo, staro aspettando, che mi comandi, pregandola sia servito di fare le mie raccomandationi alla pressata S.ra sua consorte [Isabella Gonzaga]." Letter from Eleonora de Toledo in Livorno to Ferrante I Gonzaga in Milan, 4 April 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 6, MAP Doc ID# 20970.

<sup>809</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Ferrante I Gonzaga in Milan, 16 November 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 151, MAP Doc ID# 21003.

A far richer exchange occurred between Eleonora and Ercole II d'Este, duke of Ferrara, in the matchmaking preceding the Medici-Este wedding of 1558. Negotiations had commenced a decade before, when Ercole and Eleonora had started to correspond: the focus of their correspondence was on the exchange of gifts. Not works of art, finery, or jewels, but food – admittedly fine food – that was offered from each other's palatial larders, and cuttings of trees for the enrichment of their gardens and orchards.<sup>810</sup> In June 1550, Eleonora received from Ercole:

[...] with Your Excellency's letter dated the last day of last month, I received the salami, confectionary, and the caviar that you have been pleased to send me [...] I can certify that the salami are excellent, the confectionary very good, so much so that I must confess they are ingenious, yours really are the best, but the caviar was the best thing of them all [...] I send to Your Excellency as a sign of my gratitude some things made by my own very hands.<sup>811</sup>

This intimate exchange, served taste, not ostentation, represented the intimacy of sharing food as within a single family. This mutual goodwill between the houses continued in 1551 when Ercole sent another package of gifts, including caviar, carp, eels and sweets, and

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<sup>810</sup> In 1549, it seems that Eleonora had received some arboreal samples, writing the next year, she wrote personally to Ercole to request further cuttings of peach trees: Letter from Eleonora de Toledo in Pisa to Ercole II d'Este in Ferrara, 21 January 1550, ASF, MdP 16, fol. 201, MAP Doc ID# 9571.

<sup>811</sup> "Con la carta di V. Ecc.a dell'ultimo del passato ricevi e' salami, le confectioni et il caviale che gli è piaciuto mandarmi [...] certificandola che li salami sono eccellenti, le confectioni tanto buone che io che facevo professione d'esse, confesso ingenuamente, che le sue sono di gran lunga migliori, ma il caviale è stato meglio che nessun'altra cosa. [...] Invio io a V. Ecc.a per segno di qualche gratitudine [cancelled: paia sei di quanti profumati, certe fodere da guanciali et alcuni pannicelli da naso ] ^alcune cose che io fo^ di mia propria mano" Letter from Eleonora de Toledo in Florence to Ercole II d'Este in Ferrara, 17 June 1550, ASF, MdP 1, fol. 54, MAP Doc ID# 5896.

twelve peach tree saplings.<sup>812</sup> Importantly, these exchanges took place between Eleonora and Ercole, not with Cosimo, who in the mid-1540s had competed with Ercole over whose title had precedence. Eleonora, then, took the lead, and used the mutual gifting of food and other low-cost objects to build an amicable relationship with one of Cosimo's bitterest rivals.

### *From Bronzino to Branzino*

The year 1550 marked a significant change in Medicean diplomacy. As discussed previously, the onus shifted from giving ostentatious gifts in order to build relationships with those who could be an asset to furthering Cosimo's ambitious foreign and domestic policies in the late 1530s and early 1540s, to maintaining those relationships from the late 1540s onwards. This transition only became more marked after the siege of Siena (1554-1555), which had distracted the attention of the court and drained the ducal treasury by expropriating funds otherwise spent on maintaining the expansive diplomatic network of ambassadors, resident agents, and informers based in foreign cities.<sup>813</sup>

This shift is illustrated in the types of gifts sent to people like Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle. As discussed elsewhere, Granvelle had been an essential ally in the first decade of Cosimo's rule. His role had been rewarded by many precious gifts, not least the Bronzino altarpiece donated from Eleonora's own chapel in 1545.<sup>814</sup> These gifts had won Granvelle's support for Cosimo's policies, namely, the three goals of

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<sup>812</sup> Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Livorno, 24 February 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 454, MAP Doc ID# 19598. Later that same year, Ercole II enquired as to how the saplings were fairing: Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 8 August 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 10, fol. 28, MAP Doc ID# 7968.

<sup>813</sup> See pp. 232-258 of this thesis.

<sup>814</sup> For more on Granvelle's relationship with Cosimo, and in particular, the gifting of the Bronzino altarpiece, see pp. 198-209 of this thesis.

that decade: restoration of the Tuscan fortresses to Medici control; the lobbying of the Emperor to recognise his seniority in the order of precedence over the Duke of Ferrara; and the annexation of the Lordship of Piombino and Elba. On these matters, Granvelle was in regular contact with the Medici ambassador and diplomatic secretary at the imperial court, representing Cosimo's interests directly with the Emperor.<sup>815</sup> As testament to this intimacy, Granvelle shared his own plans with the Medici delegation who in return shared with him *avvisi* from Rome and letters from Florence.<sup>816</sup> Importantly, gifts too played a role in both maintaining this relationship and advancing shared goals.

The Bronzino altarpiece itself had been accompanied by "greco" wine, likely a re-gifting of wine sent by Eleonora's father in Naples, and Granvelle, knowing that this type of wine does not come from Tuscany, may well have appreciated the gesture of including him in the distribution of a wine which itself had been a familiar gift.<sup>817</sup> This would certainly seem so, as the Medici ambassador reported, this wine was found to be very satisfactory, and was shared with other members of the Medici-Toledo faction at court.<sup>818</sup> Indeed, food and wine allowed for a different type of experience; it could be shared with giver and

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<sup>815</sup> The references to Granvelle in the diplomatic correspondence from the imperial court are copious, for example, it was Granvelle with help from the Toledo faction (headed by the duke of Alba), who led the negotiations for Piombino in summer 1546: "In che termino si ritrovano le cose di qua io non mi affaticharo in scriverla a V.Ecc.ita. perche il suo Ambascitor scrivera all'Ecc'tia V. quanto li ha detto il Signor Ducha D'Alba e Mons. di Granvela e quello mi hanno ditto a me circa alle cose di Piombino." Letter from Giangiacomo Medici in Regensburg to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 21 June 1546, ASF, MdP 380, fol. 83.

<sup>816</sup> Letter from Bernardo de' Medici in Brussels to Cosimo I de' Medici in Tuscany, 19 September 1548, ASF, MdP 4306, fol. 209.

<sup>817</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Poggio a Caiano to Francisco Álvarez de Toledo in Brussels, 19 September 1545, ASF, MdP 6, fol. 242, MAP Doc ID# 3961.

<sup>818</sup> "Reputomi a molto gran favore che Mons.re di G. [Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle] si sia satisfatto del vin greco che li ho inviato et che ne habbi fatto parte al Duca d'Alva [Fernando Álvarez de Toledo] et alli s.ri [Alfonso] Idiaquez et [Gomez Suarez de] Figueroa" Letter from Francisco Álvarez de Toledo in Brussels to Cosimo I de' Medici in Tuscany, 12 November 1545, ASF, MdP 6, fol. 345, MAP Doc ID# 3987.



recipient, and shared again with whom the recipient chose. In this way, food and wine were far more inclusive gifts than artworks or jewels. In 1547, more “greek” wine was sent to Granvelle, along with ortolans, and bed furnishings.<sup>819</sup> When Cosimo was informed that the Toledo faction at the imperial court, along with Granvelle, had proposed a favourable solution to the precedence crisis between the Medici and Este families:

[...] that of all, how much from the heart can I thank you, such as how also in my name I pray that Your Lordship thanks Granvelle [...] [Cosimo moves on to the subject of Piombino] I have given order for the oysters for Granvelle to come in time for Lent as Your Lordship has reminded me.<sup>820</sup>

For Lent 1548, Eleonora gifted to Granvelle a large lamprey (and *lampredotte*) while he attended the Council of Trent. By now their relationship was now so close and intimate that Granvelle could ask for more lampreys, as reported by Francisco de Toledo to Cosimo, “Granvelle has the desire of having her Ladyship send to him other lampreys for the rest of Lent.”<sup>821</sup> Albeit much different from the magnificent Bronzino altarpiece sent to him from her chapel, the gifting of fish by the duchess reflected a strong durable and lasting relationship with Granvelle as a stalwart Medici ally.

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<sup>819</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Poggio a Caiano to Bernardo de’ Medici in Augsburg (?), 1 October 1547, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 61, MAP Doc ID# 4482.

<sup>820</sup> “[...] che di tutto quanto posso di cuore la ringratio, così come anche a nome mio prego V.S. che ringrati M di Gran: [...] io ho dato ordine che le ostreghe per Mon. di Gran Vela [Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle] venghino et so che saranno a tempo per questa quaresima sicome V. S. mi ricorda.” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Livorno to Francisco Álvarez de Toledo in Augsburg (?), 25 January 1548, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 357, MAP Doc ID# 4649.

<sup>821</sup> “Mons. di Granvela [Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle] et il desiderio che haveva S. S. che se gli mandassi delle altre lampredotte per questo resto della quaresima.” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici to Francisco de Toledo in Trent, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 533, MAP Doc ID# 4836.

## 8.4 GIFTS OF TASTE AND TRIBUTE

### *Gifts in Good Taste*

Just as connoisseurship exists for art-objects, so too for food. Food and wine in the sixteenth century were not just simply considered as victuals, but for their quality, taste, and importantly, for comparing regional variations. The idea of the local speciality has already been demonstrated in the different foods ceremonially gifted during Cosimo's wedding celebrations in 1539. This awareness and interest in local differences not only influenced the gifting of food, but also provided the catalyst for gift exchange.

Innocenzo Cybo's status and gifts in the early period of Cosimo's reign have already been presented, but his gifts of statuary and books were accompanied with gifts of food (which were often discussed in greater detail than the accompanying artworks). Innocenzo was a grandson of Lorenzo il Magnifico and had grown up at the Medici court and he remained ever a man in pursuit of refined pleasures. Food was exchanged very regularly between the two men, wine most often, and usually the gifts of food were sent in packages, for example,

It is most gratifying to to learn that the taste of the wines that I sent with my vintner (*bottiglieri*) to Your Excellency have been liked [...] I have received with your muleteer the *marzolino* cheeses, *trebbiano* wine, and pears that you send to me, which are all most beautiful and most perfect, and I thank Your Excellency very much for this pleasure and token of affection [...] I send to Your Excellency a few salami that will please you and be a pleasing token of my affection.<sup>822</sup>

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<sup>822</sup> "Mi è stato gratissimo havere inteso che li saggi delli vini che con Marco mio bottiglieri ho mandati all'Ecc. V. li siano piaciuti [...] Ho ricevuto con el suo mulattieri li marzolini, trebbiano et pere che mi ha mandate, quali cose tutte sonno bellissime et perfettissime, et ne ringratio sommamente l'Ecc.za V. et goderonmele per suo amore. [...] Mando a V. Ecc. certi pocchi salami; piaceralli goderseli per amor mio [...]" Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 13 March 1544, ASF, MdP 3717, [Unpaginated], MAP Doc ID# 23631.

Importantly, Cybo comments that they have arrived safely (commenting on the safe arrival of gifts, food especially, is one of the most frequent references to gifts in letters), and then comments on the gifts he sends in return, perpetuating the cycle of exchange. Interestingly, it seems that Cybo had a professional *bottiglieri* in his service to help manage his cellar and the movement of wines, while Cosimo sent his gifts by mule, suitable for the mountainous journey to Cybo's residence, the castle of Fosdinovo.

Cybo sent a sturgeon to Cosimo in 1538, a gift chosen to show-off a speciality of his family's lands: as we have seen, the lampreys gifted from the ducal couple of Julius III had come from the river Serchio which wends its way through the mountainous Garfagnana, and which his family's own domain of the Lunigiana bordered.<sup>823</sup> While Cybo had initially represented a threat to Cosimo, by the mid-1540s, Cosimo was content to remain on friendly terms. The ducal couple visited him in 1545, and perhaps still remembering the gifts of fish from Cybo, all three went together trout fishing. Interestingly, the secretary in attendance, Lorenzo Pagni, writing to Riccio, made mention that, "there are trout most delicate and tasty, as much as in the other parts of Tuscany."<sup>824</sup> Enjoying this type of courtly activity emphasises the added intimacy and familiarity of a gift of food from the ducal couple when it was something caught or made by their own hand, but also an interest in the quality of food from other regions.

In thanks, for this visit, Cosimo sent wine, asking for it to be the best he had:

We send there Marco, the vintner of the Most Reverend Cardinal Cybo to whom we have decided to send two portions of red wine. But to you commit you to straight away to give of the red wine two portions of the best that one finds there, and one found, you send them to the Cardinal with the present

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<sup>823</sup> Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 30 April 1538, ASF, MdP 3716, fol. 105, MAP Doc ID# 23530.

<sup>824</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Carrara to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 14 April 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 7, fol. 323, MAP Doc ID# 7179.

Marco to provide and pay for the mule train that will take him.<sup>825</sup>

In 1545, Cosimo sent to Cybo wines “latino” and “greco”, one again assumes the latter was some of the *vino greco* received regularly from the viceroy of Naples. Eleonora is named along with Cosimo as the gifter of these wines.<sup>826</sup> Again, Cosimo himself is concerned with how they will be sent to Cybo. Indeed, Cosimo and Cybo seem to have struck up a strong relationship with one another as wine connoisseurs, Cybo sending wines for Cosimo to taste in December 1546, saying:

I send to Your Excellency, Marco, my vintner, with some wine samples from this country, which may satisfy the state of your taste and of the Most Illustrious Duchess. Please do not miss to gratefully inform me of the ones you like the most, so that I can make a small provision to sent it to you.<sup>827</sup>

Importantly, in all these gifts, Cybo was attempting to discover which tastes pleased the duke so as to best continue the friendship. In return, Cybo’s opinion was valued. In 1546 he sent white wine to be tasted by

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<sup>825</sup> “Mandiamo costà Marco bottiglieri del Reverendissimo Cardinale [Innocenzo] Cybo al quale havemo disegnato mandarli due some di vino rosso. Però vi si commetti che subito vi diate alla busca et procacciate di vino rosso due some del meglio che si trovi costà et trovato lo invierete ad esso Cardinale per il presente Marco provedendone et pagandone la vettura dei muli che lo condurranno.” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Volterra to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 15 May 1545, ASF, MdP 638, fol. 102, MAP Doc ID# 15286.

<sup>826</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio, 13 August 1545, ASF, MdP 1169, ins. 9, fol. 217, MAP Doc ID# 5517.

<sup>827</sup> “Mando con Marco mio bottiglieri all’Ecc. V. [Cosimo I] alcuni saggi di vino di questo paese, sodisfacendo al gusto suo et dell’Ill.ma S.ra Duchessa [Eleonora de Toledo]. Non manchi di gratia farmi favore di avvisarmi qual li piace più, accioché io li ne possa fare un poco di provisione et mandarli” Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 1 December 1546, ASF, MdP, 3718, [unpaginated], MAP Doc ID# 23676.

Cosimo, while the duke sent the cardinal red wine.<sup>828</sup> In all of these exchanges, Cybo relied upon a professional, “Marco, bottiglieri”, to manage the logistics of transporting the wine both to and from Cosimo’s court. Clearly, Cybo took great care to manage the exchange. Another sign of the Cardinal’s careful planning of his gifts is seen in 1548 when Cybo sent wines to Cosimo, warning the duke that he was not certain of the wine’s quality:

[...] I have been lingering over whether to send the tribute of wine to Your Excellency, persuading myself that their conservation was not the best as it should have been, but seeing that to defer to send it would too late, and though they are not of the same goodness as before, as a result of the bad conditions we had in this country last year, I am resolute that with my Marco, together with a few fish from our river, will pay my debt.<sup>829</sup>

An important point emerges from this last exchange of wine. The gift is now referred to as “el tributo” and that Cybo had to “pagare il mio debito” which denotes a certain type of relationship: Cybo as a loyal retainer to Cosimo, his feudal lord.<sup>830</sup> To define a gift as “tribute” redefines the nature of the exchange, and indeed, Cybo sent fruit for the festival of St. John the Baptist in 1545, but also, of all the gifts sent, the month most likely for a gift from Cybo was June, the month in which Florence celebrated the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24), and which he wrote in 1549, “each year, conforming to my desire to my debt, I

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<sup>828</sup> Minute of letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici to Innocenzo Cibo in Carrara (?), 5 August 1547, ASF, MdP 10, fol. 341, MAP Doc ID# 5397.

<sup>829</sup> “[...] ho indugiato sin adesso a mandare el tributo del vino corsi all'Ecc. V.ra [Cosimo I], persuadendomi che il conservarlo lo dovessi alquanto migliorare. Ma vedendo che il differire a inviarvelo non gioveria hormai più, et che il non esser di quella bontà che suole è proceduto dalla cattiva vendemmia che fu in questo paese l'anno passato, mi son risoluto col nostro Marco, insieme con un poco di pesce del nostro fiume, pagare questo mio debito” Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Firenze, 22 June 1548, ASF, MdP 3719, fol. 86, MAP Doc ID# 23704.

<sup>830</sup> The term “il tributo” was the medieval name of the *feste degli omaggi*, see *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, p. 42.

send to you my usual tribute.<sup>831</sup> Moreover, it sounds as if Cybo was willing to send his “tribute”, albeit not of ideal quality, in order to meet the June 24 deadline. As such, Cybo, who had been Duke Alessandro’s *de facto* chancellor, was continuing the older tradition of gifting to the duke of Florence, and his consort, on the day of the patron saint’s feast.<sup>832</sup> The same ceremony which had been celebrated at Cosimo’s and Eleonora’s wedding in 1539.

Knowing the taste of the prince was very important, especially for gifts from other parts of Italy, where the Duke might make direct comparisons with his own lands. Cosimo clearly had a sense of pride in Tuscany’s produce, which is reflected in the exchange of food gifts with another close Medici associate, Aurelio Fregoso, count of Sant’Agata, who after a military career with the French (and Sienese) had defected to Cosimo’s service in 1556-1557.<sup>833</sup> From the duchy of Urbino, where Fregoso had his estates, he sent to the ducal couple the ‘marzolino’ cheese from Pesaro, saying:

Your Most Illustrious Excellency must record that I promised to you, and to the Most Illustrious Duchess of the desire to send the marzolini [cheeses] of this country because they are parallels to those of Chianti, I myself think that if they are not better, they are at least as good.<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>831</sup> Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Firenze, 3 June 1549, ASF, MdP 3719, fol. 393, MAP Doc ID# 23737.

<sup>832</sup> Indeed, Cybo only started gifted in June 1545, the year in which Cosimo restoration of the feast of St. John the Baptist, see Plaisance, M., “The Cultural Policy of Cosimo I and the Annual Festivities in Florence from 1541 to 1550” in Plaisance, *Florence in the Time of the Medici*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>833</sup> For biographical details on Aurelio Fregoso, see Dubost, J.-F., “Aurelio Fergoso” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* - vol. 50 (1998).

<sup>834</sup> “V. Ecc. Ill.ma si deve reccordare ch’io promissi a Lei, et alla Ill.ma S.ra D.ssa [Eleonora de Toledo] mia signora, di volerle mandare de i marzolini di questi paesi, perchè sieno paragonati a quelli del Chianti, pensandomi che se non di maggiore, sieno questi al meno di para bontà [...]” Letter from Aurelio Fregoso in Pesaro to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 7 June 1559, ASF, MdP 479, fol. 236, MAP Doc ID# 9569.

A month later, he wrote to Cosimo and Eleonora again:

Your Most Illustrious Excellency and Most Illustrious Duchess,  
I send the *prosciutto* which the other time I have spoke of from  
this country. If you would deign to taste them when you receive  
them as a sign of my affection for you, and if they are as I hope  
liked by you, I will not miss to send them as tribute more often  
than I have sometimes made now.<sup>835</sup>

It is clear that Fregoso was searching for a type of gift which would be to the taste of the ducal couple that he could give regularly. Thus, this “tribute” would not only place him in the role of loyal vassal (a point he was no doubt keen to emphasise as a recent defector), but also to have, through his gift/tribute, a means to keep communication open with the Florentine court. Most interestingly, Fregoso also spoke of the tastes of Cosimo to Guidobaldo II della Rovere, duke of Urbino, who offered to send some Pesaran cheese to Cosimo, writing:

Having been made aware by Signor Aurelio Fregoso that Your Excellency would like to taste the cheeses of Pesaro, I have wished to send now some small samples, and I intend will send them in the years to come if you like them.<sup>836</sup>

Both the Cybo exchange, and the examples of Fregoso and the duke of Urbino, demonstrate the importance of taste in choosing the right gift. In finding something to the taste of a prince, it was possible to keep a means of communication open by sending a pleasing gift as a regular

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<sup>835</sup> “[a]ll’Ecc. V. Ill.a et all’Ill.ma S.ra Duchessa mia sig.ra [Eleonora de Toledo] mando i presciutti che altre volta gl’ho detto di questi paesi. Lei si degniaranno di ricevergli per saggio e per amor mio, che se saranno come spero, per piacergli, non mancharò di tributarne l’età più spesso di qualche si è fatto sin’hora.” Letter from Letter from Aurelio Fregoso in Urbino to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 10 July 1559, ASF, MdP 479, fol. 289, MAP Doc ID# 20302.

<sup>836</sup> “Havendomi fatto sapere il s.or Aurelio Fregoso che alla Ecc. V.ra [Cosimo I] gustarebbono i formaggi di Pesaro, io ho voluto mandarlene hora questi pochi per un saggio, et manderonnele anco gl’anni da venire se intenderò che questi gli sian piacciuti [...]” Letter from Guidobaldo II della Rovere in Urbino to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 24 July 1560, ASF, MdP 4050, fol. 418, MAP Doc ID# 22245.

tribute, and thus build a stronger and more regular bond with people as important as Cosimo and Eleonora.

*"Ambassador, you are spoiling us"*

So far we have seen how gifts of food were especially useful in sustaining stable relationships. This was a particular advantage of gifts of food for resident ambassadors who needed to maintain a network of contacts. Indeed, Averardo Serristori, Cosimo's ambassador in Rome, saw the utility of gifts, recommending to Cosimo in January 1542:

I was forgetting to say that it will be very [good] with regards this season of carnevale, were Your Excellency to order to be send here several fruits and marzolino cheese to be presented to these gentlemen [the Toledo faction in Rome].<sup>837</sup>

Bartolomeo Concini reported from the imperial court at Augsburg that plums were so well-received that an opportunity to perpetuate the cycle of gifts should be seized:

From the other Majordomos and Gentlemen of the Bedchamber I was told about the song and dance made of the marvellous and delicate fruits sent by their her Excellency [Eleonora] and that every energy was spent by Your Lordship to help cultivate them, and send them, and to assist them with such order and such gentleness that other hands did not need to be involved. Therefore, it would go to continue [to send gifts of food]

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<sup>837</sup> "Erami scordato dire che saria molto a proposito questo carnovale, V. Ex.tia ordinassi fussi mandato qui parechi frutti et del marzolino per presentare a questi signori." Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 29 January 1542, ASF, MdP 3264, fol. 95, MAP Doc ID# 20092.



because the Emperor is much gratified to know all the delicacies of Florence.<sup>838</sup>

At both the imperial court and the Roman curia, crowded with important functionaries, numerous nobles, and useful contacts, gifts of food provided a means for resident ambassadors to maintain access and communication to the nodes of power.

By far the most regular and perhaps most important distribution of food gifts was the annual (though occasionally it was made several times a year) gift of food to members of the College of Cardinals and other important churchmen. The lists preserved in the *Mediceo del Principato* of the favoured men is a rare insight into the workings of early modern diplomacy and the centrality of gifts. In 1540 the list included Cardinals Juan Fernandez Manrique, Alessandro di Pierluigi Farnese, Guido Ascanio Sforza, Franciscus Quignones, Pietro Bembo, Gaspare Contarini, Antonio Pucci, Girolamo Ghinucci, Uberto Gambarà, Marcello Cervino, Agostino Trivulzo, and Alessandro Cesarini.<sup>839</sup> Cosimo's ambassador in Rome, Giovanni dell'Antella was told to "distribute [the gifts] to whom it seems appropriate of these lords [the list then follows],"<sup>840</sup> responding that "when the fruits and cheeses arrive from Your Excellency, rest assured that they will be well distributed."<sup>841</sup> These regular gifts were also recorded in detail as to

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<sup>838</sup> "Dagli altri Maiordomi et gentilhomini della Camera mi fu fatto intorno un rigoletto con tanta meraviglia delle delicatur di lor Ecc.a ch'è ben spesa ogni fatica che la S.V. spende in coltivarle mandarle et assettarle con tanto ordine et tanto gentilmente che d'altre mani non possono venir che dalle sue. Vada continuando adunque perchè fa cosa gratissima a Cesare fa conoscer da tutti le delitie di Fiorenza et a se stessa honore" Letter from Bartolomeo Concini in Augsburg to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 5 August 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 11, fol. 24, MAP Doc ID# 7990.

<sup>839</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Tuscany to Giovanni dell'Antella in Rome, 30 October 1540, ASF, MdP 4, fol. 105, MAP Doc ID# 12782.

<sup>840</sup> "Voi le distribuirete a chi vi parrà convenir' di quei signori [...]" Ibid.

<sup>841</sup> "Quando arrivino le fructe et formaggi V. Ex. [Cosimo I] si riposi, ché si distribuiranno bene [...]" Letter from Giovanni dell'Antella in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 2 November 1540, ASF, MdP 652, fol. 59, MAP Doc ID# 22333.

how they had been distributed, with lists being sent back to Florence with the number of cheeses given to each of the cardinals (including the Pope).

Interestingly, these gifts are always *marzolino* cheese and *trebbiano* wine – the two almost always given together – and by far the most frequently gifted food and wine by Cosimo.<sup>842</sup> The two products were Tuscan specialities, and by gifting these, Cosimo was not so much advertising the produce of his lands, but sharing foods distinctly his own, conveying the best food that he had to offer. These gifts certainly seemed to be paying off by the papal conclave of 1549, when Cosimo's candidate, Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte, was elected pope on 7 February 1550 after the second longest conclave of the century.<sup>843</sup> A month later, Lorenzo Pagni wrote to Pier Francesco Riccio:

The Cardinals of Rome have remembered the tribute that is given to them every year of fruit, marzolino cheeses, and trebbiano wine, etc., and that they have merited it more for having done well in making the Pope [Julius III].<sup>844</sup>

In Pagni's letter, one may detect a note of humour – surely the throne of St. Peter's could not be bought with wine and cheese? – but then again, given the mercurial politics of the sixteenth century, it is possible.

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<sup>842</sup> Letter from Benedetto Buonanni in Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 23 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 19, MAP Doc ID# 3250.

<sup>843</sup> For Cosimo's instrumental role in the election of Julius III, see Canestrini, G. (ed.), *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori ambasciatore di Cosimo I a Carlo V e in corte di Rome (1537-1568)*, (Florence: Le Monnier, 1853), pp. 305-306; de Leva, G., "La elezione di Papa Giulio III," *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 1 (1884), pp. 21-36; and Hernando Sánchez, C., "Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy: Family, Court, and Government in the Toledo-Medici Alliance", pp. 170-172. Cosimo's role is down played in Baumgartner, F., "Henry II and the Papal Conclave of 1549" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 3 (1985), pp. 301-314.

<sup>844</sup> "Li Car.li di Roma hanno ricordato il tributo che si suol dare loro ogni anno di frutte, marzolini, trebbiano, ecc., et poi che l'hanno molto ben meritato havendoci fatto un sì buon Papa [Julius III]. Dice Sua Ecc.a che V. S. lo prepari per mandarlo quanto prima, che se mal non si ricorda le pare che V. S. le habia detto che lo haveva in ordine [...]" Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 3 March 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 2, fol. 33, MAP Doc ID# 3072.

Importantly, Pagni refers to the gift as a “tribute” to the cardinals. In later letters this term was often referred to as the *tributo ordinario* by the cardinals with whom Cosimo dealt.<sup>845</sup> It is not known whether the sending of food gifts from Cosimo to the cardinalate had been an innovation, or whether he was following standard practice, either originating with Alessandro or as practised by other rulers. In any case, the amount of food gifts leaving Florence for Rome, especially after the death of Cosimo’s enemy, Paul III in 1549, is indicative of the importance of papal politics for Cosimo’s political ambitions.

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<sup>845</sup> “Però venga il tributo ordinario et resti nella consideration della S. V. che gl'è più desiderato [...]” Letter from Benedetto Buonanni in Rome to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 23 December 1550, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 13, fol. 19, MAP Doc ID# 3250.

## 8.5 CONCLUSION

On the ceiling of the Sala Grande in the Palazzo Vecchio, the sixteen subjugated cities of Tuscany are depicted as female allegories, each bearing a cornucopia representing the bounty of her province. These allegories evoke both the ceremony of tribute made at the wedding of Cosimo and Eleonora in 1539, and reflect the decorative theme of the wedding of Francesco and Joanna of 1565, in time for which they were completed, and temporary paintings of the cities of Tuscany arranged in the *Sala Grande* when the ducal and imperial entourages entered the hall. The presentation of gifts by the allegories of the cities not only connote these weddings, but the tradition established by Duke Alessandro to receive tokens of fealty from the cities under his rule on the feast of St. John the Baptist, as the Florentine Republic had received gifts of food from the communes under their rule centuries before during the *Festa degli omaggi* on the morning of the feast of St. John the Baptist.<sup>846</sup> This ancient communication of loyalty between *contada* and city, between *dominio* and prince, was embodied in the offering of food which represented the bounty of the land.

In mid-sixteenth-century Tuscany, this bond between Florence and the other Tuscan cities had been threatened. Political unrest and military occupation had led to economic stagnancy and social instability. By 1537, when Cosimo became duke of Florence, these intrinsic weaknesses threatened his rule. His marriage to Eleonora de Toledo – the daughter of the strategically important viceroy of Naples, whose family network offered Cosimo an established lobby within the Habsburg imperial system – was intended to provide a much needed support to his regime, as indeed was his sale of the 1538 grain harvest. Whether or not Cosimo's profiteering can be held responsible for the hardship of the year after, the great famine of 1539 undoubtedly exacerbated these problems, which consequently further emphasised the importance of celebrating his marriage to Eleonora, as a symbol of his steadfast position at the apex of Florentine and Tuscan society. Against this background of agricultural dearth, the prominent position

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<sup>846</sup> See Albizzi, G., *Le feste di S. Giovanni in Firenze, antiche e moderne: cenni storici* (Firenze, Tipografia dell'arte della stampa, 1877).

of food during the celebrations of their marriage is highly significant within this programme of reinforcing the role of his marriage as a pillar of his government. Lavishly feeding the nobility at the wedding banquet, like sharing food within an extended family, and entertaining them and the ambassadors in attendance with a theatrical ceremony of homage from his subject cities, altogether communicated in the clearest of terms: Cosimo's rule, despite rumours of his culpability in the famine, was to be age of peace and plenty. The allegories of the Tuscan cities in the Sala Grande, arranged around the apotheosis of Cosimo himself, was to stand as a permanent ceremony of homage in the pantheon of the Medici. Just as in the Sala of Cosimo I, the duke would gift to each allegory in turn, the restoration of local pride as depicted when Cosimo gifted a crown to each of his loyal cities.<sup>847</sup>

All gifts of food to and from the Florentine court must be viewed within this experience of famine (in 1539 and after), but more so, within the frameworks of fealty and familiarity. Like other gifts, gifts of food provided a means for communication between sender and receiver, but unlike other objects, food carries with it the extra significance when the exchange occurs between a prince and his subject. As we have seen, gifts of food were often seasonal, tied to both the agrarian calendar, the civic, and the ecclesiastical. Low in financial value, but symbolically precious, gifts of food to Cosimo and Eleonora provided a rare opportunity for those of relatively low social status to make an offering to their sovereign prince, sharing the bounty of the harvest (his harvest), whilst sending a token of their loyalty and affection. Interestingly, at a higher social status of princely subject (nobility, rich merchants, functionaries), gifts of food were not simply about sharing the produce of the land, but finding something to the taste of the prince that could be re-gifted regularly as a form of tribute, and in so doing, keep open communication, each gift/tribute instigating further exchanges. Within the diplomatic relations between the Medici and Habsburgs, finding something to the taste of Granvelle or Charles V, such as fish and plums, provided for Cosimo and

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<sup>847</sup> Allegri & Cecchi, *op cit.*, p. 148.

Eleonora the same relationship, albeit reversed, as they enjoyed with Innocenzo Cybo and Aurelio Fregoso.

In this way, the gifts of food are much more nuanced than they first appear. Certainly, the fear of poison meant that gifts of food carried with them a sense of trust and intimacy. The almost casual way in which gifts of food were sent between members of a family was replicated between the Medici, the Toledo, the Gonzaga, and the Este (and later, the Savoia), creating at one level (regardless of political reality) a sense of a family or brotherhood of princes, which, given the patterns of intermarriage between the Italian dynasties, was not an entirely inaccurate description. At the level of the court, such simple gifts as soft fruit and shellfish seem incongruous with our perception of these places as sites of wealth, ostentation, and the high arts. Yet, after long journeys over land and sea, the arrival of fruits, perfectly ripe, or fish, still fresh, held its own wonderment and in their consumption, a distinct pleasure, recognised as quite different from the enjoyment of more tangible material gifts, no matter how rare and precious. Therefore, gifts of food, regularly given, could be much more potent than “spontaneous” gifts. Indeed, it would seem that regular gifts of food not only stabilised a relationship, it also created a strong enough bond, even with a group of people, such as the College of Cardinals, who owed such a debt of gratitude, that they would affect the selection of the new Pope to Cosimo’s preference.

## 9. GIFTING THE MARZOCCO

### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

#### *Hercules/Cosimo and the Nemean Lion/Marzocco*

Entering the city of Florence on 16 December 1565, Joanna of Austria passed under the first triumphal arch erected at the western gateway to the city, the Porta al Prato. The arch was decorated with scenes depicting the foundation of Florence, crowned with the coats-of-arms of Joanna, her betrothed, Francesco de' Medici, and her father-in-law, Cosimo I. Her eyes will have taken in two scenes facing her, one the foundation of Florence as a Roman colony by Augustus:

The second (and this is the most ancient [symbol] of the city, and with it public documents were sealed) was of Hercules with a club and the skin of the Nemean lion.<sup>848</sup>

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<sup>848</sup> "Il secondo (e questo è antichissimo della città, e con cui ella le cose pubbliche suggellar suole ) era l' Ercole con la clava e con la pelle del leon Nemeo, senz'altro motto" Vasari (Milanesi), *Vite*, 8, p. 529.

The inclusion of this scene – as Cini notes, “senz’altro motto” – would have been easily understood by the Florentines. As the the fifteenth-century historian, Gregorio Dati explained:

[...] the sixth [symbol of the city] is Hercules, which they put on the seals of the Comune, and with the said sign, they seal the letters, the significance of Hercules being that he was giant, that finished all the tyrants and iniquitous men, such as the Florentine have also done.<sup>849</sup>

Indeed, when Cini referred to the seal of Florence depicting Hercules and the slain Nemean lion, he could have been referring to both the older use of the device by the medieval republic, and to Cosimo, who adopted the seal after his election in 1537.<sup>850</sup> While the emerald intaglio was the same image of Hercules used by the Republic, Cosimo changed the motto from “HERCULEA CLAVA DOMAT FIORENTIA PRAVA” to “COSMVS MED[ICI] R[ES] P[UBLICIA] FLORENTINA DVX ET EIVS CONSILIARI”.<sup>851</sup> Albeit an ancient symbol in Florentine history, Leopold Ettlinger has found that the legend of Hercules as the founder

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<sup>849</sup> “[...] il sesto è l’Ercole, il quale portano ne’ suggelli del Comune, e con detto segno suggellano le lettere, a significazione, che Ercole fu giogante, che andava spegnendo tutti i Tiranni, e inique signorie, e così hanno fatto i Fiorentini.” Dati, G., *Istoria di Firenze dall’anno 1380 all’anno 1405*, (Florence: Giuseppe Manni, 1785), p. 126.

<sup>850</sup> Although the sixteenth century is largely neglected, the older relationship between Florence and Hercules is studied in, Ettlinger, L., “Hercules Florentinus” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institutes in Florenz*, 16 2 (1972), pp. 119-142.

<sup>851</sup> The seal is exists today in the Museo degli Argenti, inv. Bargello 1917 (II), n. 30. The seal of the Republic is discussed extensively by Ettlinger in “Hercules Florentinus”. A more recent discussion, with full bibliographic references is Klein, F., “Lettera patente con il sigillo dell’Ercole” in Parenti, D. & Donato, M. (eds.), *Dal Giglio al David: Arte civica a Firenze fra Medioevo e Rinascimento [Catalogo della mostra alla Galleria dell’Accademia, Firenze, 14 maggio-8 dicembre 2013]*, (Firenze: Giunti, 2012), p. 65. Klein also discusses Medicean antecedents of Cosimo I’s seal, such as Alessandro’s and Pope Leo X’s. For a brief background on the maker of the seal, the goldsmith, Domenico di Polo, and his later commission for a medal of Hercules and Anteus for Cosimo I, see Supino, I., *Il medagliere Mediceo nel R. Museo Nazionale di Firenze* (Florence: Alinari, 1899), p. 100 & n. 263.



of Florence (or the Florentine gens) was a relatively new myth.<sup>852</sup> At the turn of the fifteenth century, both the lion of Florence and Hercules as a city-founder were merged into the single allegory of Hercules's lion as the Marzocco (albeit slain) by the notorious inventor of tradition, Annius of Viterbo, who wrote that Hercules had drained the Arno marshes to allow the people of Fiesole to found Florence, adding that, "the name of the river Arno is derived from an Egyptian epithet of the founder and that the Florentine lion is none other than the lion of Hercules."<sup>853</sup> This connection certainly took hold in the sixteenth century, with the Arno often depicted with its own (Nemean) lion.

This late fifteenth-century invention may have contributed another level of meaning to the lion and to the inclusion of Hercules, but the more popular history of the foundation of Florence was a Roman colony, from whence came the association of the lion of Florence:

The sign of the lion was given to the Florentines by the Romans from the beginning, [lions] edify the city of Florence, and in many places of the said city are carved and sculpted in stone to signify that their neighbours fear the Florentines because *il Leone* watches over the city, just as the Romans, and that they [the lions] are the best and most powerful of wild animals.<sup>854</sup>

Thus, the lions of Florence had been the city's most antique gift: a symbol from mother Rome bestowing sovereignty and status. The lion

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<sup>852</sup> Florence's traditional founder was said to be Augustus, see Rubinstein, N., "Vasari's Painting of The Foundation of Florence in the Palazzo Vecchio", in Fraser, D., Hibbard, H., & Lewine, M. (eds.), *Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, (London: Phaidon, 1967), pp. 64-73, (on Hercules's minor role in the depiction of foundation of Florence, see in particular, p. 67 & n. 47).

<sup>853</sup> Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus", p. 122, quoting, [Joannes Annii of Viterbo] *Antiquitatum variarum volumina XVII ab Annio declarata*, (Paris: Parvus & Badius, 1514?), Bk. XV, fol. CXXXVIIIr.

<sup>854</sup> "Il segno del Leone fu dato a' Fiorentini da' Romani dal principio, che edificarono la Città di Firenze, e in molti luoghi di detta Città lo misono intagliato, e scolpito di pietra a significazione, che i vicini d'atorno temessono i Fiorentini, perchè il Leone la guardava cioè i Romani, che erano i maggiori, e più potente degli animali bruti." Dati, loc. cit.

and Hercules (slaying the Nemean lion) was, therefore, one of the most potent symbols of the city. As such, Cosimo's programme of artistic commissions needed to identify himself with this symbolic tradition. Evidently, Cosimo chose to identify himself with Hercules<sup>855</sup>, for the lion of Florence had acquired by the sixteenth century a powerful symbolism of its own as the emblem of the republican constitution and the *fuoriusciti* movement who had attempted to unseat Cosimo in 1537, and whose lingering presence had constituted a threat to Medici rule over Florence and Tuscany until the annexation of Siena-Montalcino in 1559.

### *The King of Florence*

As Joanna processed with her father-in-law along the streets of Florence, upon her head was the *mazzocchio* coronet with which she had been crowned by the bishop of Arezzo and the archbishop of Siena outside the walls of the city. This same style of crown had been used annually to crown a stone lion, its paw raised over a shield bearing the *giglio* arms of Florence located in the Piazza della Signoria, the

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<sup>855</sup> Cosimo as Hercules is discussed in Forster, K., "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institutes in Florenz*, 15 (1971), p. 72, and Utz, H., "The Labors of Hercules and Other Works by Vincenzo de' Rossi" *The Art Bulletin*, 53 3 (1971), pp. 344-366. On Utz's work, a further comparison could be made between Cosimo and Hercules. Vincenzo de' Rossi was commissioned in 1560 to undertake a series of statues depicting the labours of Hercules to be displayed in the Sala Grande of the Palazzo Vecchio (Ibid, p. 347). Interestingly, not only are Cosimo's own labours depicted on the ceiling of the hall, but for Cosimo and Joanna's triumphal entry to the city, the Arch of Prudence (dedicated to the life of Cosimo), made a direct parallel to Cosimo's own twelve labours, such as the war against Siena, creating a fleet, and his abdication, etc. For the clearest list of the imagery depicted on the gate, see Starn & Partridge, op. cit., pp. 291-292. Bronzino's poetry also turned Cosimo into Hercules, see Parker, D., "The poetry of patronage: Bronzino and the Medici" *Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies*, 17, 2, (2003), pp. 230-245.

Marzocco.<sup>856</sup> The coronation of the Marzocco had an important secular use, far more regular than the feast of St. John the Baptist: the bi-monthly investiture of the new *signoria*.<sup>857</sup> This event, marking the temporary control over government of a new group of nine men (*priori*), was an integral element of Florence's Republican constitution, whereby political power could not be monopolised by a single man (or

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<sup>856</sup> The statue of the Marzocco discussed here should not be conflated with the more famous Donatello statue of the Marzocco, commissioned for the apartments of Martin V in 1419. The original fourteenth-century statue by an unknown sculptor was, by the early nineteenth century it was much decayed and was removed in 1812. That same year, Donatello's statue of the Marzocco was moved to its position in the Piazza della Signoria, only to be removed to the Bargello in 1865. The current Marzocco statue is a late nineteenth-century copy of an early nineteenth century "imposter". See Fader, M., "Sculpture in the Piazza della Signoria as emblem of the Florentine Republic", [Ph.D Diss.], University of Michigan 1977, chapter 1; and Manescalchi, R., Carchio, M., & del Meglio, A. (eds.), *Il Marzocco. The Lion of Florence* (Firenze: Grafica European Center of Fine Arts, 2005), on the Feast of St. John the Baptist, and whenever else the Florentines wished to express their political sovereignty and independence, see van Veen, H., "The Crown of the Marzocco and the Medici Dukes and Grand Dukes" *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 43 2 3 (1999), p. 653. The fifteenth-century tradition of the coronation is described as part of the celebrations of the feast of St. John the Baptist, Mancini, G., "Il bel s. Giovanni e le feste patronali di Firenze descritte nel 1475 da Piero Cennini," *Rivista d'arte*, 6, 3 4 (1909), pp. 185-227. The connection between the Feast of St. John the Baptist and the Marzocco (the lion of Mars), originates, according to Vincenzo Borghini, when the Christians of Florence converted the Temple of Mars into the Baptistery (Church of St. John the Baptist) in A.D. 40. Borghini, V., *Discorsi*, (Firenze, 1755), vol. I, p. 142. While one obviously doubts the veracity of Borghini's chronology, his opinion suffices to demonstrate the importance of the tradition in Florentine history up to the late sixteenth century, and the integration of the Marzocco (the replacement of the statue of the Mars washed away in the flood of 1333 Dante mentioned the loss of the statue to the waters of the Arno twice: *Inferno* XIII.146f, & *Purgatorio* XXXI. 58f.), the ancient defender of Florence, as part of the celebrations of St. John the Baptist, the city's saintly protector.

<sup>857</sup> Henk van Veen cites, Tommaso Forti, *Il Foro Fiorentino*, BNCF, Magi. 5, cod. 385. See also Emilio Santini, "La protestado de iustitia nella Firenze medicea del sec. XV (Nuovi testi in volgare del Quattrocento)" *Rinascimento* X (1959), p. 35.

group).<sup>858</sup> The ceremonial coronation of the Marzocco served as a poignant reminder that Florence had no king, and that Florence needed no king. The simple crown, a *mazzocchio*, with which the Marzocco was crowned was made of bronze, inscribed: “I wear a crown worthy of my country, in order that everyone might maintain liberty.”<sup>859</sup> As such, the Marzocco was the ceremonial king of the city, wearing the crown so that such a diadem would not corrupt the governing class. Indeed, as king, when in 1364 the Florentines defeated the Pisans at the Battle of Cascina, the prisoners were brought to Florence and (the statue of the Marzocco then being in the Piazza del Duomo), made to kiss “le parte posteriori di Marzocco.”<sup>860</sup> The Marzocco was also used as a symbol to project Florence’s power over subjugated cities under Florence – such as Volterra and Montepulciano – where rather than having a statue of the person of the conquering king or general, they had statues to the Marzocco.

Interestingly, the relationship between Florence and her subject cities was couched within the terms of loyalty to the Marzocco. For example, after the Medici exile of 1496, Piero de’ Medici successfully won over Cortona and Arezzo (Arezzo had rebelled from the Florentine Republic in 1502) to declare independence from the Florentine

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<sup>858</sup> The literature on the Florentine Constitution in the fifteenth century is unfathomably vast, on the constitution’s preoccupation with freedom, see Baron, Hans, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance : Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Rev. one-vol. ed. with an epilogue edn, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 419-439.

<sup>859</sup> “Corona porto per la patria degna, Acciocché libertà ciascun mantegna.” Albizzi, *Le feste di S. Giovanni in Firenze, antiche e moderne: cenni storici*, pp. 37-38. The poem is attributed to the fourteenth-century poet Franco Sacchetti, see Battaglia Ricci, L., *Palazzo Vecchio e dintorni, studio su Franco Sacchetti e fabbriche di Firenze*, (Rome, 1990), pp. 32-34.

<sup>860</sup> Mecatti, G., *Storia cronologica della città di Firenze*, (Napoli: Simoniana, 1755), pp. 251-252.

Republic, only for Florence to reconquer the cities months later, saying in their defence<sup>861</sup>:

They had stopped being devoted to the Marzocco when they did not resist Piero de' Medici, and of those who give to him favours, after which Vitellozzo and the Cardinal [Giovanni de' Medici], his brother departed, having been in Arezzo, they were recognised as enemies of the present regime of our city.<sup>862</sup>

Clearly, the Marzocco had become the antithesis of a Medici symbol.

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<sup>861</sup> On the rebellion of Arezzo in 1502, see Black, R., "Arezzo, the Medici and the Florentine Regime," in Connell, W., & Zorzi, A. (eds.), *Florentine Tuscany: Structures and Practices of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 293-312.

<sup>862</sup> "[...] non si partendo dalla devotione di Marzocco, quando non facevano resistenza à Pietro de Medici, ne à quelli, che gli davano favore, il qual doppo la partita di Vitellozzo, & il Cardinale suo fratello erano rimasi in Arezzo, & rinconosciuti come nemici del presente reggimento della nostra Citta." Nardi, J., *Le historie della citta di Fiorenza*, (Lyon: Theobaldo Ancelin, 1582), p. 77.

## 9.2 THE SYMBOLISM OF THE MARZOCCO IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

### *The Republican Marzocco*

In front of the Marzocco statue in the Piazza della Signoria in September 1537 a very different ceremony from the annual coronation took place. Erected at the base of the statue was a raised platform:

The following day was made a stage in the Piazza della Signoria facing the Marzocco, on which for four days continuously, each morning heads were chopped off, four a morning, so as to upset the people with such cruelty, who where lamenting this horrible torture.<sup>863</sup>

The executed men were important captives from the Republican army of anti-Medici *fuoriusciti* who had been seized after their defeat at the hands of Cosimo's forces at the battle of Montemurlo a month before.<sup>864</sup> As we glean from Segni, as blade split head from body, blood would have spurted over the scene, splattering the symbol of the republican movement, the Marzocco, who was purposefully provided with a ring-side seat at the execution of her cubs, the *Marzoccheschi*. This was what as they had called themselves during the siege of Florence from the pro-Medici imperial forces in 1529-30, and who, after seven years of exile, had made one final attempt to restore to the city her republican constitution.

This scene was a marked difference from seven before, when, in the aftermath of the sack of Rome, the Florentines had thrown off Medici rule, restoring a republican constitution, and in January 1530, during the siege of the city by pro-Medici imperial troops, they appointed (for a second time) Malatesta Baglioni as *condottiero* of the city:

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<sup>863</sup> "Il giorno seguente fu fatto un palco in piazza de' Signori dirimpetto al Marzocco, sul quale per quattro giorni continovi ogni mattina fu mozzo il capo a quattro per volta. Onde infastidito il popolo di quella crudeltà, si lamentava di si orrendo supplizio." Segni IX, p. 353.

<sup>864</sup> Spini, G., *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, pp. 95-110.

On the 26th of the same month [January], Malatesta was accompanied from his house to the Piazza de' Signori, where on the *ringhiera* [the razed platform that used to surround the base of the Palazzo Vecchio], where with all the usual pomp, the *gonfaloniere* was waiting for him with the other counsellors and other magistrates: and to show that it was a solemn and festive day they crowned the Marzocco, putting a crown of gold upon his head.<sup>865</sup>

The departure of the Medici in 1527 had led to a power vacuum, filled, in part, by religio-political radicals (the *piagnoni*, a Savanoralan legacy) and members of the old Republican elite. With Charles V's army closing in on Rome, the power of the house of Medici, whose head sat on the throne of St. Peter's as Clement VII, seemed soon to be extinguished. The Marzocco restored to his role in the city's civic life, albeit not king of the city, a role given to Christ himself on 9 February 1528.<sup>866</sup> The Marzocco was to acquire new significance during the siege as the embodiment of the struggle against the imperial army and the Medici.

As mentioned before, the most devoted of the defenders of the city formed bands, naming themselves the *Marzoccheschi*, and undertook some of the most daring actions and defences during the siege. Benedetto Varchi, our chief source for the period, describes their actions:

The Germans suddenly were given the order: the noise and smoke of the artillery and the muskets made such an uproar and such a haze, which left it neither possible to see or hear anyone. It lasted, this feat of arms (as it can rightly be called), for more than four hours with varying fortune, but

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<sup>865</sup> "[...] al ventisei del medesimo mese di gennaio, accompagnò Malatesta da casa sua sino sulla piazza de' Signori, dove nella ringhiera l'aspettava colla solita pompa il gonfaloniere e la Signoria con altri magistrati: e per mostrare che quello era giorno solenne e feriate, avevano inghirlandato il Marzocco, messagli la corona d'oro sopra il capo." Varchi, *Storia fiorentina*, XI, p. 216.

<sup>866</sup> For most recent account of the politics of 1527-1528, see Baker, N., *The Fruit of Liberty : Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 98-141.

*Marzoccheschi* kept always the hill and the church, and such were the cries of the captains, animating each of his [soldiers] to hold back the flood, while now they again throw out the enemies.<sup>867</sup>

While Varchi records several tales of their daring, for the Medici camp, this stalwart resistance – even fanaticism – would have been recognised as a significant threat, and a dangerous parallel with the zealotry of Savonarola, which had forced the Medici into exile in 1494. As a consequence, the siege of Florence placed the *Marzocco* as a symbol opposed to Medici rule, such as in the ever factional city of Pistoia:

For the city of Pistoia has long been divided into two factions: one of which calls itself the Panciatichi party and the other the Chancellory party: the Panciatichi are those of the *Palle*, in other words, they follow and favour the house and the state of the Medici; the Chancellory keep the party of the *Marzocco*, in other words, they follow and favour the government of the people.<sup>868</sup>

This identification of the two opposed factions fighting to control the political destiny of Florence (and by extension, all Tuscany), had fallen into the tradition of bi-partisanship entrenched in Italian history of guelf versus ghibelline, black versus white, and now, *Marzocco* versus the *Palle*. As such, on the 3 August 1530, when the Florentine relief force-marched as a forlorn hope to raze the siege, the news of the defeat

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<sup>867</sup> “[...] I Tedeschi subitamente, e gli fece stare tuttavia in ordinanza: lo strepito e i fumi dell’artiglierie, e degli archibusi, facevano tanto romore e cotale caligine, che non lasciavano, nè vedere nè udire cosa nessuna. Durò il fatto d’arme, che così su può giustamente chiamare, più di quattr’ore con varia fortuna, ma i Marzoccheschi tenneno sempre il poggio e la chiesa, e furono tali le strida de’ capitani mentre animavano ciascuno i suoi o gli avvertivano, e sì fatte l’innondazioni, mentre ora rincacciavano i nimici.” Varchi, B., *Storia Fiorentina*, (Milano: Società tipografica de’ classici italiani, 1803), vol. IV, p. 78.

<sup>868</sup> “È la città di Pistoia già gran tempo divisa in due fazioni; l’una delle quali si chiama la parte Panciatica e l’altra Cancelliera: i Panciatichi sono da quella delle *Palle*, cioè seguono e favoriscono la casa e lo stato de’ Medici; i Cancellieri tengono la parte di *Marzocco*, cioè seguono e favoriscono il governo del popolo.” Varchi, B., *Storia Fiorentina* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1858), vol. II, book X, p. 88.



was worsened when it was realised that the commander of the Florentine garrison, Malatesta Baglioni, had conspired with the imperial forces. When confronted he said:

To which words Malatesta responded to the question [...]: he responded that he did not know, but leaving the audience, he went saying: poor Marzocco, poor Marzocco, they have put your head in a noose, and you have not realised it: adding other words of little honour.<sup>869</sup>

On 10 August 1530, the Florentine republic surrendered, and while the leading men of the Republican movement, including the *Marzoccheschi* went into exile, the Marzocco remained, not as an honoured symbol of the city, but as a reminder of the latent strength of the Republic, and to the Medici, as a tangible threat to their rule. Such was the threat of the *fuoriusciti* in the 1530s that it was only when Alessandro negotiated his marriage with Margaret of Austria, natural daughter of Charles V in 1535, did the historian and well-placed witness to events, Paolo Giovio, declare, “[the] Marzocco’s tail had been amputated”, meaning, that the attempts of the exiles to persuade the Emperor to alter the Florentine constitution in their favour had been thwarted.<sup>870</sup> Indeed, when finishing the writing of his history (under Cosimo I’s patronage in 1550s, he wrote of the siege of Florence: “Marzocco ought to be very content with me, because it is evident that I have not had a glimmer of partisanship, but a ready propensity for praising them for those virtues that merited it.”<sup>871</sup> The Marzocco therefore remained the living embodiment of anti-Medici sentiment under the Medici principate.

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<sup>869</sup> “Alle quale parole rispondendo Malatesta lo domando, [...]: rispose che non lo sapeva, ma uscito poi le ‘udienza disse: povero Marzocco, povero Marzocco, è ti è pelato la corda, & no te ne accorgi, soggiugendo altre parole poco honore.” Nardi, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>870</sup> Price Zimmermann, T., *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton, N.J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 145.

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

With the successful conclusion of the Florentine campaign, Charles V and Alessandro de' Medici, now duke-designate of the reconquered city, were both invited by the leader of the pro-Medici faction in the city of Pistoia, Gualtiero Panciatichi, to hunt and feast in the province of Pistoia.<sup>872</sup> Only a year before, the Florentines had been stationed in the city until their departure in December 1529, and had erected (with their supporters) a Marzocco over the main well of the city in Piazza della Scala. Whether Alessandro thought anything of this symbol of the Republic no one can know.<sup>873</sup> Instead, it would be the Pistoians themselves who would demean the proud symbol of popular government as the *leoncino* (little lion), a name still used today.<sup>874</sup> Following this approach, it would be Cosimo I de' Medici, who, having faced a genuine threat to rule in the Republican invasion of Tuscany in the first year of his rule, would have far greater need to tame the Marzocco into becoming his own *leoncino*.

Joanna of Austria, continuing her procession to the Palazzo Vecchio in the cortege of her father-in-law, may well have failed to grasp the allusion of Cosimo as Hercules with the slain lion-skin over his shoulder, though she could not have failed to have noticed Cosimo at the apex of the archway erected on the canto de' Carnesecchi displaying the "Theatre of the Medici" with Cosimo, dressed as a Roman general/Augustus, supported by a she-wolf (Siena) and a lion (Florence) at this feet.<sup>875</sup> This same composition was replicated in Vasari's portrait of Cosimo for the Sala di Leone X within the Quartiere di Leone X in the Palazzo Vecchio, where Cosimo is again shown in

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<sup>872</sup> Fioravanti, J., *Memorie istoriche della città di Pistoja*, (Lucca: Filippo Maria Benedini, 1758), pp. 413-414.

<sup>873</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 420-421, see also Boccardi, G., *Pistoia nel medioevo* (Pistoia: Nuove Esperienze, 2005), p. 160.

<sup>874</sup> See Chiti, I., "Il pozzo del 'Leoncino' nella piazza della Sala" *Bullettino Storico Pistoiense*, LVII, 1, (1955), pp. 20-24. The pozzo dei Grifi e dei Leoni in Montepulciano also features Marzocchi, but with the *palle* of the Medici on the shield, not the *giglio*.

<sup>875</sup> Starn & Partridge, p. 282.

Roman military armour, flanked by shields emblazoned with the devices of Augustus, *festina lente* and the Capricorn, and at his feet, pacified, the Sienese she-wolf and the Florentine Marzocco.<sup>876</sup> Indeed, this martial connection with the Marzocco was older still. The Marzocco was also integrated into Cosimo's armour, as seen with Cellini's bust (most likely 1548) of Cosimo, clearly evoking the slain Nemean lion over Hercules' shoulders as with the open-mouthed lion on Cosimo right-shoulder plate.<sup>877</sup> In this way, Cosimo was presenting an image of himself as the lion-tamer, having subdued, at least in paint and bronze, the latent threat the Marzocco posed.

Upon entering the Sala Grande, Joanna would have had the clearest understanding yet of the role of the Marzocco within Cosimo's propagandistic program. Gazing to the ceiling, she would have seen the newly completed work of Vasari and his workshop, the centrepiece of which was three tondi arranged along the central axis, which Henk van Veen has identified as representations of sovereignty.<sup>878</sup> The central tondo depicts the *Apotheosis of Cosimo*, the great climax of Cosimo's

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<sup>876</sup> See Fig 10. On the decoration of the Quartiere of Leone X, see Bartoli, p. 66 - 71, & on the Medici portraits, see Forster, "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," pp. 91-93; and van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, p. 20.

<sup>877</sup> Now in the Museo Nazionale (Bargello), Firenze, inv. Bronzi e placchette (Bargello), n. 358. See Richelson, P., *Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I De' Medici, Duke of Florence* (Ann Arbor: Garland Publishing, 1978), p. 4.; and Forster, "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici", p. 73. Commonly, this bust is erroneously thought to be disliked by Cosimo, when in fact, Elba and Portoferraio/Cosmopolis were Cosimo's great achievements of the 1540s, and therefore, the dispatch of this bust to crown the principal gateway of his eponymous city was a sign of great favour.

<sup>878</sup> van Veen, H., "Circles of Sovereignty. The Tondi of the Sala Grande in Palazzo Vecchio and the Medici Crown" in Jacks, P. (ed.), *Vasari's Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 204-217; and van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 59-67.

projection of power.<sup>879</sup> How this power is perceived, triumphal or republican, autocratic or constitutional: or rather, how two opposed political systems of popular principate and oligarchic republic could be integrated into a single cultural narrative is still keenly debated by historians.<sup>880</sup>

As Henk van Veen has noted, Flora's coronation of Cosimo in the central tondo represents the laurels of authority granted to a Roman consul, evoking the "coronation" of Octavian as an office-holder of the Republic, as opposed to an Augustus of Empire.<sup>881</sup> This element of the apotheosis of Cosimo could be taken further when we compare the two lateral tondi with the central tondo. Setting aside the important interpretation of three tondi as a triptych representing together the Florence republican constitution, one should note that at the centre of each of the lateral tondi is a lion: a Marzocco. The Marzocchi are uncrowned. They stare towards Flora who ignores them. Instead, the crown goes to the new Marzocco, Cosimo himself as depicted in the central tondo. While he takes centre stage, the Marzocchi are blocked behind allegories of the *quarteri* of the city dressed as Roman soldiers, penning in the Marzocchi (one roaring in frustration, the other timid in anticipation). Further emphasising their submission, putti, each bearing the Medici *palle*, jostle around them.

If the tondi portray a version of the coronation of the Marzocco, does Cosimo then take on the mantle of "king" of Florence? To answer this, we need but recall the lines of the crown, the *mazzocchio*: "I wear a crown worthy of my country, in order that everyone might maintain

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<sup>879</sup> Understandably, the *Apotheosis of Cosimo* features frequently in historical scholarship, see in particular: Tinagli, P., "The Identity of the Prince: Cosimo de' Medici, Giorgio Vasari and the Ragionamenti," in Rogers, M. (ed.), *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 189-196; and Cox-Rearick, J., *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, and the Two Cosimos*, p. 251; Richelson, op. cit., pp. 42-44; and Forster, "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici", pp. 97-98.

<sup>880</sup> Compare above with: van Veen, H., "Republicanism in the Visual Propaganda of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992), pp. 200-209.

<sup>881</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200-209.

liberty.” Thus, Cosimo was taking on the responsibility of government, not assuming it as an emperor or king, but receiving it as a consul – as an Octavian – nor was he acting out of ambition, but out of a sense of duty so that his country could heal after decades of instability and decay.<sup>882</sup>

To take on the Marzocco’s mantle meant both domesticating the lion to live in the house of Medici, and diverting popular attention from its association with the radical Republican tradition. Indeed, there are three other Marzocchi depicted in the Sala Grande, all “relocated” from their traditional status as Florence’s shield-bearer.<sup>883</sup> All of these lions have been put into the subservient position as familiars to the Arno, recalling Annius of Viterbo’s recent myth-creation of the Herculean origins of the city, and the name Arno as a corruption of the Egyptian name for Hercules. Not only are the Marzocchi robbed of their autonomy, but they are depicted as passive and docile, even sleepy. The most striking depiction of the Marzocco would also have been Ammannati’s *Rain Fountain*, in which the lion, with Medici palla and a book (?), provided the personified Arno with a throne.<sup>884</sup> The Marzocco was an essential part of the pictographic invention of the city of Florence under Medici rule, but it was to be perceived and depicted

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<sup>882</sup> The tondi must all be understood within the context of Cosimo’s abdication, see van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>883</sup> Marzocchi appear in the foreground of *The Conquest of Vicopisano*; to the left foreground, and in two scenes painted in c.1597-1600, *Cosimo I enthroned under a Baldachin Paid Homage by the Florentine Senators after His Creation as Duke* and *Cosimo I Dressed in Ermine Robes Crowned Grand Duke of Tuscany by Pope Pius I in 1570*. Both of these latter scenes connect the lion as a witness to Cosimo receiving authority to govern the state. Furthermore, on the Cosimo, the Arno, and its lion, see also, Langdon, G., *Medici Women: Portraits of Power, Love and Betrayal From the Court of Duke Cosimo I* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), p. 127.

<sup>884</sup> The Marzocco as both a “foundation” and a witness to the crowning of Cosimo is also depicted in the print, Martino Rota’s *‘Alexander Medices Primus Dux Florentie’ / ‘Cosmus Medices Magnus Dux Etruriae’*, (British Museum, inv. 1858,0626.365), discussed in van Veen, “The Crown of the Marzocco and the Medici Dukes and Grand Dukes”, pp. 656-657 (who also identified the so-called allegory of Tuscany as the Personification of Flora: this draws a further parallel with the tondi of the Sala Grande).

as a supporting character. Finally, in 1564, Cosimo was able to physically move the statue of the Marzocco from its pride of place on the corner of the Palazzo Vecchio, overlooking both flanks of the Piazza della Signoria, to make way for the *giganti* of Ammannati (the fountain of Neptune) and later, Bandinelli's works.<sup>885</sup> There would, though, be far greater journeys for the Marzocchi to make under Cosimo through the gifting of lions, once deemed sacred totems of the city, to the crowned heads of Europe and other important Medici allies.

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<sup>885</sup> Albizzi, *Le feste di S. Giovanni in Firenze, antiche e moderne: cenni storici*, p. 38.

### 9.3 GIFTING LIONS

#### *Gifted Lions in Florentine History*

As discussed above, according to legend, the Romans had gifted lions to Florence as a sign of her status and sovereignty. Interestingly, there is another version of the myth – that the lions of Florence, and the coronation of the Marzocco, originate from a Scottish prince. This legend states that a Prince William<sup>886</sup>, a brother of the Scottish king, Achaius (c.788), was made governor of the city of Florence on behalf of Charlemagne. As the chronicle details:

And to acknowledge the diligence therein of the lieutenant, they did institute publike plaies to be used and celebrated everie yéere, wherein with manie pompous ceremonies they crowne a lion. And further that there should be kept upon the charges of the treasure within the cite certaine lions (for the foresaid lord William gave a lion for his cognisance) and thereupon as the Scottish chronicles affirme, those beasts grew to be had in such honor amongst the Florentines.<sup>887</sup>

Even in this myth, penned by Raphael Holinshed in the late sixteenth century and published in 1587, while only folklore, it still conveys the importance of the Marzocco as a symbol of Florentine identity, especially the ceremony of its coronation, and interestingly, paralleling the Roman gifting of the lions to Florence, again represent the lions as a gift to the city.<sup>888</sup> One aspect of Holinshed's story is highly illuminating: that Florence was famed, even in the British Isles, as a place where lions were kept and honoured.

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<sup>886</sup> There was a more famous Scottish prince, and later king, William the Lion, c.1143-1214, brother of Malcolm IV, king of Scots, and while this prince would seem the more likely candidate, the chronicle sets its story in the ninth century.

<sup>887</sup> Holinshed, R., *Holinshed's Chronicles: England, Scotland and Ireland: The Historie of Scotland* (London: Routledge, 1967), vol. V, p. 190.

<sup>888</sup> Holinshed's *Chronicles* must be read with caution, see Patterson, A., *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). On Holinshed's Italian sources (Guicciardini) for the history of Scotland, see p. 57.

By the thirteenth century, lions were certainly lodged at the commune's expense as recorded by Giovanni Villani in his *Nuova Cronica*. In one anecdote he recalls how the commune had a male lion "bellissimo e forte" which escaped from its cage in the Piazza di San Giovanni in 1259.<sup>889</sup> In 1302, Villani mentions the unfortunate death of a beautiful lion cub gifted by Pope Boniface VII and killed by an ass.<sup>890</sup> In 1330, Villani records that a two lion cubs were born to the lions of Florence, a highly unusual event given that cubs born in captivity would rarely if ever survive.<sup>891</sup> Therefore, this was taken as a good augury by the people of Florence, that while Venice's lion cubs had been stillborn, the young lions of their city "many say that it is a sign of good fortune and prosperity for the commune of Florence."<sup>892</sup> The superstitious power held by the lions of Florence was something akin to the folklore surrounding the famous ravens of the Tower of London whose departure from the fortress, so the story goes, would herald the end of the English Crown.<sup>893</sup> In April 1492, upon the death of Lorenzo de' Medici (il Magnifico), Francesco Guicciardini in his *Storia fiorentina*, listed a number of portends accompanying the death of the city's leading citizen, one of which was that the lions "scrapped amongst themselves and a most beautiful one was killed by the others, and ultimately it was a day or two after his [Lorenzo's] death."<sup>894</sup>

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<sup>889</sup> This lion's escape resulted in the popular folktale of "Orlanduccio the Lion" about the boy who survived the lion's attack, see: Gherardi Dragomanni, F. (ed.), *Cronica di Giovanni Villani*, (Firenze: Coen, 1846), I, p. 289.

<sup>890</sup> Villani quotes Sibilla, saying that this foul event portended the fall of the church. *Ibid.*, p. 608.

<sup>891</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1158.

<sup>892</sup> "Disse per molti ch'era segno di buona fortuna e prospera per lo Comune di Firenze." *Ibid.*

<sup>893</sup> See Sax, B., "How Ravens Came to the Tower of London" *Society and Animals* 15 (2007), pp. 269-283.

<sup>894</sup> "[...] eransi azzuffati insieme alcuni lioni ed uno bellissimo era stato morto dagli altri, ed ultimamente un dí o dua innanzi alla morte sua." Guicciardini, *Opere inedite di Francesco Guicciardini: Storia Fiorentina*, (Firenze: Barbèra, Bianchi e Comp., 1859), p. 83.



Two important points emerge from the tradition of keeping live lions in the city. One, the living lions were living representations of Florence's sovereignty, and as such, were an important part of the civic life of the city. As living Marzocchi, they were well cared for, being treated with a sacred reverence and of great importance for the well-being of the state. This did not stop the lions of Florence from being killed in staged hunts: indeed, that was one of their most important purposes.<sup>895</sup> The second, that lions were notoriously difficult to breed in captivity, suffering from a high natural death rate. This latter point likely necessitated the brisk trade and gift exchange of lions between the elites of Europe, the purchase of lions from source countries for fresh lions in north Africa, and a lively discussion accompanying the gifting of lions of how best to develop blood lines and breedings pairs.

### *Blood Lines*

From his succession in 1537, Cosimo took responsibility for the lions of Florence. The position of lion-keeper in the days of the Republic had been given only to "un uomo onoratissimo, e nobile, addetto alle Arti maggiori."<sup>896</sup> As such, Cosimo could improve his own standing by increasing the number of lions kept in Florence, thus connecting his rule with the good auguries long associated with the birth of new lions in the city. As early as 1540, Cosimo was discussing the sending of lions to a German court, likely that of Otto-Henry von der Pfalz, discussing with some authority the state of the Florentine pride, and:

Your Most Illustrious Lordship, you ask in the name of  
Martinus Magister two young lions male and female born from

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<sup>895</sup> This point is further discussed below, but it should be noted that the Republic, though regarding the lions in Florence as a sign of the city's greatness and splendour, did not mean that the lions were some sort of "sacred cow": lions from the Florentine *serraglio* were massacred *en masse* at the staged hunts for visitors to the city, such as Pope Pius II and Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, and were an important feature of "civic diplomacy" as well as the public entertainments of important events, such as the feast of St. John the Baptist, see Rastrelli, M., *Priorista fiorentino istorico* (Firenze: Giuseppe Tofani, 1783), p. 32.

<sup>896</sup> Rastrelli, *Priorista fiorentino istorico*, loc. cit.

our pride's well-bred females to enrich the bloodline of your country's lions.<sup>897</sup>

Before any interpretation of the diplomatic significance of these gifts, the ability to send two pairs of cubs in two years is testament of Cosimo's successful management of the lion pens and their breeding programme. The gift exchange is worthy of mention for several other reasons. The first, lions were a highly symbolic object for Ottheinrich, Elector Palatine, whose heraldic device was the Palatine lion, and who had his own breeding programme.<sup>898</sup> Second, we have the payment for their transportation to Germany for 35 *scudo d'oro*.<sup>899</sup> And third, that we have the thank you letter written from the Elector, reciprocating Cosimo's gift with the announcement of his intention to give a chain-mail shirt.<sup>900</sup> In total, the exchange took over a year to complete.

By 1549, Cosimo was perhaps even considered something of an expert on lion-keeping when his father-in-law wrote to him via the Medici representative in Naples, asking him his advice on how to stop captive lions from eating their young:

For the reply of which we have to say to you that the lions, for as much hopefulness as has been shown here, they usually eat always the first parturition, and many of the others continue to eat all the others. Some overs are nurtured and brought-up, but

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<sup>897</sup> "Petiit a nobis Ill.me D. V. nomine Martinus Magister duos catulos leonum marem ac feminam aliquotque armenti nostri equas cupere et illam mirifice dixit ex utroque animalium genere susceptam prolem suis illis regionibus alere" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici tin Florence to Ottheinrich von der Pfalz in Germany, 12 June 1541, ASF, MdP 4, fol. 83, MAP Doc ID# 12664.

<sup>898</sup> Ottheinrich was also painted with lions as familiars: see Lazinner, M., *Pfalzgraf Ottheinrich: Politik, Kunst und Wissenschaft im 16. Jahrhundert*, (Hamburg: Pustet, 2002).

<sup>899</sup> *Ricordi* of Pier Francesco Riccio, 31 March 1542, ASF, MdP 600, fol. 9, MAP Doc ID# 6738.

<sup>900</sup> Letter from Ottheinrich von der Pfalz [?] in Germany to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence [?][registri], 31 May 1542, ASF, MdP 617, fol. 307, MAP Doc ID# 22879.

these are respectively few. We cannot give a method or a rule to the Viceroy to save and bring up his lions.<sup>901</sup>

The high death rate (not only from violence within the pride, but from disease) and the dangers of inbreeding, were a constant factor necessitating the frequent replenishment of his own breeding stock, even if it meant purchasing lions through merchants trading in Alexandria, as he did in 1553.<sup>902</sup> To this end, in February 1551, Pope Julius III had sent two lionesses to Florence.<sup>903</sup> Interestingly, for a court and city with a long history of lion-keeping, the Pope sent his ambassador with careful instructions for the lions' care:

The present bearer [Simone Thodesco] has brought here two lionesses from the Pope, donated to our lord the Duke and for the orders of his Excellency (the ambassador), who comes with them for the cost and management of the journey and to teach to whom will keep and care for them in the future the manner in which they have to graze, that appears to them both together. His Excellency has commanded me to address it to Your Lordship until that you do join with the one who has the care of the lions, to give them the instruction and the rule of these

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<sup>901</sup> "Per risposta delle quali habbiamo a dirvi che e' lioni, per quanto ha mostro qui la sperientia, son soliti mangiare sempre il primo parto, et molti di ^loro^ continuano a mangiarli ^tutti^. Alcuni altri li nutriscano et allevano, ^e' quali rispettivamente son pochi^. Però non [cancelled: ne] possiamo noi dar certo modo o regola al Vice Re [Pedro de Toledo] per ^salvar et^ allevare [cancelled: e nutrire] li suoi." Letter from Francesco Babbi in Naples to Cosimo I de' Medici at Poggio a Caiano, 9 February 1549, ASF, MdP 12, fol. 253, MAP Doc ID# 20922.

<sup>902</sup> Cosimo wanted specifically "uno liono maschio" – further evidence of his control and interest in the breeding of lions. This request was made through Eleonora de Toledo, along with a list of other exotic objects, such as musk and amber, placed with the merchant, Paolo Bacceglio, who was bound for Alexandria, Egypt: Note signed by Tommaso de' Medici, *Ricordi* of Eleonora de Toledo, 30 December 1553, ASF, MdP 5922b, fol. 17, MAP Doc ID# 3333.

<sup>903</sup> The lions were sent with one "Simone Thodesco". Letter from Giovanni Battista Galletti in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 26 February 1551, ASF, MdP 401, fol. 407, MAP Doc ID# 19600.

lions, which they have to put in the room in which is made for these animals.<sup>904</sup>

Perhaps these lions were born-wild and needed different care, and certainly problems could be had with different ‘races’ of lions. Indeed we can glean from letters concerning the gifting of lions that Cosimo did have problems with the fertility of his pride in 1549. Guidobaldo della Rovere, duke of Urbino, had sent his courier with a request for a lion, to which a Medicean secretary noted, “if he wants a lioness, if he is to be accommodated [in this request], of the lions there may not be a good one.”<sup>905</sup> The “good” of the lions does not refer to behaviour, but to fertility. As a letter dated later that same week discusses:

One finds close to Florence in the house of Signor Ridolfo Baglione, Simone Genga, the duke of Urbino’s man who came in the name of his lordship to ask to our lordship for a lion and a bear. I presented the letter regarding this, and having reminded this morning His Excellency, he has asked me to you write to Your Lordship that you are to say to that man [Genga], that of the lions that His Excellency has, there may not be one good one, of which it would not seem just to deprive oneself because it would not perpetuate the bloodline [razza]. But if he

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<sup>904</sup> “Il presente latore ha conducto qua due leonesse che il Papa [Julius III] ha donato al Duca n.ro s.re [Cosimo I] et per ordine di S. Ecc.a torna con esse sino costì per governarle per il camino et insegnare a chi harà a tener cura di loro per l’avenire in che maniera le habbi a pascere, che mi pare habbi a esser ogni dua di una volta. S. Ecc.a m’ha comandato lo indirizzi a V. S. a fine che lei lo facci abboccare con chi ha la cura delli altri leoni, per dargli la norma et la regola di queste leonesse, le quali s’hanno a metter in una stanza di quelle che son fatte per queste animali [...]” Letter Lorenzo Pagni in Livorno to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 8 March 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 11, fol. 35, MAP Doc ID# 3232.

<sup>905</sup> “Il [Simone] Genga, presente latore farà riverenza a V. Ecc. [Cosimo I] in nome mio, et le chiederà una grazia ch’io molto desidero [...] [An addendum in the hand of a secretary at the Florentine court reads: Se vuole una leona se ne puo le accomodare; de leoni non ce n’è se non uno che sia buono.]” Letter from Guidobaldo II della Rovere in Pesaro to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 23 March 1549, ASF, MdP 4050, fol. 113, MAP Doc ID# 22211.

wants to take a lioness which does not have cubs, then you might give one [...]<sup>906</sup>

This poor state of the lions of Florence by 1549 necessitated a change in management, moving the lions to a purpose built lion's den in 1550.

Cosimo's decision to move the lion pits from behind the Palazzo Vecchio (on the eponymous via dei Leoni) to Piazza San Marco, to what appears to be a purpose built structure, was not solely founded on the premise of animal welfare, or indeed, the plausible (albeit contrived) premise that Cosimo moved the lions from the via dei Leoni to the Piazza San Marco, just as he had moved the Marzocco from its position in the Piazza della Signoria in 1564, to move the living lions as living representatives of the Marzocco away from the centre of political power.<sup>907</sup> There is also another explanation: that Cosimo on both occasions was simply being practical. The old Marzocco statue was not being destroyed, but simply moved to a more suitable location. Given the construction work in and around the Palazzo Vecchio, just as Pier Francesco Riccio wrote to Cosimo in November of 1550 regarding the relocation of other animals held in the Palazzo Vecchio's seraglio:

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<sup>906</sup> "Si trova costì in Fiorenza in casa del S.or Ridolfo Baglione [Baglioni] il [Simone] Genga, huomo del Ill.mo S.or Duca d'Urbino [Guidobaldo II della Rovere], il quale è venuto a nome di quel signore a chiedere al S.or nostro [Cosimo I] un liono et un'orso. Presentato la lettera innanti che partissino et havendolo ricordato io questa mattina all'Ecc.a sua, mi ha imposto che scriva a V. S.ria che dica a quel huomo che de' lioni Sua Ecc.a non ha se non uno che amonti et sia buono, del quale non li par giusto doversi privare perchè non li manchi la razza. Ma se lui vuole condurre una leonessa di quelle che non fanno figliuoli che se li dia, et se li dia parimente un orso, dicendo che a Sua Ecc.a ricresce non haver altro lion buono per poterne compiacere il sopradetto Duca [...]" Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Florence to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 29 March 1549, ASF, MdP 6, fol. 202, MAP Doc ID 2352.

<sup>907</sup> The lion pens are depicted in the Buonsignori Map (1584 edition) of Florence, see Burr Litchfield, R., *Online Gazetteer of Sixteenth Century Florence* (Florentine Renaissance Resources/STG: Brown University, Providence, R.I., 2006), Square 10, "1 - Serraglio dei Lioni".

Yesterday was to be the relocation of the bears and wolves to the new space but it was very much a child's game. Today the work was finished on the new stairway inside the palace.<sup>908</sup>

It seems that ducal secretaries and apex predators did not mix well: on November 17th, neither the lions, nor the bears and wolves, had been moved from their cages on via dei Leoni:

[...] leaving the lions in their place, if it pleases Your Excellency, we want to move the bears and wolves to their new spaces so as to be able to rebuild those walls that are in that place where now the wolves stay so that the room of Your Excellency can be extended.<sup>909</sup>

Far from being a political statement, the movement of the seraglio was to extend the ducal apartments. Again, the practicality of this choice is apparent when we realise that the new lion pens were the ducal stables, and so allowed for large animals in Cosimo's collection to be lodged and provisioned within the same complex of buildings away from the hubbub of the via dei Leoni.<sup>910</sup> Importantly, the housing provided for lions, but also bears and wolves: all animals used in staged hunts held during Florentine civic celebrations.<sup>911</sup> This relocation certainly seemed

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<sup>908</sup> "Hier si fece la transmigratione de' lupi et delli orsi alla nova stanza et fu di molto trastullo de' fanciulli. Hoggi resta finita la scala nova delle stanze di dietro del palazzo." Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Livorno, 2 November 1550, ASF, MdP 613, ins. 6, fol. 51, MAP Doc ID# 18202.

<sup>909</sup> "Lasciando stare i leoni nel luogo loro, se piacesse a V. E., noi vorremo levare li orsi et lupi et mandargli alle stanze nuove per poter rifondare quelli pilastri che sono nel luogo dove hora stanno detti lupi per poter accrescere quelle camere che l'E.a V. sa [...]" Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence to Cosimo I de' Medici in Livorno, 17 November 1550, ASF, MdP 613, ins. 6, fol. 81, MAP Doc ID# 18099.

<sup>910</sup> See Burr Litchfield, R., *Online Gazetteer of Sixteenth Century Florence*, (Florentine Renaissance Resources/STG: Brown University, Providence, R.I., 2006), Square 10, "2 - Stalle del G. Duca".

<sup>911</sup> Plaisance, M., "The Cultural Policy of Cosimo I and the Annual Festivities in Florence from 1541 to 1550" in Plaisance, *Florence in the Time of the Medici: Public Celebrations, Politics, and Literature in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, pp. 101-140.

beneficial: another pair of cubs was born that year, which Cosimo had sent to him in Pisa in 1551, the secretary writing to Riccio in Florence, “that you send them here in good condition and well taken care of, such as best seems to you, for these two little lions.”<sup>912</sup>

During the 1550s, the diplomatic gifting of lions to and from Cosimo’s allies and important contacts had fully resumed.<sup>913</sup> In 1560, the young new governor of Milan, Juan Alonso Pimentel de Herrera, asked for a lion to breed with his own from Cosimo:

The castellan in this city, Don Alonso Pimentel has a lioness and therefore has kindly asked me with most great insistence that I supplicate in his name to Your Excellency that you do him the grace to make a gift of one of your young lions, so that he may make a [new] bloodline in this castle.<sup>914</sup>

This request was put through the Medicean ambassador in Milan, Fabrizio Ferrari, conforming to usual diplomatic practice of Medici agents and those from other states, who would give gifts to welcome the new figure at the head of the respective government or administration. For example, Ferrari had often mediated gift exchanges, as valuable for his own access to the heart of Milan’s gubernatorial regime, as it was for the Medici to maintain good relationships with the Spanish governors of one of the most important cities in northern Italy. As such, Ferrari gifted to Pimentel’s predecessor, Gonzalo Fernández de Cordoba, duke of Sessa, medicine and dye for his beard in January

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<sup>912</sup> “[...] che ella le mandi qua ben conditionati et accompagnati, secondo che parrà a lei, quelli duoi lioncini.” Letter from Jacopo Guidi in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 23 February 1551, ASF, MdP 1176, ins. 11, fol. 19, MAP Doc ID# 3212.

<sup>913</sup> Lions were being sent out groups, like breeding pairs, See Letter from an unidentified secretary to Cosimo I de’ Medici, 18 April 1553, ASF, MdP 617, fol. 751, MAP Doc ID# 22975.

<sup>914</sup> “Il Castellano di questa città Don Alonso Piamantello [Piementel] ha una leona e perciò ha pregato me con grandissima instantia che supplichi per nome suo V.E. che le faccia grazia di farle donare un leone giovane de suoi, perch’egli possi fare razza in questo castello.” Letter from Fabrizio Ferrari in Milan to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 9 March 1560, ASF, MdP 3108, fol. 27, MAP Doc ID# 12282.

of that year.<sup>915</sup> The gift to Pimentel was at a much higher level, but indicative of Cosimo's change in diplomatic practice in the 1550s, when once he would have taken advantage of such a request to build a potentially useful alliance, by 1560, he was secure and established enough not to prioritise such exchanges, and as such, Ferrari wrote in October of that year, again requesting that a lion be sent.<sup>916</sup>

### *A Precedential Gift*

Since 1541, Medicean diplomacy had been preoccupied with the issue of precedence between the duke of Florence and the duke of Ferrara. Precedence mattered in early modern diplomacy as it regulated the interaction of international representatives within the setting of a court, as Felicity Heal notes, "[precedence] was a form of situational communication that ensured an ambassador in a strange court was

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<sup>915</sup> Letter from Fabrizio Ferrari in Milan to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 18 January 1560, ASF, MdP 3108, fol. 6, MAP Doc ID 16409.

<sup>916</sup> "[...] Il S.r Castellano [Alonso Pimentel] mi sollecita per il Leone che già V.E. [Cosimo de' Medici] fu servita di prometterle, il medesimo fa il S.r Castaldo per li retratti [...]" Letter from Fabrizio Ferrari in Milan to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 2 October 1560, ASF, MdP 3108, fol. 119, MAP Doc ID 17319. The tardiness of this exchange is typical of this period in Cosimo's rule. At the same time as negotiating the dispatch of a Florentine lion, Fabrizio Ferrari was also trying to mediate the sending of promised portraits of Cosimo, Eleonora, and Giovanni delle Bande Nere to a noble Captain of Artillery, Giovanni Battista Castaldo based in Milan. Castaldo first asked for portraits in August 1560, over a three year period, at least six requests for these portraits were made. When they finally arrived in Milan and February 1563, Castaldo had just died. See Letter from Fabrizio Ferrari in Milan to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 3 February 1563, ASF, MdP 3108, fol. 444, MAP Doc ID 12383.



welcomed as the proper embodiment of his master.”<sup>917</sup> The issue of Medici-Este rivalry runs as a thread through this thesis, and it is important to give accounts of its many dimensions as an issue worthy of attention given the amount of ink spent in the epistolary collection of the duke of Florence on discussing the issue. As often is the case in early modern diplomacy, a seemingly definitive resolution to a problem is often illusive, and this was just such the case with the dispute with the house of Este. In 1548, the Toledo faction at the imperial court, headed by the duke of Alba, and supported by Cosimo’s ambassador, Bernardo de’ Medici, and resident secretary with the imperial court, Bartolomeo Concini, obtained an official declaration from Charles V that Florence took precedence over Ferrara.<sup>918</sup>

While this decision satisfied Cosimo, it was soon reported that the decision had not been accepted by all. Cosimo’s ambassador at the French court, Giovanni Battista Ricasoli, the bishop of Cortona, wrote to his master to say that he had not received the appropriate recognition, Cosimo replied:

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<sup>917</sup> Heal, F., *The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 127. On precedence in early modern diplomacy, see Mattingly, G., *Renaissance Diplomacy*, pp. 201-207; Burke, P., *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy: Essays on perceptions and communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 168-1723; Roosen, W., “Early modern diplomatic ceremonial: a systems approach,” *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980), pp. 452-476; Visceglia, M. A., “Il cerimoniale come linguaggio politico,” in Visceglia, M. & Brice, C. (eds.), *Cérémonial et riteuil à Roma (XVIe-XIXe siècle)*(Rome: École française de Rome, 1997), pp. 117-176; Levin, M., “A New World Order: The Spanish campaign for precedence in early modern Europe,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6 (2002), pp. 233-264; and most recently, Levin, M., *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 26-29. On issues of status in early modern society more generally, see Romaniello, M. & Lipp, C. (eds.), *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>918</sup> Letter from Francisco de Toledo in Trent (or Augsburg) to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Livorno, 25 January 1548, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 357, MAP Doc ID# 4649.

[...] of the declaration of the Emperor in the precedence between the duke of Ferrara and us, you have had the resolution and order of how much you would have to do towards this business, which we do not need to say to you more, if not that his Majesty [the king of France] and his ministers will take this towards their desire that it will not be by the declaration, and may not do it as it [Florentine precedence over Ferrara] is being given in Rome and at the imperial court [...] Our ambassador that was there until now was being stopped from from being well understood in these things and that this would be proved, but his not wanting to make a mistake, he could not himself say the declaration [of the Emperor], but His Majesty would do well to recall that kind and lovely works that were being sent to the Dauphin [side note from in the hand of a secretary or Cosimo: we remind ourselves how we believe for certain that the loud protests of the agents of the agents of Ferrara nearby you are of little effect] this proposal of our said ambassador showing displeasure that he may have a made mistake by having said this thing [the precedence issue] to the Most Serene Queen [Caterina de' Medici]. We will give an order to send to His Most Christian Majesty [Henri II] two little lions that he has been looking for, and it is enough for us to be informed of where to send them and to whom in Lyon or Marseilles, because they can then be sent on to wherever His Majesty will be.<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>919</sup> “[...] della dicharatione del Imperatore nella precedentia tra il Duca di Ferrara et noi, haverete hauto la resolutione et l’ordine di quanto havevi a fare in questo negotio intorno al quale non ci occorre dirvi altro, se non che piglila cotesta Maestà et i ministri suoi per quel verso che vogliono che non sara che la dicharatione non sia fatta et essendoci data a Roma et alla Corte di Cesare [...] [fol. 480r] Il nostro Imbasciatore che ci era alhora si fusse ferma, che haveva inteso bene le cose et ci haverebbe demoistro che non ci voleva far torto et questa non si puo dir dichiaratione ma sua Maesta si doverrà anco recordare delle grate amorevole parole che disse <alhor sendo Delfino> [Side note: ci ricordandosene come crediamo per certo che li schiamazzi delli agenti di Ferrera doverrebbono apso [proposed reading: appresso] di lei operar poco] questo propositio al detto nostro Imbasciatore mostrando dispiacere che ci fussi fatto torto et che la cosa li premesse, rispetto alla Serenissima Regina. Daremo ordine d’inviare a sua Chr.ma May.ta [Henri II] li dui leoncini che vi ha ricerchi, et in tanto noi ci aviserete dove si hanno a indirizzare et a chi in Lyone o a Marsilia perché sien poi mandati alla May.ta sua dove sarà.” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Pisa to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli in France, 6 March 1548, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 478, MAP Doc ID# 7469.

While the papal and imperial courts confirmed Cosimo in the order of precedence, France remained loyal to its steadfast Italian ally, the house of Este.<sup>920</sup> Indeed, Ercole II d'Este, duke of Ferrara, was married to a French princess, Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII, making him not only head of one of the most cultivated courts in Italy, but almost a prince of the blood with regards his status within the kingdom of France.<sup>921</sup> Cosimo's reaction to this slight on the part of the French, and his appreciation that the ambassadors of Ferrara would do everything possible to block Cosimo's insistence that his status would be respected, was to send a gift of lions.

Several weeks later, it seems that Cosimo thought to send the lions to his kinswoman, Caterina de' Medici, writing:

The little lions that were desired by the Most Serene Queen [Caterina de' Medici], I had not been given advice if they have to be male or female, meaning that the cubs this year there are not, less the rest are born this spring. There are two good cubs born last year, one male, the other female, which I would like to send to His Majesty at anytime once you have made known which address Lyon.<sup>922</sup>

The concern here seems to be with finding a suitable breeding pair, and that the lions are of the right age to travel. Indeed, Cosimo seems

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<sup>920</sup> On Ercole II d'Este's alliance with the French during the long Habsburg-Valois conflict, see Mallett & Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559*, pp. 271-296.

<sup>921</sup> Baumgartner, F., "Renée of Ferrara" in Grendler, P. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1999), pp. 305-306; and Belligni, E., "Renata di Francia tra Ferrara e Montargis" in Benedict, P., Seidel Menchi, S., & Tallon, A. (eds.), *La Réforme en France et en Italie: Contacts, Comparaisons et contrastes* (Rome: Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2007), pp. 363-379.

<sup>922</sup> "De' lioncini che desiderava la Ser.ma Regina [Caterina de' Medici] non ci havete dato aviso se hanno a essere maschi o femine, significandovi che de' piccoli questo anno non ce n'è alcuno se già non ne nascesse in questo resto della primavera. Ce ne son ben dua [cancelled: li] nati l'anno passato, che l'uno è maschio l'altro è femina, e' quali piacendo a S. M. gli si manderanno ogni volta che farete intendere [cancelled: che] ^dove^ s'habbino a indirizzare in Lione" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli in France, 26 March 1548, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 561, MAP Doc ID# 4845.

preoccupied by the logistics of the transportation of the animals, not willing to risk sending them to a location unless he knows exactly that they will find their way to the royal couple. Certainly, Cosimo is wanting to send a good gift, and a pair of healthy young lions certainly was a gift of royal status. Yet, given the context of the precedence crisis with Ferrara as undermining Cosimo's own status (and thus sovereignty) at the principal royal court of Europe, we must ask: is there not some significance that the old embodiment of Florence's status and sovereignty was the Marzocco lion? Alas, the document which states Cosimo's conceptualisation of this gift of lions, or anyone else's perception of a gift of lions from the court of Florence, as being a gift of living Marzocchi remains elusive. What is clear, is that in April 1548, this gift of lions is still being spoken about in the missive as the *proposed* gift of lions.<sup>923</sup>

Of course, at least two people at the French court could have associated Cosimo's gift as a representation of the Marzocco, and Cosimo's nonchalant presentation of a kingly gift, when he was, for them, an usurper, were the brothers: Piero and Leone Strozzi.<sup>924</sup> The two sons of the leader of the Republicans at the battle of Montemurlo, who, though he did not face decapitation at the feet of Marzocco, died

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<sup>923</sup> "[...] E ci pare poi che Sua Maesta et cotesti signori hanno fatto quella resolutione sopra la precedentia che per le de 25 del vescovo habiamo inteso che non sene debba pui parlare <illegible> quanto apresso di loro s'e trattato et havendo nella resolutione demoetro che il rispetto che vogliono havere a Duca di Ferrara et non ragion' li ritiene a non dar quel grado all' Imbasciatori nostri che appresso il Papa et la Maesta Ceserea [...] S'aspetta intendere come per le precedenti si scrisse al Vescovo se i leoncini che [cancelled: su] quel Re [Henri II] desidera haver da noi vuol che sieno amnedui maschi e di che età, perché quando li volesse piccoli piccoli, noi non ne habiamo, non havendo questo anno figliato, et i minori son d'un anno. Et se di questi gli piacerà ^haver^ si darà ordine di mandarne dua al Conte di Tenda [Claudio di Savoia] ^a Marsilia^, come ci ha quel Vescovo avisato, però non havendo inteso [cancelled: come] ^di che qualità ^ sua M.ta li voglia fategli, et avisatecene con le prime." Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Livorno to Piero Gelido in Paris, 16 April 1548, ASE, MdP 11, fol. 48, MAP Doc ID# 6942.

<sup>924</sup> In 1548, Piero and Leone Strozzi were fighting for the Guise faction in Scotland, see Merriman, M., *The Rough Wooings*, (London: Tuckwell, 2000), pp. 327-330.

in his cell in the Fortezza da Basso.<sup>925</sup> The flight of his sons was inevitably into French service, and in May 1547, less than a year before Cosimo had decided to send lions to the French court, had been made aware by his agent, Bartolomeo Panciatichi, that both brothers had been afforded great honours in France: Leone with the command of eighty galleys, and Piero with the promise of a position in the French army.<sup>926</sup> Dangerous jobs for *Marzoccheschi*. In any case, Cosimo was insistent that lions had to be the gift to be sent, even if it was necessary to wait for the next births:

Of the precedence, do not say more, neither to the King [Henri II], neither to others, it is enough which has been said, and that in the two principal courts, for the Pope and the Emperor, it [seniority in precedence] may be given to us. And to the Most Serene Queen [Caterina de' Medici-Valois] remit to make it with time those offices that they seem to her such a thing that you touch, and it will not be made into some mistake by the duke of Ferrara [Ercole II d'Este], when they capitulate such as the other two courts have done, and all the world knows and consents, then that the Duke will not have a parity with us, and he may not take precedence. The little lions, such as I have written last time to Piero [Gelido], there are not others smaller than one year, and if His Majesty replies that he wants such, I will send

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<sup>925</sup> Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, p. 131.

<sup>926</sup> Letter from Bartolomeo Panciatichi in Lyon to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 17 May 1547, ASF, MdP 1173, ins. 4, fol. 170, MAP Doc ID# 8086.

them to Marseilles, and if such as they are too big that he does not like them, it will be necessary to wait for the next births.<sup>927</sup>

One must be very careful not to read too much into their symbolic significance. Rather than making it a policy to send Marzocchi, Cosimo continued far more the tradition of the Republic, to maintain the lions at the city's expense. Moreover, if we go by the number of cubs born under Cosimo, it was obviously much more frequent than the special events recorded in the Villani chronicle. This is not to dismiss the full context of the Marzocco in Florentine history, but rather, to suggest that the strong anti-Medicean connotations of the Marzocchi, and lions in general, were quickly lost. Instead, our attention on Cosimo's gifting of lions should relate to the wider princely practice of gifting exotic animals (and all the difficulty in breeding and keeping them that such an activity entails) and the interest and enthusiasm in many early modern courts to develop collections of animals (often gifted) into palatial menageries.

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<sup>927</sup> "[...] Della precedentia non farete più parola, né con il Re [Henri II de Valois], né con altri, bastando assai quel che s'è detto, et che nelle dua corte principali, del papa [Paulus III] et del Imperatore la ci sia data. Et alla Serenissima Regina [Caterina de' Medici-Valois] rimetterete il farne col tempo quelli uffitii che li parerà come di cosa che tocchi a lei et ne la quale non si faria torto alcuno al Duca di Ferrara [Ercole II d'Este], quando si terminasse come l'altre dua corte hanno fatto, et tutto il mondo conosce et acconsente, che quel Duca non ha parità con noi, non che ci habia a precedere. De' leoncini come si scrisse ultimamente al Pero [Piero Gelido], non cen'è de più piccoli, che di un anno, et se attende risposta se sua Maestà li vuole tale, per inviarli a Marsilia, et se così grandi non li piacciono, sarà necessario aspettare alla prima figliatura [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli in Paris, 12 May 1548, 12 May 1548, ASF, MdP 11, fol. 154, MAP Doc ID# 19754.

## 9.4 GIFTS OF EXOTIC BEASTS AT THE MEDICI COURT(S)

### *The Giraffe of Lorenzo de' Medici*

The artistic transformation of the Palazzo Vecchio not only displayed the achievements of Cosimo I de' Medici, but also his Medici forebears in the rooms of the Quartiere di Leone X for which work starting in 1556 with Vasari's workshop using an iconographic program invented by Cosimo Bartoli.<sup>928</sup> Of the six rooms in the apartment – Sala di Cosimo il Vecchio, Sala di Cosimo I, Sala di Leone X, Sala di Clemente VII, Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico – the latter, dedicated to the most famous of his ancestors is worthy of further attention with regards gifted animals.<sup>929</sup> On the central ceiling of the Sala di Lorenzo, *il Magnifico* is depicted at what was his most 'royal' moment, the receiving of ambassadors presenting gifts: plates, horses, porcelain, and remarkably, a giraffe.<sup>930</sup> This presentation recalls Guicciardini's comment on Lorenzo's death:

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<sup>928</sup> On Cosimo Bartoli's involvement, see Bryce, *Cosimo Bartoli (1503-1572): The Career of a Florentine Polymath*, pp. 57-71. This design closely followed many of the elements of the *apparato* for the wedding celebrations of Eleonora and Cosimo, see Forster, "Metaphors of Rule: Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici", pp. 91-93; and Cox-Rearick, J., *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 242-243.

<sup>929</sup> On the importance of dynastic imagery in Cosimo's program of self-representation, see van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 18-26: who states, "The theme of dynastic Medici rule is articulated very clearly in the rooms of Cosimo Pater Patriae and Lorenzo il Magnifico, where the figures of both men are emphatically princely. The focus is their statesmanship, their military courage, their diplomatic gifts, their erudition, their piety, and their patronage. Here, Cosimo's image was reinforced by those two revered ancestors." (p. 20). On the iconographic schema deployed, see Bartoli's letter fragments published in Frey, K., *Der Literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris* (Munich: Muller, 1923-1930), pp. 437-438; and Rubin, P., "Vasari, Lorenzo and the Myth of Magnificence," in Walter, I. (ed.), *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo mondo*, (Rome: Donzelli, 2005), pp. 427-442.

<sup>930</sup> See Fig. 13.

To be made in faith, the friendship and great credit that he had with many princes of Italy and outside of Italy: with Innocent [VII]; with King Ferrando [of Naples], with Duke Galeazzo [of Milan], with King Louis [XII] of France, with the Great Turk [Bayezid II], and the Sultan [Quitbay of Egypt], of which in the last yers of his life presented a giraffe, a lion, and geldings [...].<sup>931</sup>

Receiving diplomatic gifts from important individuals was therefore a sign of Lorenzo's high status and the respect in which he was held. Lorenzo, like his father, Cosimo il Vecchio, provided the strongest models for leadership available for Cosimo I. Leadership that depended upon popular support, the continued use of the forms and terms of the older Republican constitution<sup>932</sup>, an extensive cultural programme, (especially commissioning new artworks, creating new collections, and hosting public events)<sup>933</sup>, the personal management of

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<sup>931</sup> "Fanne fede la amicizia e il credito grande che ebbe con molti principi in Italia e fuori di Italia: con Innocenzio, col re Ferrando, col duca Galeazzo, col re Luigi di Francia, infino al Gran Turco, al Soldano, dal quale negli ultimi anni della sua vita fu presentato di una giraffa, di uno liono e di castroni: che non nasceva da altro da sapere lui con gran destrezza e ingegno trattenersi questi principi" Guiccardini, *Storia fiorentina*, IX, p. 85.

<sup>932</sup> See, for example, N. Rubinstein, *The government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494)*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966; Brown, A., *The Medici in Florence: The Exercise and Language of Power* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1992).

<sup>933</sup> Paolucci, A. & Sframeli, M., *La maschera di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Vicende e iconografia*, (Firenze: Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, 1993); Elam, C., "Lorenzo de' Medici and the urban development of Renaissance Florence", in *Art History*, 1, (1978), pp. 43-66; Caglioti, F., *Donatello e i Medici. Storia del David e della Giuditta*, (Firenze: Olschki, 2000), 2 vols.

<sup>934</sup> Falchi, F., "La politica di Lorenzo il Magnifico e l'espansione verso i due mari (Mare Adriatico)", in *La sicurezza dell'esistere. Le architetture fortificate al tempo di Lorenzo, catalogo della mostra*, (Cerreto Guidi: Istituto Italiano dei Castelli / Sezione Toscana - Scramasax, 1992), pp. 137-142; Fubini, R., "Diplomacy and government in the Italian city-states of the fifteenth century: Florence and Venice" in Frigo, *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, pp. 25-49; and Bullard, M., "The language of Diplomacy in the Renaissance," in Toscani, B. (ed.), *Lorenzo de' Medici. New perspectives*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 263-278.



Florence's foreign affairs<sup>934</sup>, and forging strong bonds between the city and countryside.<sup>935</sup>

The older fifteenth-century "Medici model" for Cosimo's rule has been well-discussed in historiography, but less analysed has been Cosimo's own manipulation of the history of his family for his own ends. One example is the painting, *Lorenzo il Magnifico receives the ambassadors*. The painting's most frequently discussed feature is the inclusion of a giraffe, a gift from the Mamluk Sultan Qaitbay who sent an embassy to Florence in November 1487.<sup>936</sup> This remarkable event was of global importance, as well as a major civic event in the life of the Renaissance city which was imprinted upon the communal memory, as shown in the frequent equating of the Mamluk embassy with the three Magi (accompanied by the giraffe), in artworks of the

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<sup>935</sup> Salvadori, P., *Dominio e patronato: Lorenzo dei Medici e la Toscana nel Quattrocento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2000); Connell & Zorzi, *Florentine Tuscany: Structures and Practices of Power*; and *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Politica economia cultura arte. Atti del Convegno per le celebrazioni del V centenario della morte di Lorenzo il Magnifico (Firenze-Pisa-Siena, 5-8 novembre 1992)*, (Pisa: Pacini, 1996), 3 vols.

<sup>936</sup> A popular history of the giraffe is Belozerskaya, M., *The Medici Giraffe: And Other Tales of Exotic Animals and Power* (London: Hachette, 2009), who nonetheless makes an important argument that the royal gift of a giraffe turned Lorenzo from a "merchant into a prince".

Adoration.<sup>937</sup> Inevitably, the opening of diplomatic relations with Mamluk Egypt under Lorenzo was a political triumph – the giraffe was also associated with the triumph of Caesar in Florentine art of the sixteenth century<sup>938</sup> – attesting to the success of Lorenzo's foreign policy, and as such, connotations of this event were useful for Cosimo to convey in the painting of his ancestor, his family's long-established power and global reach as he himself advanced his own ambitious diplomatic programme.<sup>939</sup>

In the Morgan Library there exists one of Vasari's preparatory drawings for the ceiling of the Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico.<sup>940</sup> When compared with the final execution, there is one notable change with the completed version (beyond the more prominent inclusion of Eurydice and Omphale in the background): the insertion of a she-wolf and a lion, both leashed with chains, entering the lower foreground. The coupling of the she-wolf and lion mirrors only one other painting in the Quartiere di Leone X: Cosimo I as Augustus, with the she-wolf (Siena) and lion (Florence) at his feet.<sup>941</sup> One may wonder if Cosimo himself may have made this change (he certainly was consulted on every work

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<sup>937</sup> The paintings include: Ghirlandaio, D., *Adoration of the Magi* (1488), fresco, Tornabuoni Chapel (high altar), Santa Maria Novella, Florence; Botticini, R. [attr.], *Adoration of the Magi* (1495), tempera on panel (poplar), The Art Institute of Chicago; del Sart, A., *Adoration of the Magi* (1511), fresco, Votive cloister, Santissima Annunziata, Florence; Aspertini, A., *Adoration of the Magi* (late fifteenth century), oil on panel, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence. See also Cuttler, C., "Exotics in Post-Medieval European Art: Giraffes and Centaurs" *Artibus et Historiae*, 12 23, (1991), pp. 161-179.

<sup>938</sup> del Sarto, A. *Triumph of Caesar* (c.1520) [later alterations by Alessandro Allori in 1582], fresco, Sala Grande, Villa Medicea at Poggio a Caiano. The inclusion of the giraffe recalls Pliny, *Natural Histories*, VIII, 69.

<sup>939</sup> See Joost-Gaugier, C., "Lorenzo the Magnificent and the Giraffe as a Symbol of Power" *Artibus et Historiae*, 8, 16, (1987), pp. 91-99.

<sup>940</sup> Compare Vasari, G., *Design for the Ceiling of the Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Palazzo Vecchio, (ca. 1556–58), The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

<sup>941</sup> Vasari, G., *Cosimo I as Augustus* (1558-1559), Sala di Leone X, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

to be undertaken<sup>942</sup>). In any case, the inclusion of a lion and a she-wolf paired together, is a timely addition as Vasari's workshop busied themselves in these rooms in the immediate aftermath of the conquest of Siena, and finished their work in 1559, during which time Philip II had officially enfeuded the city and the Sienese *contado* to Cosimo. By placing the Sienese she-wolf and Florentine Marzocco as gifts in the painting of his forebear, Cosimo was creating for himself and his dynasty – through the artistic depiction of gifted animals – a sense of destiny.

Importantly, it should be remembered that Lorenzo intended to regift the giraffe to Anne, queen of France, were it not for the beast's death.<sup>943</sup> Such an animal was therefore rich with diplomatic value, symbolic of far more than the exotic orient, and was itself intended as a gift to further Lorenzo's diplomatic ambitions. Indeed, as seen in both Andrea del Sarto's *Triumph of Caesar* at Poggio a Caiano (perhaps Cosimo and Eleonora's favourite villa), and in Vasari's *Lorenzo il Magnifico receives the ambassadors*, the giraffe is not alone, but gifted along with other exotic animals – the aforementioned wolf and lion, but also horses, camels, parrots, and monkeys – which indicates the elevated status of gifting rare and exotic animals: a practice in which Cosimo and Eleonora fully engaged.

### *The Medici Menagerie*

The development of the Medici menagerie was not a formal process of planning and acquisition. The animals the ducal family enjoyed at their various homes were not only an important aspect of court life, but very often the living collections of gifted animals, which in turn, were gifted to others. Perhaps more than any other Medici collection, the Medici menagerie was the focus of diplomatic

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<sup>942</sup> Bryce, *Cosimo Bartoli (1503-1572): The Career of a Florentine Polymath*, p. 62.

<sup>943</sup> Belozerskaya, *The Medici Giraffe: And Other Tales of Exotic Animals and Power*, pp. 87-129.

exchange.<sup>944</sup> This pattern of exchange was in keeping with other famous Renaissance gifts of animals, such as the elephants gifted by the king of Portugal to Pope Leo X Medici in 1514 and to various members of the Habsburg family in 1549 and 1551.<sup>945</sup> Indeed, the taste for collecting specimens of flora and fauna, but especially living creatures, was one of the high fashions of European court life in the sixteenth century.<sup>946</sup> As such, the gifts of rare animals was a particularly elite form of exchange, most often restricted to only the ruling family and

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<sup>944</sup> Lazarro, C., "Animals as Cultural Signs: A Medici Menagerie in the Grotto at Castello," in Farago, C., *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 197-227; and Simari, M., "Menageries in Medicean Florence," in Mosco, M. (ed.), *Natura Viva in Casa Medici: Dipinti di animali dai depositi di Palazzo Pitti con esemplari del Museo Zoologico "La Specola": Firenze, Palazzo Pitti, Andito degli Angiolini, 14 Dicembre, 1985-13 Aprile, 1986*, (Firenze: Centro Di, 1985), pp. 27-29. See also Pérez de Tudela, A. & Jordan Gschwend, A., "Luxury Goods for Royal Collectors: Exotica, princely gifts and rare animals exchanged between the Iberian courts and Central Europe in the Renaissance (1560-1612)" in Trnek, H., & Haag, S. (eds.), *Exotica. Portugals Entdeckungen im Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Renaissance. Die Beiträge des am 19. und 20. Mai 2000 vom Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien veranstalteten Symposiums*, (Mainz: Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums, 2001), pp. 1-127.

<sup>945</sup> On Leo's elephant, Hanno, see Bedini, S., *The Pope's Elephant* (Nashville: Sander's & Company, 1998); on Suleiman, the Habsburg elephant gifted to Prince Carlos of Spain, and later, to Maria of Austria and the Emperor Maximilian II, see Jordan Gschwend, A., *The Story of Suleyman: Celebrity Elephants and Other Exotica in Renaissance Portugal*, (Zurich: Pachyderm Press, 2010).

<sup>946</sup> See Jordan Gschwend, A. & Pérez de Tudela, A., "Renaissance Menageries. Exotic Animals and pets at the Habsburg Courts in Iberia and Central Europe", in Enenkel, K., & Smith, P. (eds.), *Early Modern Zoology: The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 418-447. On Medici interests in "exotica" from the Americas, see Turpin, A., 'The New World Collections of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici and Their Role in the Creation of a Kunst- and Wunderkammer in the Palazzo Vecchio', in A. Marr (ed.), *Curiosity and Wonder From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 63-86. There was, of course, a far older tradition of exchanging rare animals, see Brubaker, L., "The Elephant and the Ark: Cultural and Material Interchange Across the Mediterranean in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58 (2004), pp. 175-195.

the very highest scion of the aristocracy.<sup>947</sup> Unlike other typologies of gifts, these animals had to come from elsewhere, requiring them to be sent, at great expense, from distant continents.<sup>948</sup> The consequence of this effort to obtain, display, tame, and breed, was that the collection could be enlarged and gifted through diplomatic channels.

For Cosimo and Eleonora, beyond the lion pits (which, as we have seen, also housed bears and wolves), the ducal couple developed a collection of animals based at their villa at Poggio a Caiano. In this they were following another precedent of Lorenzo, as it was to Poggio a Caiano that he brought the animals (lions, a dromedary, a cheetah, the giraffe and an “Ara”) gifted by Sultan Quitbay in 1487.<sup>949</sup> Poggio a Caiano provided the best space of all the Medici estates for keeping animals, and it was at Poggio a Caiano that Cosimo would create a hunting range (the *Bargo mediceo di Bonistallo*) and his best stables.<sup>950</sup> The interest in exotic animals at the villa was revived by Eleonora de Toledo, who spent a great amount of time there, but also, through her family in Naples, had access to the trade in exotic animals, as a letter from 1546 attests:

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<sup>947</sup> See Gómez-Centurión, C., “Treasures Fit for a King: King Charles III of Spain's Indian Elephants” *Journal of the History of Collections*, 22, 1, (2010), pp. 29-44; Ringmar, E., “Audience for a Giraffe: European Expansionism and the Quest for the Exotic”, *Journal of World History*, 17, 4 (2006), pp. 375-397.

<sup>948</sup> See Gorgas, M., “Animal Trade between India and Western Eurasia in the Sixteenth Century: The Role of the Fuggers in Animal Trading,” in Mathew, K., *Indo-Portuguese Trade and the Fuggers of Germany* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997), pp. 195-225; and Russel-Wood, R., “Dissemination of Flora and Fauna,” in *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 148-182.

<sup>949</sup> See Foster, P., *A Study of Lorenzo de' Medici's villa at Poggio a Caiano*, (London: Garland Publishing, 1978), p. 69; Galletti, G., “Le jardin de la villa de Poggio a Caiano”, in Acidini, C. (ed.), *Jardins des Médicis: Jardins des palais et des villas dans la Toscane du Quattrocento*, (Arles: Actes Sud, 1997), pp. 196-199; and Nonaka, N., “The Garden of the Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano”, *Bulletin of Saitama Women's Junior College*, 15 (2004), pp. 177-191.

<sup>950</sup> Gurrieri, F., & Lamberini, D., *La scuderie della Villa Medicea di Poggio a Caiano* (Prato: Azienda autonoma di turismo di Prato, 1980).

[...] The cargo of the boat come from Naples has appeared [...] the said cargo has the animals of the Duke and Her Ladyship the Duchess [...] His Excellency has asked me to write to Your Lordship that the animals must be sent to Poggio [a Caiano], but arrange that the hens and ducks from the Indies are looked after diligently, and inform yourself of who knows how best to look after them and what they need.<sup>951</sup>

In October 1547, from Benedetto Oliveri, a scion of the family bankers to Pope Paul III, Eleonora received the gift of two baboons, sent as a sign of his affection and loyalty to her, he also sent rather charming instructions on how to care for the animals: “and give them almonds and nuts with shells and little pits which they crack open themselves just as a very gentle person.”<sup>952</sup> Exotic animals also accompanied the exchanges of food which Eleonora made to Ercole II d’Este, who promised to send in return an Indian donkey in June 1550.<sup>953</sup> While the brother of Julius III, Balduino del Monte, sent to the duchess a parrot (and a kitten) in September 1551.<sup>954</sup> All these gifts were sent to

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<sup>951</sup> [...] Comparse il sopracarico della barca venuta da Napoli [...] Il detto sopracarico ha parlato con il Duca et con la S.ra Duchessa delli animali venuti [...] S. Ex.a m’ha comandato che io scriva a V. S. che li [i.e. animali] debba mandar’ al Poggio, ma ordinare che alle galline et alle anatre delle Indie sia atteso con buona diligentia, informandosi da persone che el sappino che governo et cura bisogni loro havere [...] Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Cafaggiolo to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 11 May 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 2, fol. 27, MAP Doc ID# 7799.

<sup>952</sup> “[...] E dando loro mandorle o noce col guscio e una piccola preta [proposed reading: pietra] apresso le schiaceranno con essa come una persona molto gentilmente.” Letter from Benedetto Oliveri in the Mugello to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 12 October 1547, ASF, MdP 1173, ins. 8, fol. 356, MAP Doc ID 8169. On the Benedetto Oliveri’s remarkable rise to fortune, see Guidi Bruscoli, F., *Papal Banking in Renaissance Rome: Benvenuto Olivieri and Paul III, 1534-1549* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>953</sup> Letter from Eleonora de Toledo in Florence to Ercole II d’Este in Ferrara, 17 June 1550, ASF, MdP 1, fol. 54, MAP Doc ID# 5896. For Eleonora’s relations with Ercole II d’Este, see above, pp. 231-233.

<sup>954</sup> Letter from Tommaso de’ Medici at Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 14 September 1551, ASF, MdP 1175, ins. 11, fol. 2, MAP Doc ID# 3205.

Eleonora, demonstrating that the Medici menagerie at Poggio a Caiano was very much her domain.

While Eleonora received gifts of animals, Cosimo more often than not was giving them away. In 1549, Cosimo sent rare birds to Cardinal Benedetto degli Accolti (who had been exiled by Paul III in 1542), in order to discuss their species, Accolti thanked Cosimo for these gifts with “all his heart”.<sup>955</sup> Favour was also shown to Princess Isabella Gonzaga di Guastalla, wife of Cosimo’s ally, Ferrante I Gonzaga di Guastalla, governor of Milan, in October 1548 with animals sent from Naples to Milan, thanks to Cosimo’s family network and diplomatic agents: “and of the Princess of Molfetta, one recalls the promise made to her of Indian ducks and other animals which she desired for her park.”<sup>956</sup> In this way, the contacts used to create the Medici menagerie at Poggio a Caiano – namely, Eleonora’s familial contacts in Naples – to support Medicean diplomacy, strengthening Cosimo’s alliances with anti-Pauline clerics and pro-imperial Italian noblewomen.

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<sup>955</sup> Letter from Benedetto degli Accolti in Florence to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 5 February 1549, ASF, MdP 2719, fol. 273, MAP Doc ID# 23726.

<sup>956</sup> “Et della Principessa di Molfetta [Isabella di Capua-Gonzaga] s'osserverà la promessa dell'anatre d'India et d'altri animali che le desidera per il suo barcho.” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici at Poggio a Caiano to Francesco Babbi in Naples, 19 October 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 70, MAP Doc ID# 20978.

## 9.5 CONCLUSION

In 1576, as part of the ceremony of homage of the Tuscan communes to Florence, the Marzocco's simple Republican *mazzocchio* crown was replaced by one modelled on the newly commissioned Grand Ducal Crown of Francesco I, whose title of Grand Duke, papally conferred on his father in 1570, was recognised by the Emperor Maximilian in that year.<sup>957</sup> In crowning the Marzocco with the Ducal crown, Henk van Veen has argued, was a particular political message – that the sovereignty of the Medici family over Florence was to be permanent – directed at a wider audience than the Tuscan delegates assembled to pay homage, but at the imperial court at Vienna.<sup>958</sup> The restoration and transformation of this ancient ceremony had been a long process, but that continuation occurred at all is indicative of why it is vital to understand the symbolic significance of the lion in Florentine political, civic, and artistic cultures as the constitution shifted from republican to royal over the course of the sixteenth century. The questions this section has grappled with are: one, what connection exists between Cosimo's gifting of lions and his treatment of the Marzocco; and two, what was the model (if one existed at all) for the gifting of exotic animals, such as lions, given the legacy of Lorenzo il Magnifico, but also, the established practice of gifting exotic animals between the courts of Europe. These questions were asked in order to connect Cosimo's gift-giving practices with the iconographical program followed in the Palazzo Vecchio (and elsewhere) in order to better understanding the social world of gift-giving in Medicean diplomacy under Cosimo I.

In 1539, given the political associations of the Marzocco as the embodiment of the anti-Medicean republican struggle, Cosimo could have killed all the living lions in the city and had the Marzocco statue dropped unceremoniously into the Arno. He did neither. The blood the *fuoriusciti* spilt in September 1537 seems to have been enough to re-

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<sup>957</sup> van Veen, "The Crown of the Marzocco and the Medici Dukes and Grand Dukes", p. 657.

<sup>958</sup> Ibid.



baptise the Marzocco as a Medici pet. The continuation, indeed, improvement of Florence's pride of lions, indicates a trend in Cosimo's approach to dealing with the Marzocco, live lions, and "high value" animals in general: to continue established models. As such, Cosimo became the lion master as the old Republic had employed. Cosimo did not despise or fear the Marzocco, instead he viewed it as a predecessor, and as we see in the Sala Grande of the Palazzo Vecchio, Cosimo himself took on the ceremonial role of wearing the crown of government, so that stability and peace would reign. Moreover, Cosimo joined two formerly opposed animals together: the she-wolf of Siena and the Marzocco of Florence as heraldic retainers when he himself represent the man-in-arms, Augustus, both in the Sala di Leone X and during the triumphal entry of Joanna in 1565. Perhaps most importantly, Cosimo sought to combine his own connection with allegorical animals with that of his most esteemed ancestor, Lorenzo il Magnifico, by including both beasts in the depiction of Lorenzo receiving the princely gifts from Sultan Qaitbay, which had elevated him to a higher status in Europe (such that he was going to regift the giraffe to the queen of France).

Therefore, the gifting of lions for the most part was not an act of autocratic authority: exiling lions as gifts as he had exiled the men who had opposed his family's rule. While a poetic interpretation of the gifting of lions by Cosimo, it lacks the important nuances with which Cosimo conducted his public affairs, whether civic propaganda or nationwide statecraft. It is far more interesting to appreciate the diplomatic value of these animals as putting Cosimo on an equal footing with the great potentates and princes with whom he dealt, some of them with ready access to exotic animals from their oceanic empires. When Cosimo's precedence was threatened at the French court of Henri II and Caterina de' Medici, it was a gift of lions which he felt would be most effective to guarantee his standing. It is striking then that the subject that pervades correspondence is not about making a political statement with these animals – although Florence had long been famous for its lions – but how to care for them and transport them across Europe. This is even more marked when we realise that any and all of the animals gifted were subject to harm in one of the most important of courtly activities – hunting – a field of princely activity

which again is supported by frequent and varied gifts, and more, was very much part of Cosimo's diplomatic practice.

## 10. GIFTS AND HUNTING

### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

#### *Hunting and the Medici-Habsburg Wedding of 1565*

The giant painted stage curtain by Federico Zuccari hung in the Sala Grande of the Palazzo Vecchio for Joanna's entry to the city depicted a magnificent hunt.<sup>959</sup> In the midground a deer hunt is well underway. The huntsmen, dressed in their distinctive blue and red livery (recalling the tapestries of the ducal collections in production while Zuccari worked on his curtain<sup>960</sup>), on foot and on horseback, have broken the herd of deer, isolating others while giving chase to the main group. In the foreground, three huntsmen have cornered a young stag, hounds already snapping at its body, the buck is caught at it hopes to prance away, turning to meet the gaze of a young huntsman, poised to lob a spear at its neck. On the left foreground the main hunting party enters the scene. Equipped with greyhounds, spears, a falconer, and

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<sup>959</sup> The design for the curtain is preserved in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, Florence, inv. no. 11074F; see also Gere, J., *Mostra di disegni degli Zuccari (Taddeo e Federico Zuccari, e Raffaellino da Reggio)[Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, 24]* (Florence: Olshcki, 1966), pp. 36-37, fig. 33. See Fig. 11.

<sup>960</sup> Stradano, G., *Caccia al cinghiale con lo "stioppo" (archibugio)*, Serie delle Cacce per la villa di Poggio a Caiano (1566). (catalogue note: tessitura in basso licio di Giovanni Sconditi, prima del 6 ottobre 1566 Arazzo). Trama: lana; ordito: lana, 6-7 fili per cm; 400 × 518 cm Firenze, Palazzo Pitti, Depositi Arazzi, inv. Arazzi n. 107.

hunting horns, this is a group of some importance. Indeed, three of the people depicted can be recognised. At the far left, Cosimo I's portrait gazes at the view, while just ahead of him, also on horseback, is a young blond woman, her hair elegantly braided under a fine hat, and accompanying her, a young man, his portrait clearly presented, but his gaze averted from the viewer: this is, of course, the newly married couple: Joanna of Austria and Francesco de' Medici. In the background, under bursting sunbeams, an idealised city of Florence awaits their arrival.

This was not the first association of Joanna and Francesco's betrothal marked by courtly hunts. When Francesco travelled to Vienna to collect his bride in 1565, of the many entertainments lavished there and in Munich upon the prince of Tuscany, the most frequent was hunting. Francesco hunted in the company of his bride's brothers, the Emperor Maximilian II and the Archduke Karl. As Francesco himself wrote to his father:

Yesterday morning, His Majesty [Maximilian II] ordered a hunt and I have sweetly dined with him and the archduke, not without some modest toasts, and I have rested, while now we go hunting where with much pleasure they will kill twenty wild boar, some wild goats, wolves, and a deer.<sup>961</sup>

As part of the formalities of receiving his bride, Francesco exchanged gifts with the imperial family, gifting to Joanna a golden chain, fine drapes, a pair of gloves, and to her family, an ivory crucifix (made by an "eccellente scultore") and other fine things gifted in Cosimo's name. Francesco suavely gifted the diamond engagement ring to Joanna while

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<sup>961</sup> "Hiermattina Sua Maestà fece ordinare una caccia et [ho] desinato con lei et con l'arciduca dolcemente non senza qualche brindisi modesto,[et ho] riposato mentre [l']hora andammo a caccia dove con molto piacere si amazzarono venti porci, alcuni capri, volpe et una cervia" Letter from Francesco I de' Medici in Viena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 1 November 1565, ASF, MdP 5923, fol. 158, MAP Doc ID# 3472.

they danced together.<sup>962</sup> In return, Francesco received a fine hunting rifle with inlaid ivory, likely the work of Habsburg gunsmiths in Nürnberg.<sup>963</sup> While a gun as a wedding present may strike us as a strange token towards marital bliss, that is, until we note the fine ivory inlay depicting the story of Adam and Eve. Given the poetic mindset towards hunting, and also, that men and women could hunt together – a rare opportunity for equal interaction – the gift is quite romantic, an image of man and woman together in a forested paradise as Francesco and Giovanna would be in the Tuscan countryside. Indeed, hunting as an amorous activity - *la caccia d'amore* - would have been present in their minds.

Appropriately, just such an image was conveyed in Zuccari's stage curtain. Yet, while evoking these themes, Zuccari was working on the curtain a month before Francesco's hunts with the Habsburgs.<sup>964</sup> The origin of the hunt scene was much more simple: hunting was an important courtly pursuit, but it was also an activity which Cosimo personally took great pleasure in, such that hunting and hunt-related

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<sup>962</sup> "Oltre all'haver portato doni per le medesime Regine, ha ancor presentato grossamente tutti li offitiali, ministri, et cavalieri di Corte, et di più lassato in mano della Ser.ma Principessa Giovanna N.S.ra molte catene et simili ornamenti d'oro, molte pezze di drappi, molte para di guanti, et altre galanterie [...] Tra gli altri doni fatti a lor Alt.ze vi è un crocifisso d'avorio lavorato dalla mano di eccellente scultore, et così bene adornato, che si stima per cosa bellissima. Alla Ser.ma N.ra padrona oltre alle gioie di grandissimo valore dateli dal Concino [Bartolomeo Concini] in nome del Duca N. S.re [Cosimo I de' Medici] donò il Principe di sua mano mentre che stavano a giocare et burlare insieme un bellissimo diamante in anello [...]" Letter from Emilio Vinta in Vienna to Francesco Vinta in Florence, 29 November 1565, ASE, MdP 4473, fol. 575, MAP Doc ID# 12017.

<sup>963</sup> See Fig. 12, and also, Tamassia, M. & Scalini, M. (eds.), *A caccia con Cosimo I: Armi mediche in Villa* (Firenze: Sillabe, 2014), pp. 45-46. Compare this to the hunting rifle in the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Invent. W 4284; and the "Radschlossgewehr für die Jagd Laufschiemied „MM“, Schäfter „CO“ Süddeutschland, um 1600 Eisen, Holz, Hirschhorneinlagen graviert" in the Museum im Palais, Graz, Austria.

<sup>964</sup> "Federico Zuccaro has ten days' work left on his curtain for the stage [...]" Letter from Giorgio Vasari in Florence to Vincenzo Borghini in Poppiano, 21 September 1564, quoted and translated in Starn & Partridge, *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600*, p. 204.

objects played a central role in his 'personal' diplomacy and his gift-giving to the leading men and women of Europe and Italy.

## 10.2 COSIMO AND HUNTING

In Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortigiano*, the character of Cesare Gonzaga elucidates to the court of Urbino, the physical abilities expected of a gentleman at court:

Amongst these it seems to me that hunting is the most important, since in many ways it resembles warfare; it is the true pastime of great lords... and we know that it was very popular in the ancient world.<sup>965</sup>

Indeed, hunting has been ever the pursuit of rulers. As Thomas Allsen has shown in his study, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, the importance of hunting, while with local variations and temporal nuances, is shared by many other courts, not only in Europe, but across the Levant, India, and Asia, during the early modern period.<sup>966</sup> Beyond Castiglione, hunting was frequently written about in hunting manuals, but also as a suitable theme with which to write panegyric odes and poetry.<sup>967</sup> Over the course of the sixteenth century, hunting became a more restricted and regulated activity. Francis I banned non-nobles from hunting in 1515. Across Europe princes began creating hunting reserves and constructing hunting lodges in order to guarantee a good hunt, for themselves as much as for their guests.

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<sup>965</sup> Castiglione, B., *The Book of the Courtier* [trans. Bull, G.,](London: Penguin, 1976), p. 63.

<sup>966</sup> Allsen, T., *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>967</sup> See, for example, *La Chasse Royale. Composée par le Roy Charles IX* (Paris: Madame Veueve Bouchard-Huzard, 1857); the works of a Tudor diplomat who wrote the two most important sixteenth century tracts in English, Tuberville T., *The Booke of Faulconrie* (1575), followed soon after by *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting* (1576); and Scandianese, T., *I quattro libri della caccia; con la dimostrazione de Luochi de greci et latini scrittori* (1566), dedicated to Ercole d'Este, duke of Ferrara, using examples of ancient and mythic hunters and huntresses to richly illustrated an otherwise practical guide detailing how to read weather patterns and which colour was best for your horse. For a survey of hunting in Italian literature, see Barberi Squarotti, G., *Selvaggia dilettezza. La caccia nella letteratura italiana dalle origini a Marini* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2000).

Cosimo followed suit in 1549 when he created the ducal hunting domains and constructed his hunting lodge at Cerretto Guidi.<sup>968</sup> Other Medici properties had long been used for hunting, namely Poggio a Caiano, which Lorenzo il Magnifico had used as his base to hunt Montalbano.<sup>969</sup> Cosimo had hunted long before inheriting any of the Medici patrimony: famously, Cosimo was out hunting when Guicciardini and Varchi sent to tell him that he had been elected duke of Florence. Hunting was Cosimo's favourite pastime, as Varchi wrote, "Cosimo [...] with the twelve thousand ducats granted him as his private income, devotes himself to enjoyment and employing himself in hunting, fowling and angling."<sup>970</sup> Indeed, this sense of Cosimo as a "simple hunter" has been a familiar trope in historical writing.<sup>971</sup> Hunting, though, need not be seen as in anyway anathema to the lifestyle of an urbane prince of the sixteenth century. Hunting was not only a pursuit for the outdoors, but a popular theme for courtly art: Cosimo commissioned a series of tapestries on the

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<sup>968</sup> Farneti, F., "La legislazione medicea sulle bandite, la caccia e la pesca," in Cascio Pratilli, G., & Zangheri, L., (eds.), *La legislazione medicea sull'ambiente, IV, Scritti per un commento* (Firenze, 1998), pp. 95-117; and Barsanti, D., "Tre secoli di caccia in Toscana attraverso la legislazione: da «privativa» signorile sotto i Medici a 'oggetto di pubblica economia' sotto i Lorena," *Rivista di Storia dell'Agricoltura*, 26, 2, (1986); on later reforms, see Calonaci, S., "Nello specchio di Diana. La corte e la riforma della caccia nella Toscana di Cosimo III" in Bianchi, P. & Passerin d'Entrèves, P., *La caccia nello Stato sabauda II. Pratiche e spazi (secc. XVI-XIX)* (Torino: Silvio Zamorani editore, 2011), pp. 153-170.

<sup>969</sup> On Lorenzo's hunting activities, see his poem, "La caccia al falcone", in *Opere di Lorenzo de' Medici detto Il Magnifico* (Firenze: Giuseppe Molino, 1825), vol. II, pp. 114-129. On the Italian medieval hunting tradition, see Galloni, P., *Il cervo e il lupo. Caccia e cultura nobiliare nel Medioevo*, (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1993), and Galloni, P., *Storia e cultura della caccia* (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000).

<sup>970</sup> "[...] che Cosimo [...] attendesse con que' dodicimila ducati darsi un bel tempo, e s'occupasse tutto ne' piaceri, ora del cacciare, ora dell'uccerllare, ed ora del pescare" Varchi, B., *Storia fiorentina*, (Milano: Società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1803) vol. V, p. 296.

<sup>971</sup> "The carefree adolescent who just thirty-six hours before had been tramping over the hills of the Mugello had suddenly, on Tuesday morning, January 9, 1537, become a prince." Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, p. 18.



subject.<sup>972</sup> The objects discussed below demonstrate some of the finest craftsmanship of the age.<sup>973</sup> Cosimo also had a collection of antiquities all evoking the beauty of the hunt.<sup>974</sup> As we have seen, Cosimo associated himself with Hercules, the great hunter of mythology.<sup>975</sup> As this section will demonstrate, Cosimo's passion for blood sports, and his skill as a huntsman, profoundly influenced his diplomatic activities.<sup>976</sup>

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<sup>972</sup> Most magnificently, he commissioned several series of tapestries, designed by Giovanni Stradano and Alessandro Allori, and woven at the Medici workshop under the master, Benedetto Squillo. The latter series by Allori was composed of thirty-six individual tapestries, each depicting a hunting scene, see Meoni, L., "I panni d'arazzo' con le cacce per la villa di Poggio a Caiano" *Paragone*, 45, (1994), p. 94-100; see also, Sellink, M., *Stradanus (1523-1605), Court Artist of the Medici* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 48-49.

<sup>973</sup> See the exhibition catalogues: Pietrosanti, S. (ed.), *Le cacce dei Medici* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1992); and Tamassia, M. & Scalini, M. (eds.), *A caccia con Cosimo I: Armi mediche in Villa* (Firenze: Sillabe, 2014).

<sup>974</sup> See above pp. 258-259 in this thesis.

<sup>975</sup> See the exhibition catalogue, Paolozzi Strozzi, B. (ed.), *Giambologna: gli dei, gli eroi: genesi e fortuna di uno stile europeo nella scultura. Catalogo della mostra* (Firenze, 2 marzo-15 giugno 2006) (Firenze: Giunti, 2006) Interestingly, published in 1623, Cardinal Carlo de' Medici was the dedicatee of *La Caccia Etrusca* by Scipione Francucci an epic poem which recounts, extensively, the skills of the Cardinal's father, Ferdinando I de' Medici, who is often compared to Heracles.

<sup>976</sup> See also, Passerin d'Entrèves, P., "Il cerimoniale della caccia al cervo," in Bianchi, P. & Merlotti, A. (eds.), *Le strategie dell'apparenza. Cerimoniali, politica e società alla corte dei Savoia in età moderna*, (Torino: Silvio Zamorani editore, 2010), pp. 201-222.

### 10.3 GIFTS FOR HUNTING

#### *Man's best friend*

Pier Maria III de' Rossi, marquis of San Secondo, shared with Cosimo both family blood and a passion for the hunt.<sup>977</sup> In June 1540, the marquis wrote to Cosimo informing the Duke of the difficulty in procuring hounds which he wished to send to him, mentioning also Galeotto II Pico, count of Mirandola, need for hounds also.<sup>978</sup> Persevering, he eventually re-gifted to Cosimo hounds he had inherited in the legacy of his late father-in-law, Federico II Gonzaga.<sup>979</sup> For Cosimo's birthday in 1541, both Pier Maria and Federico sent hounds and horses.<sup>980</sup> The Marquis's effort to cultivate Cosimo's friendship was not only for the sake of family ties and shared hobbies – Pier Maria needed Cosimo's support, as the marquis's hard-won autonomy for his

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<sup>977</sup> For a general history of the Rossi family, see Arcangeli, L. & Gentile, M. (eds.), *Le signorie dei Rossi di Parma tra XIV e XVI secolo* (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2007) see in particular, Arcangeli, L., "Principi, homines e 'partesani' nel ritorno dei Rossi", pp. 231-307. Pier Maria had been an early visitor to Cosimo after his election, writing that he wanted to stay with the duke, and not Margaret of Austria (thus declaring his personal loyalty to Cosimo), see Letter from Cherubino Buonanni in Pagliaia to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 7 May 1537, ASF, MdP 3260, fol. 102, MAP Doc ID# 19385.

<sup>978</sup> "[...] n'è grandissima penuria, io n'havevo parecchi a San Secondo, ma in questi rumori che ci sono stati sono andati tutti in disperso. Io non mancherò far tutta quella diligenza sarà possibile al mondo per trovarne un parro de boni et ne manderò a fuori uno che mi ha promesso il Conte [Galeotto II Pico] della Mirandula, et li manderò a v. Ecc.tia et quando per sorte non potesse trovarli per le cause dette di sopra la supplico si digni havermi per excusato [...]" Letter from Pier Maria III de' Rossi in Mantua to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 13 June 1540, ASF, MdP 343, fol. 495, MAP Doc ID# 18559.

<sup>979</sup> "[...] Ho fatto ogni opera è stato possibile per trovare un parro de boni brachi per mandarli a V. Ecc.tia ma in effetto non vi è stato ordine a ritrovarne alcuno perché essendo hora nel colmo della cazza, quelli che ne hanno non se ne vogliono privare [...] Essendo morto il S.or duca [Federico II Gonzaga] qui, il suo maestro di cazza mi ha donato un parro di boni cani da porzi li quali mando a V. Ecc.tia supp.la si degni accettarli per amor mio [...]" Letter from Pier Maria III de' Rossi in Mantova to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 7 July 1540, ASF, MdP 345, fol. 89, MAP Doc ID# 18648.

<sup>980</sup> Summary of letters dated 13 June 1541, ASF, MdP 617, fol. 191, MAP Doc ID# 22816.

small fiefdom from the Gonzaga family was under threat from Farnese ambitions in nearby Parma. Interestingly, even when Pier Maria changed from the imperial to French sides in 1543, Cosimo and the Marquis remained in contact, and hounds continued to be gifted to the ducal kennels.<sup>981</sup>

Cosimo exchanged dogs and horses with most of the lords of Italy. In the summer of 1563 he sent a female hound to Guidobaldo II della Rovere, duke of Urbino<sup>982</sup>, and received precious greyhounds from duke Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia in 1565.<sup>983</sup> The arrangements were reciprocal, and as such, Cosimo used his diplomatic channels to procure new hounds for the hunt, for example, in writing to Bernardo de' Medici, his representative at the imperial court in Brussels during 1549, he mentioned his eagerness to receive falcons and English hounds that Bernardo had bought for him.<sup>984</sup> As such, it is unsurprising that Innocenzo Cybo – ever calculating at how to appeal to Cosimo's favour – requested hounds, saying that all he had to do in Carrara was to

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<sup>981</sup> Summary of letters dated 13 February 1543, ASF, MdP 617, fol. 257, MAP Doc ID# 22852.

<sup>982</sup> “[...] Le mando la cagna che vedrà, acciò sendo tanto terribile cacciator' possa haver' la razza di questi miei cani [...] credo che la cagnia ch'io le mando porti poco pericolo d'essere ammazzata da porci, se già non la menasse altri che Vostra Eccellenza, sì che al sicuro potrà con il tempo ridomandargliene razza.” Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici at Poggio a Caiano to Guidobaldo II della Rovere in Urbino, 16 September 1563, ASF, MdP 219, fol. 199, MAP Doc ID# 19681.

<sup>983</sup> “[...] ho preso tal piacere che mi ha invitato a mandar li presenti levrieri a V.Ecc.a, la quale se gli riusciranno tali come io desidero non dubito che non habbia a pigliarsene la parte sua. [...]” Letter from Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia in Fossano to Cosimo I de' Medici in Firenze, 31 October 1565, ASF, MdP 2960, fol. 111

<sup>984</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Pisa to Bernardo de' Medici in Brussels, 18 November 1549, ASF, MdP 13, fol. 159, MAP Doc ID# 21005.

hunt.<sup>985</sup> Keeping hounds, as wit lions, required the ability to mix blood stocks into more effective blood lines, as Chiappino Vitelli intended with a gift of eighteen hounds and a Corsican bitch in December 1546, offering to send more if they proved suitable.<sup>986</sup> There should be no doubting the importance of good hounds for men of Cosimo's social class. When in February 1548, a prize hound gifted to the Duke by Don Diego de Mendoza died during a hunt, along with a huntsman, both were buried with martial honours:

As much as I come to console myself with Your Excellency of the valorous death of the black and white that you sent to me in these past days, slain by a great hog in the open field, which itself was killed soon after as it merited and they gave jointly [to the hound and the huntsman] the most honourable send-off [...]<sup>987</sup>

For Cosimo, the gifting of hounds provided an escape from political calculations, and to some extent allowed him to interact with others who shared his passions. It would be naive to think that diplomatic

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<sup>985</sup> "[...] Potendomi V. Ecc.za [Cosimo I] far gratia di uno astore o terzuolo et di un par di bracchi, non vogla mancare di accomodarmene, perché me ne truovo in tutto privo, et qui, come quella sa, se non vado qualche volta a caccia non ci ho altro spassatempo. Et li dui ucelli stiavi che a questi giorni mandai a comprare costì, l'uno si morì prima che giungesse a Carrara, l'altro subito che fu giunto qui. [...]" Letter from Innocenzo Cybo in Carrara to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 27 August 1542, ASF, MdP 3717, [not paginated], MAP Doc ID# 23617.

<sup>986</sup> Letter from Gian Luigi (Chiappino) Vitelli in Città di Castello to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 22 December 1546, ASF, MdP 379, fol. 301, MAP Doc ID# 4667.

<sup>987</sup> "[...] In tanto vengo a condolermi con V. S. della valorosa morte del cane bianco et nero, mandatemi alli giorni passati da quella, da uno bravissimo porco in campo aperto, che presto li detti il castigo meritava et così giuntamente si feciono l'essequie honoratissimamente insieme con quelle di Amador, il braccieri morto ancor lui [cancelled: di] pur di suo male. Eravi Tonino [Tarchi] et Piero Sordo con Gramaglie et tutto la canatteria che fece bel vedere. Et per lasciare queste cose funebre vengo a fare le raccomandationi a V. S. d'una gran quantità d'ocche et grue et anatre che aspettano a 20 passi le archibusate, il simile fanno tutti li falconi, li quali sono perfettissimi [...]" Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Diego de Mendoza in Rome, 7 February 1548m ASF, MdP 9, fol. 400, MAP Doc ID# 4700.

considerations were not taken into account, but to one extent, gifts of hounds demonstrate Cosimo's participation in a wider cultural pursuit of pleasure.

*Caterina de' Medici, queen of France*

For Cosimo, the gifts of hunt-related objects and animals were gifts of a personal nature, this did not mean that they were apolitical gift. The Peace of Cr py in 1544 marked a lull in fighting between the Valois and Habsburg factions in Europe.<sup>988</sup> Cosimo took advantage of this peace to affect a rapprochement with his kinswoman, Caterina de' Medici, wife of the Dauphin Henry in October 1544, writing to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli, his ambassador at the imperial court, that he intended to send a special envoy to congratulate Caterina on the birth of her first son.<sup>989</sup> On 20 March 1545, the political gifts of ducal portraiture were accompanied with personal gifts of hunting-related objects, in this case, two fine horses.<sup>990</sup> In response to their gifts, Caterina reciprocated by sending to Cosimo and Eleonora hounds and

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<sup>988</sup> See Mallet & Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>989</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici at the Villa Castello to Giovanni Battista Ricasoli in Brussels, 9 October 1544, ASF, MdP 3, fol. 581, MAP Doc ID# 19941.

<sup>990</sup> Incidentally, these paintings of the ducal family were by Bronzino, and this would likely have been the cycle of exchanges in which Bronzino's *Allegory of Venus and Cupid* could most likely have been sent, see pp. 265-267 in this thesis. As the letter explains: "[...] Facci ogni opera et diligentia possibile di trovare in cotesta citt  dua cavalli turchi che siena belli, agevoli, et habbino il portante che li vuole per la S.ra Delfina [Caterina de' Medici] [...] Hoggi queste Ex.tie [Cosimo I; Eleonora de Toledo] hanno fatto una bella caccia, et amazzato di molte fiere [...] S. Ex.a [Cosimo] vuole che la S. V. oltre a quei ritratti che io li dissi da parte sua dovesse far fare al Bronzino del S.or Don Francesco [I], del S.or Don Giovanni, et di Donna Maria, ne facci fare altre tanti in tre quadri in quella migliore forma et maniera che sar  possibile perch  gli vuole mandare alla S.ra Delfina, che gli domanda." Letter Lorenzo Pagni in Lecceto to Pier Francesco Riccio, 20 March 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 6, fol 295, MAP Doc ID# 2447.

horses.<sup>991</sup> Emphasising the personal dimension of the gifts sent, it was Eleonora who wrote personally to thank the Dauphine:

The lovely action that Your Highness is pleased to make to me by sending to visit me her gentleman to present me the four horses and small dogs, one and the other are most beautiful, has pleased me as much as I can be.<sup>992</sup>

Despite the fraught political and social history between the two families, a bond was being built through the gifting of these animals. The cycle of gift and reciprocal gift had commenced, and in March 1546, Cosimo and Eleonora planned to send more horses that year.<sup>993</sup> This exchange was interrupted the year after, when the king, Francis I, died on 31 March 1547. With Caterina's succession to the throne as Henry II's queen consort, the brief peace would quickly become less stable. As an indicator of this change, and that Cosimo was keenly interested in the gifts of others, it was reported to him that the Strozzi brothers had travelled to Caterina in order to make signs of their loyalty. As Serristori reported from Rome:

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<sup>991</sup> Interestingly, Bernardo de' Medici, having received the gifts for Cosimo and Eleonora from Caterina de' Medici, was also soliciting a gift of a choirboy (*putto*) and trying to work out what the best gift would be for the Dauphin: [...] Metendo qua l'ordine la Ill.ma S.ra Delphina [Caterina de' Medici], un presente per il S.or Duca [Cosimo I] al Duchessa [Eleonora de Toledo] miei S.ri di cani et chinee m'è parso avanti [...] Intanto io voglio vedere che la S.ra Delphina veggia di provvedere un putto che canti per il Duca et anchor che sappia che [proposed reading: in fin amore] habbi usato ogni diligentia et non si sia trovato cosa che satisfaccia vedrò che, ametta l'ama, la se ne facci dare uno al Delphino]" Letter from Bernardo de' Medici in France to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 12 June 1545, ASF, MdP 1171, ins. 9, fol. 502, MAP Doc ID# 7219.

<sup>992</sup> "[...] L'amorevole officio che all'Altezza Vostra è piaciuto [cancelled: far] ^usar^ con me nel [cancelled: farmi ^mandarmi^] ^mandare^ a visitarmi da [cancelled: per] il gentilhuomo suo et presentarmi insieme delle quattro achinee et de' piccol cani, l'une et li altri bellissimi, mi è stato grato quanto esser possa [...]" Letter from Eleonora de Toledo in Florence to Caterina de' Medici in France, 19 September 1545, ASF, MdP 6, fol. 232, MAP Doc ID# 12575.

<sup>993</sup> Letter from Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 6 March 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 1, fol. 27, MAP Doc ID# 7328.

[...] These Strozzi leave tomorrow evening for France, and they intend to take the Venice road. They have dressed discreetly [*hanno fatto livree*] as with them they have many jewels and the most beautiful works to gift to the Most Serene Queen [Caterina de' Medici].<sup>994</sup>

If Cosimo was going to attempt a relationship with Queen Caterina, his gifts would need to be much grander.<sup>995</sup>

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<sup>994</sup> “[...] Questi Strozzi partono domani da sera per la volta di Francia, et faran la via di Venetia, secondo intendo. Han fatto livree et porton con loro molte gioie et cose di lavori bellissimi per donare a la Serenissima Regina [Caterina de' Medici], ancor che alcuni pensino che Ruberto [Strozzi] habbi a restare in Venetia. [...]” Letter from Averardo Serristori in Rome to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 2 July 1547, ASF, MdP 3464, fol. 32, MAP Doc ID# 23932.

<sup>995</sup> From 1548, Cosimo sends live lions to Caterina and Henry, see above, pp. 353-354.

## 10.4 GIFTS OF GAME

### *Cinghiale to Andrea Doria*

While horses and hounds are some of the most frequently gifted objects to Cosimo and Eleonora, one of the most regular gifts to result from the hunt was game sent to select personages in front of whom Cosimo wanted to convey a particular message or build a certain type of relationship. In the early years of his reign, one of the most important men with whom it was necessary to both court favour, and more importantly, establish his own standing, was Andrea Doria of Genoa, the grand admiral of the imperial fleet.<sup>996</sup> The Genoan fleet guaranteed Tuscany from both French and Ottoman incursions, and as such, Doria's goodwill was essential. Cosimo chose to build this relationship through the regular gifting of wild boar meat.

While hunting in the forests of San Rossore around Pisa, Cosimo and Eleonora had enjoyed a good hunt on 25 January 1542, killing seven wild boar, one of which was particularly big and wild. They decided to send that same night to Andrea Doria the best kills of the day.<sup>997</sup> In order for the meat to be fresh, it had to be sent straight away as it would neither keep, nor could it travel long distances. As such, Genoa was within easy range. Unlike gifts of other foodstuffs and wine, gifts of game, hunted by the duke's own hand, communicated something personal about Cosimo, displaying his martial virtuosity (for the hunt, as we recall Castiglione was closest to war) and physical strength. By hunting his own lands, he was demonstrating himself to be

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<sup>996</sup> On Doria in these years, see Oreste, G., *Genova e Andrea Doria nella fase critica del conflitto franco-asburgico* (Genova: Società ligure di storia patria, 1950); and his unfinished autobiography, see Borghesi, V. (ed.), *Vita del principe Andrea Doria: scritta da lui medesimo incompleta* (Genova: Compagnia Dei Librai, 1997).

<sup>997</sup> "Sua Ex.tia insieme con la Duch.a [Eleonora de Toledo] [cancelled: sono stati] a questo vento sono stati a caccia verso San Rossore, dove si son presi VII porci, fra li quali ce ne fu un grossissimo e bestiale, che ha ferito malamente il cavallo di Leone [cancelled: da] camerieri [Leone di Santi da Carpi], dal quale generosamente fu morto. Manderannosi questa nocte a donare al Sig.or Principe [Andrea] Doria, al qual saranno cari [...]" Letter Ugolino Grifoni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 25 January 1542[?], ASF, MdP 1170, ins. 2, fol. 68, MAP Doc ID# 5937.



in firm possession of his territory, but also of displaying an intimacy by thinking to send to Doria the prizes of his hunt, likely interpreted as a sign of respect to his neighbour.<sup>998</sup>

This friendship took the form of an annual tribute of wild boar, hunted by the Duke himself.<sup>999</sup> This regularity was an important indicator of a stable relationship. The dispatch of the boar meat was often accompanied by fruits, wines, and cheeses, sent through the Medici agent in Genoa, Tommaso di Negro, who would distribute the majority to Andrea and his immediate family, and to other notables in Genoan high society.<sup>1000</sup> This was an important advantage for Tommaso who would partake of the gifts himself (perhaps as a payment-in-kind or reward for his services), while using the gifts to gain access to Doria and his circle, who greatly appreciated the gifts, as was reported one year, “each thing was most gratefully received, and the *Trebbiano* and *greco* wine was reputed to be absolutely perfect.”<sup>1001</sup> In this way, Cosimo was not just maintaining an important relationship, but building a reputation for himself as a man of munificence as well as

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<sup>998</sup> Andrea Doria was the de facto ruler of Genoa, but he refused the title of doge.

<sup>999</sup> “[...] Mi trovai alla morte d'un cignale di sei che se ne son presi et mandati a Genova stasera per presentarli al S.or Principe [Andrea Doria] come si suole fare ogni anno [...]” Letter from Cristiano Pagni in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 22 November 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 6, fol. 15, MAP Doc ID# 7701.

<sup>1000</sup> “[...] La caccia dieri et quella di 3 di sono molto belle. S. Ex.tia mela fatte inviare a Gienova dove che 6 ne tochi al principe [Andrea Doria], 4 a Gianetino [Doria], uno a messer Niccolò Grimaldi, uno a l'abate [Tommaso di Negro], e uno per Agostino [...]” Letter from Vincenzo Ferrini in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 26 November 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 6, fol. 27, MAP Doc ID# 20481.

<sup>1001</sup> “[...] noltre [Andrea Doria] dice haver riceuto le frutte che V. Ex.a gli ha mandato, et che sono bellissime et bonissime, secondo la stagione dell'anno [...] L'Abate [Tommaso] di Negro con sue de' XVI accusa la riceuta delle frutte, trebbiano, greco, cignali et caprioli, et in nome di V. Ex.a haverne fatto parte al signor Zanettino [Doria], et tutto il resto presentato al signor Principe [Andrea Doria], et ogni cosa esserli stato gratissima, et il trebbiano et greco esser stato reputato perfectissimo. [...]” Letter from Pier Francesco Riccio [?] to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 25 February 1542, ASF, MdP 617, fol. 145, MAP Doc ID# 22794.

magnificence in sharing food that he and his family would also eat.<sup>1002</sup> Importantly, given Tuscany's historic problems with food supplies, famine, and dearth (often reliant upon Genoan grain ships to alleviate the crisis), Cosimo was demonstrating to Genoan high society the prosperity of Florentine Tuscany under his rule.

While it is important to reflect that the gift of meat from the hunt to Doria, a military man, could well have been a calculated effort to demonstrate Cosimo's martial virtues as a huntsman, it could also have been sent to communicate a oneupmanship over the Admiral. This would follow the pattern of the most famous gift of a hunted wild boar, that of Francis I of France's gift to Henry VIII of England, an animal by then extinct in England, to show not only his horsemanship and bravery, but the quality of his own royal hunting grounds over Henry's.<sup>1003</sup> Sending such a direct message could have been Cosimo's intention when he sent a wild boar to the historian Paolo Giovio (Giovio's *Storie* was one of the most talked about writing endeavours of

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<sup>1002</sup> [...] Noi mandiamo, secondo il solito, parte della nostra caccia di Vada al Sig.r Principe [Andrea Doria], che saranno 7 porci et un cervo. Et della parte nostra ne haviamo lassata la cura alla duchessa [Eleonora de Toledo] [...], Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Rosignano Marittimo to Tommaso di Negro in Genoa, 29 January 1548, ASF, MdP 9, fol. 369, MAP Doc ID# 4659.

<sup>1003</sup> Weir, H., *Henry VIII: The King and His Court* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), p. 106.

<sup>1004</sup> See Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy*. Charles V was particularly concerned as to how he would be portrayed, see Burke, P., "Presenting and Representing Charles V" in Soly, H. (ed.), *Charles V, 1500-1558* (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 2013), pp. 393-476. Cosimo was also concerned about how he would be recorded, see: "Il Jovio [Paolo Giovio] lo scrive qua a Tomasso Cambi tutto alla rinversa, et che Vostra Excellentia li diede una stoccata nella bocca et mille belle cose. Suplico Vostra Excellentia che gli faccia [proposed reading: sapere] la verità della cosa, perché io so che la metterà nelle Storie [...]" Letter from Pirro Musefilo in Naples to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 16 November 1540, ASF, MdP 653, ins. 11, fol. 287, MAP Doc ID# 26636.

the sixteenth century<sup>1004</sup>) in order to demonstrate a certain physical prowess and masculine virtue as a huntsman.<sup>1005</sup>

### *Cinghiale for the Florentine Nobles*

Emphasising the practicalities underpinning gifts of game, while gifts of wild boar could be sent to Genoa from Pisa, when Cosimo hunted in the vicinity of Florence, other recipients were chosen. On one day in particular, an especially generous gift was sent to the nobility of Florence, as Vincenzo Ferrini reported in some excitement from the Medici Villa of Poggio a Caiano:

[...] the second one to the house of Sforza [Sforza Almeni], the other two His Excellency is content to send are presented to messer Alamanno e Pietro Salviati, messer Pandolfo, and messer Lorenzo Pucci, messer Lorenzo Ridolfi, messer

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<sup>1004</sup> See Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy*. Charles V was particularly concerned as to how he would be portrayed, see Burke, P., "Presenting and Representing Charles V" in Soly, H. (ed.), *Charles V, 1500-1558* (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 2013), pp. 393-476. Cosimo was also concerned about how he would be recorded, see: "Il Jovio [Paolo Giovio] lo scrive qua a Tomasso Cambi tutto alla rinversa, et che Vostra Excellentia li diede una stoccata nella bocca et mille belle cose. Suplico Vostra Excellentia che gli faccia [proposed reading: sapere] la verità della cosa, perché io so che la metterà nelle Storie [...]" Letter from Pirro Musefilo in Naples to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 16 November 1540, ASF, MdP 653, ins. 11, fol. 287, MAP Doc ID# 26636.

<sup>1005</sup> "Al Maiordomo ho reso la carta del Jovio [Paolo Giovio] sì come V. S. mi comandava et dice che non mancherà di mandargli per l'advenire la parte sua di cignali (sì come non ha manchato per il passato et io ne lo terrò sollecitato) poi che non sono di tanta autorità che lo possa far da me stesso. Oggi S. Ex.tia n'ha amazzati XII o XIII et se la notte non lo sopraggiugneva ne amazzava delli altri." Letter from Lorenzo Pagni at Villa di Caffaggiolo to Pier Francesco Riccio, 10 December 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 7, fol. 7, MAP Doc ID# 7755.

Alessandro Strozzi, messer Lione de' Nerli, and similarly to the Bishop of Pavia [Girolamo de' Rossi] .<sup>1006</sup>

Cosimo, wishing to celebrate the success of his hunt (undertaken almost alone, it would seem – and without nets), sent gifts of boars to the pro-Medici members of the oldest families in the city, while in the same batch of gifts, sending wild boar meat to his father-in-law and to one of his closest courtiers. In this sense of local diplomacy, Cosimo was conveying many of the same messages as the gifts had communicated to Andrea Doria in Genoa.

### *Cinghiale for Joanna of Austria*

As a final demonstration of the intended intimacy and bond that sending game connoted, it suffices to look at Cosimo's relationship with Joanna of Austria. Cosimo wanted both to impress her and share their mutual passion for the hunt when he gifted to her a deer and four fat hogs in December 1566 (Joanna having written before to ask how he was finding his stay in Lecceto):

Your Highness makes too much favour to keep so lovingly the memory of where I am and of this pathetic thing I have had to

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<sup>1006</sup> “[...] Ringraziato sia Idio che oggi S. Ex.tia ha fatto la più bella chaccia [caccia] che si facesse mai ed 'a auto el magiore piacere che 'gli abbia auto un pezzo fa di chaccia, essi [proposed reading: e si è] amazato dieci porci che 6 grossi e 4 picholi et senza la rete di modo ch'egli è tanto satisfatto quanto sia possibile [...] Mando costà quatro porci grossi de' quali uno el magiore s'a a consegnare a Lorenzo Spina per parte del S.or don Petro [probably Pedro de Toledo] uno a casa messer Sforzo [probably Sforza Almeni] el secondo, li altri dua S. Ex.tia si chontenta che si presenti messer Alamanno e Piero Salviati, messer Pandolfo e messer Lorenzo Pucci, messer Lorenzo Ridolfi, messer Alessandro Strozzi, messer Lione de' Nerli et simili, et il vescovo di Pavia [Giovan Girolamo de' Rossi] [...]” Letter from Vincenzo Ferrini at Poggio a Caiano to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 6 November 1546, ASF, MdP 1172, ins. 5, fol. 23, MAP Doc ID# 7661.

send due to the poor hunt, now that I have had a better venture  
with the hunt, I send you a deer and four fat hogs.<sup>1007</sup>

Cosimo had clearly been embarrassed, as a hunter of considerable repute, to have sent something not of sufficient standing for a Habsburg princess over whom he doted. The ‘personal diplomacy’ of Cosimo interacting with Joanna, despite being his daughter-in-law, was still the daughter and the sister of emperors. The bond was built with such gifts, which Joanna appreciated very much, saying all the more because they were sent from Cosimo personally.<sup>1008</sup> This ‘personal touch’ is crucial to understanding the personal diplomatic bonds forged through a mutual appreciation of the noble art of hunting, as communicated through the exchange of hunt-related gifts.

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<sup>1007</sup> “[...] V. A. mi fa troppo segnalato favore in tener si amorevol’ memoria di ricordarsi dove io sia e così in ringratiarmi di così debol cosa come è la poca caccia ch’io li [h]o mandato, hora havendo havuto miglio[r] ventura a caccia, li mando un cervio e quattro porci grossi [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Eremo di Lecceto to Joanna von Habsburg, 9 December 1566, ASF, MdP 5094, ins. 1, fol. 102, MAP Doc ID# 17564.

<sup>1008</sup> Letter from Joanna von Habsburg in Florence to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Lecceto, 9 December 1566, ASF, MdP 5927a, ins. 2, fol. 145, MAP Doc ID# 22171.

## 10.5 HUNTING AND DIPLOMACY

Hunting also frequently features in the reports sent to Cosimo by his ambassadors. This information is not without purpose. The agent would report hunting activities to Cosimo because the absence of the prince, king, or emperor, by disappearing into the countryside for the hunt, would mean that there would be no new news updates until the sovereign returned to court. Hunting was an escape from court, it created an alternative space to the court – a more personal intimate space – that played an important role in early modern diplomacy. For example, at the Diet of Regensburg in 1541, Charles V was petitioned by Ascanio and Camillo Colonna to be restored to their lands, in particular, the duchy of Paliano, after Pope Paul III had suppressed the family.<sup>1009</sup> The Emperor, having settled the matter in their favour, used hunting as a way to evade Gaspare Contarini, the papal legate, when he attempted to make a counter-petition.<sup>1010</sup> As Cosimo's agent at Regensburg, Agnolo Niccolini wrote to his master, "The Emperor takes rest having given the decision, as such goes to hunt, and as such, Paliano being in his power, he would speak no more on the matter."<sup>1011</sup>

Hunting as a way to avoid diplomatic interaction was also used by Sultan Suleiman, often to keep foreign ambassadors waiting upon his return, as Cosimo was informed in a letter regarding the French

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<sup>1009</sup> Letter from Agnolo Niccolini in Regensburg to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 30 May 1541, ASF, MdP 652, fol. 260, MAP Doc ID# 22368. On the Farnese suppression of the Colonna, see Gamrath, H., *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneiderp, 2007), p. 49.

<sup>1010</sup> Letter from Gaspare Contatini in Regenbergh to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 15 March 1541, ASF, MdP 652, fol. 365, MAP Doc ID# 22389.

<sup>1011</sup> "[...] Sua Beatitudine [Paulus III] commesse dipoi al legato [Gaspare Contarini] et al nuncio che la excusassino con Sua Maestà [Karl V] de non haverla satisfatta di quello gli havea domandato [...] L'Imperatore gli rispose che havea dato quella commissione così andando a caccia, et poichè Palliano era in sua potestà non ne accadeva parlare [...]" Letter from Agnolo Niccolini in Regensburg to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 3 June 1541, ASF, MdP 652, fol. 273, MAP Doc ID# 22369.

ambassador in August 1542.<sup>1012</sup> More interestingly, it seems in the reports from Venice – both in ambassadorial letters and from *avvisi* (the news-sheets) – that the hunting activities of the Sultan were used as a barometer as to whether or not he would start a military campaign: the more hunting, the less likely he would go to war. As a letter from April of the same year details, “The Lord [Suleiman the Magnificent] was hunting at Adrianople, and it seems for these letters that they do not show themselves to be making big preparations [for war] at sea or on land.”<sup>1013</sup>

Another diplomatic consideration is who went hunting with the prince on these occasions. We tend to think of royal hunts as grand events involving hundreds of participants, but while the number of huntsmen could be many, much more often the number of high-status guests was strictly limited. Quite simply, hunting was and is lethally dangerous. Understandably, you would hunt only with whom you trusted, and as such, an invitation to hunt with a sovereign lord was a great honour. Lucas Cranach’s painting of Charles V stag-hunting at Torgau, itself a gift to the emperor from John Friedrich, duke of Saxony in 1544, beautifully illustrates the danger and intimacy of the diplomatic occasion a hunt provided.<sup>1014</sup> As with Zuccari’s scene in the *Sala Grande* of the Florentine hunt, Charles and the duke are painted together in the lower left-hand corner.

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<sup>1012</sup> “[...] Il signor [Suleyman I], inteso l’arivo di Polino [Paulin de la Garde], ritornò da caccia, et mandò a presentar detto Polino, et infra li altri presenti due bellissime veste, con una delle qua[l]i andò a bac[i]ar la mano al signor [...]” Letter from Donato de’ Bardi in Venice to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 12 August 1542, ASF, MdP 2964, fol. 210, MAP Doc ID# 22725.

<sup>1013</sup> “[...] il Signor [Suleyman the Magnificent] hera a caccia in Andrinopoli, et pare per queste lettere non si mostrino quelli grandi apparati et per mare et per terra [...]” Letter from Donato de’ Bardi in Venice to Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence, 22 April 1542, ASF, MdP 2964, fol. 177, MAP Doc ID# 22716.

<sup>1014</sup> Lucas Cranach the Younger, *A Stag-hunt with Elector Johann Friedrich*, 1544 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. See Baillie-Grohman, W., “Ancient Weapons of the Chase,” *Burlington Magazine*, 4 11 (1904), p. 158.

Given that hunting provided a much more private space for diplomatic interaction than anywhere in the palace, Cosimo was interested to receive the names of those involved with papal, imperial or royal hunting parties. For example, in 1540, when Cosimo feared that Margaret of Austria and Ottavio Farnese might lay claim to Florence, news of their hunting together was often reported back to Tuscany.<sup>1015</sup> In 1541, while his father-in-law was facing unrest in Naples, a situation initiated by hostile Neapolitan noblemen, Cosimo was informed of the favour shown to their ring-leader, Ferrante Sanseverino, to hunt in the duke of Bavaria's estates.<sup>1016</sup> Knowing who was in favour and who was not, was then, as it is today, a key element in intelligence gathering, which in turn, informed foreign policy.

Cosimo himself used the hosting of a hunt as a diplomatic tool. On the occasion of another marriage, that of Cosimo's daughter, Lucrezia, with Alfonso II d'Este in 1560, Cosimo attempted to use a courtly hunt to secure the relationship between the two dynasties. In July 1560, Cosimo wrote to the senior member of the family, Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este – who he had long known – to visit his villa of Poggio a Caiano.<sup>1017</sup> This offer being refused, Cosimo resorted to an invitation to hunt with him in Tuscany, explaining the superiority of his lands, “the hunts at Cerreto Guidi] are truly beautiful and delightful,” in order to try and woo the cardinal to visit and thus develop a closer relationship, perhaps to deal with the heated issue of Florentine versus

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<sup>1015</sup> Letter from Marco Bracci in Rome to Ugolino Grifoni in Florence, 27 November 1539, ASF, MdP 3262, ins. 4, fol. 126, MAP Doc ID# 19246.

<sup>1016</sup> “Il Signor Principe mio signore [Ferrante Sanseverino] bacia le mane di Vostra Excellentia et semo venuti a vedere Augusta et parte a caccia in queste foreste del duca di Bavera cosa bellissima.” Letter from Vincenzo Martelli in Augsburg to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 21 June 1541, ASF, MdP 653, ins. 13, fol. 35, MAP Doc ID# 26623.

<sup>1017</sup> Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence to Ippolito II d'Este, 20 July 1560, ASF, MdP 211, fol. 73, MAP Doc ID# 8719.



Ferraran precedence.<sup>1018</sup> In sum, Cosimo knew how to use ‘la bella caccia’ as a diplomatic tool. Indeed, Cosimo would go to great ends to make sure his hunting domains were as well-stocked as he promised. When Don Ferrante was passing through Tuscany on his way to Milan in 1546, Cosimo made arrangements for not only extra wine, but for wild goats to be released into the forests of San Rossore for Ferrante and Cosimo to enjoy a hunt together.<sup>1019</sup>

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<sup>1018</sup> “[...] Il secretario Montemurlo mi trovò con la lettera di V. S. Ill.ma in mezzo le caccia di Cerreto le quali son veramente così belle et dilettevoli che più non si può desiderare dove et con l'uccello et con li cani s'è amazzate tante starne lepre caprii et rufolatti che ciascheduna sera si tornava a casa carichi di preda. So che quando ella come minaccia verrà da queste bande passerà il tempo forse più allegramente che in quelle Campagne di Roma perchè qua si gode in un tempo con la vista il salvatico et il domestico [...]” Letter from Cosimo I de’ Medici in Florence to Ippolito II d’Este, 5 August 1560, ASF, MdP 211, fol. 81, MAP Doc ID# 8729.

<sup>1019</sup> “[...] Fateci mandare del vino del Ciecherino per il tinello de’ gentilhomini et un pocho di vino in fiaschi per la tavola del duca. Intendo chel chaprichorno doverrà essere chonparso al barcho [probably the Tenuta di San Rossore] che quando lo saprò al sicuro lo potrò dire a S. Ex.tia [Cosimo I] et io manderò la mufra et mufrolini come e’sieno un pocho riuti. [...] Il S.or don Ferrante si trova chon le galere a Civita vecchia, per ciò ho spedito el veschovo di Cortona [Giovanni Battista Ricasoli] et m. Jacopo de’ Medici a Livorno per riscieverlo et presentarlo [...]” Letter from Vincenzo Ferrini in Pisa to Pier Francesco Riccio in Florence, 23 May 1546, 1172, ins. 3, fol. 6., MAP Doc ID# 20398.

## 10.6 CONCLUSION

The hunting scene in the *Sala Grande* would have resonated well with the notables assembled in the wedding entourage. Cosimo prided both himself on being a huntsman and on the high quality of hunt Tuscany provided. The freedom to hunt was a privilege, and as such, the men (and to a lesser extent, women) with whom Cosimo exchanged hunt-related gifts were all men enfeuded with their own territories. Whether minor lords such as Pier Maria de' Rossi, or Cosimo's equals, such as the Este of Ferrara, hunting in the style in which Cosimo pursued was a restricted activity. This elitism meant that hunt-related gifts were exchanged because the sender knew of Cosimo's passion for the hunt, perhaps because it was shared, and were in a position to make a gift of hounds or horses. The gifts described in this section have demonstrated how diplomacy, gifts, and personal interests combine at the highest level of society. Diplomatic channels served Cosimo's needs to enrich and expand his activities as a huntsman and the quality of hunting ranges. Zuccari's painting is the celebration of his achievement in the field.

Status was also reflected in the killing of wild boars and deer which were animals reserved for Cosimo on his domains. As such, it was a princely delicacy: only Cosimo could make a gift of such a meat. Thus, when people received this gift it was a sign of special favour, as well as a demonstration of the virtues and messages Cosimo wished to convey. Thus, gifts of hounds and horses from Caterina de' Medici recognise Cosimo's standing as a sovereign prince: a significant departure from the position her cousins, the Strozzi brothers, would have wished her to take. Thus, when Cosimo hosted a hunt, for Ferrante Gonzaga or Ippolito d'Este, he was not only playing the good host, or demonstrating the various attributes of being a refined prince, but taking the opportunity to display gifts: hounds from Catherine, hounds from Mendoza, an arquebus from the Emperor, and so on. He was able to make this display within his own realm and territory, and most importantly, find a space away from the palace and the court in order to conduct a more personal form of diplomacy with visiting notables.

## Epilogue

In the Sala degli Elementi in the Palazzo Vecchio, Vasari and Gherardi's fresco of Saturn being presented with the first fruits of the earth unites many of the themes discussed in this part of the thesis.<sup>1020</sup> Saturn (Cosimo) is at the end centre of the scene, surrounded by men and women, and is presented with the first fruits of the earth, while on the lower left foreground, Mother Earth has a cornucopia between her legs and gazes over the scene. On the right-hand side, a host of Tritones have hunted and caught nymphs from the forest to also be presented to Saturn. At his feet, a tame capricorn rests with a hoof upon a Medici *palla*, while a female allegory of ducal fortune rises out of the sea bearing the sail and tortoise of Cosimo's *festina lente* device.<sup>1021</sup> The offering of gifts to Saturn of food, symbolic animals, and the takings of the hunt, mirror Cosimo's gifting of food, exotic animals, and hunted game. The fresco reflects the world in which Cosimo existed, with himself at the centre, and his subjects offering homage.

The intention of the three studies presented here has not been to suggest that gifts influenced the decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio, but that the iconographic programme for the palace, for the entry of Joanna, and the wedding celebrations of Cosimo and Eleonora, all must be viewed through the significance of how these objects, symbols, and motifs connoted patterns of gift exchange which permeated the lives of Cosimo, his family, and his court. Likewise, the representation of gifts in these cultural events, whether depicted in the act of being gifted, or as objects which were gifted, influences how we conceive of the social world in which gifts were given at the sixteenth-century Medici court. Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between what one sees in the decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio, whether the Sala Grande, the Sala degli Elementi, or the Sala di Leone X, which provides us with a unique perspective on the significance of certain typologies of gifts and particular forms of courtly activity.

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<sup>1020</sup> Giorgio Vasari & Cristofano Gherardi, *Le primizie della terra offerte a Saturno*, fresco, 1555-1556, Sala degli Elementi, Quartiere degli Elementi, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

<sup>1021</sup> Allegri & Cecchi, pp. 66-67.

While there are other themes one could draw from in the rooms of the Palazzo Vecchio, different objects and activities (clothes, weapons, vases), none are so abundantly represented in the scenes and allegories depicted in the Palazzo Vecchio by Vasari and his workshop as those which relate in some way to food, hunting, and symbolic animals. Aspects of the Palazzo Vecchio have long been discussed in terms of providing a biography of Cosimo, and this section has demonstrated how it is also possible to read into the pictorial designs of the palace Cosimo's relationship with the material cultures of food, animals, and their cross-over, hunting. The inclusion of these three patterns or spheres of gift-giving suggests that they have special meaning for Cosimo that their inclusion alone cannot convey.

Indeed, while using the Palazzo Vecchio and the *apparati* of the nuptial celebrations of 1539 and 1565 to unify three seemingly disparate gift-giving strategies into a single whole, it has been found that each object type has a nuanced context within the social world of Cosimo. Given the famine of 1539 (and Cosimo's possible role in causing it), and the dearth thereafter, remedied by grain imports from Naples and Sicily (a trade made more secure by Cosimo's marriage to Eleonora), gifts of food in Tuscany cannot be seen simply as sharing the bounty of the land. While all princes, and likely, most people, were regularly partaking in food gifts (the giving and taking of alms, for example), for Cosimo the gift of food was built on the foundation of his family's strong connection with the *contado* and *dominio* of Florence. It was a bond which allowed him as an individual to connect to his wider domain (in a way that oligarchic republics rarely can). Food meant fealty, and by gifting food to Cosimo, it was as a sign of loyalty, in return, Cosimo reciprocated by guaranteeing the prosperity of Tuscany.

The lion, both living and symbolic, should be treated as separate when it comes to their depiction in art (as the Marzocco, the symbol of the Republican constitution) and the gifting of live lions (symbols of royal status). While both are connected, and no doubt, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, much more explicitly given the superstitious status both the Marzocco statue and the living lions held in the city's civic life, they are not one and the same. Indeed, while gifted lions were an important element of Cosimo's acquisition of social

prestige within the courts of Italy and Europe, the Marzocco's gift was its crown. Cosimo was the heir to the Marzocco.

The act of hunting unites both elements, the gifting of hunting equipment (including horses and hounds) were a way to gain personal favour, by appealing to Cosimo's passions, just as the gifting of good food and wine appealed to his taste (and the gifting of lions flattered his ego). These gifts created personal bonds between individuals. The act of gifting the game (the meat of the hunt), carried with it all the connotations associated with the gifting of food – the sharing of the land's bounty, Cosimo as a provider in times of famine, etc. – it also held a meaning with regards his personal status – Cosimo as a refined prince, Cosimo as a fit and healthy man of arms, etc. – making it one of the most densely symbolic gifts Cosimo could give.

By far, these loose categories of gifted objects outnumber other gifts (artworks, precious stones, medals, books, clothes, weapons, etc) mentioned in the letters of the Duke and his court. They are not, though, the objects that tend to be mentioned in the inventories. Relationships were maintained not by paintings or statues, but dogs and plums. Their record is preserved in the decorative schemes of the Palazzo Vecchio. Thus, Cosimo's palace and the descriptions of the spectacles of 1539 and 1565, are an important source, as well as a cultural framework, in which to posit and reflect upon objects which may not otherwise be considered reflections of Cosimo's identity as a giver of gifts.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

### *Abdication*

On 1 May 1564, Cosimo suddenly announced his abdication. Ten days later, the government of Tuscany was handed to his son, Francesco. As Henk van Veen has found, such an act was a clever calculation: by gifting his powers to his son, he was able to acquire even more power by being able to freely pursue the longed-for royal title.<sup>1022</sup> Cosimo sought in this action to portray his virtues as a modest and humble leader of a republic, rather than as an ambitious ruler who might upset the balance of power in Italy.<sup>1023</sup> His actions were portrayed at the time as laudable and wise, Agnolo Niccolini, governor of Siena wrote:

[...] the concession of the government and administration of this and other states of yours, made by you to the Prince, your

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<sup>1022</sup> van Veen, *Cosimo I de Medici and his Self-representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>1023</sup> van Veen cites Cini, *Historia della vita et fatti del S.or Cosimo de Medici Gran Duca di Toscana (Firenze)*, p. 535: "Aggiugnerevasi poi che fornita essa guerra di Siena, fornite le gravezze, ed i tributi, et con essi ogni amaritudine, et spievoleza: ed essendosi da lui deposto il Principato; et per ciò ogni invidia spenta, vivendosi come privato pieno di gloria, et d'umanità, haveva con tutti i sudditi acquistatosi gratia singularissima."

firstborn [Francesco I], is truly seen as a satisfaction and seems to universally approved [...].<sup>1024</sup>

Guglielmo I Gonzaga, duke of Mantua, wrote to Cosimo to express his admiration for Francesco and praising Cosimo for having relinquished the reigns of government.<sup>1025</sup> While Cosimo did have models to follow (Octavian and Charles V), this action was in keeping with Cosimo's approach to all things material. Cosimo had made a material sacrifice in order to gain what he truly sought, a royal title. He gifted away his power in order to gain even more, just as he had freely gifted away his material possessions throughout his reign as he sought to pursue his ambitions. Thus, it could be argued that Cosimo was far more willing to use gifts as part of an ambitious cultural diplomacy throughout his reign.



This thesis has traced Cosimo's patterns of gift-giving over the course of his lifetime as duke of Florence and Siena. In doing so, a pattern emerges. This pattern does not conform to an expectation that as Cosimo grew in power, his gifts grew in stature. Quite contrary to such a correlation, it appears that Cosimo used major gifts of art and precious objects more in his early period (1537-1551), than in his later period as duke (1552-1564). Likewise, from being a net-giver of major gifts of art and precious objects in the early period, he became a net-receiver of gifts from the 1550s until after his abdication. While this

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<sup>1024</sup> "[...] la concessione di governo, et administratione di questo et delli altri Stati suoi, fatta da lei [Cosimo I] al s.r Principe suo primogenito [Francesco I], della quale veramente si vedde satisfattione et allegrezza universale parendo anche" Letter from Agnolo Niccolini in Siena to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, 16 June 1564, ASF, MdP 1870, fol. 12, MAP Doc ID# 20236.

<sup>1025</sup> "[...] Non poteva il governo di cotesto stato essere in mano di persona a cui io portassi maggior affettione che all'Ecc.za Vostra [...] poichè a lei è piaciuto di rinunciare questo carico all'Ill.mo S.or Principe suo figliuolo [Francesco I], di ciò mi sono rallegrato assai, vivendo sicuro che essendo egli nato di V.Ecc.za Ill.ma et ornato delle virtù et delle rare qualità che si sono sempre conosciute in lui, non potrà se non esser simile a lei." Letter from Guglielmo I Gonzaga in Mantua to Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, ASF, MdP 2938, non paginated, MAP Doc ID# 4285.

thesis has limited its focus to around 1565, preliminary research on the final period of Cosimo's life (1565 to 1574) would suggest that gift-giving (when we include his endowment of Church of Santo Stefano in Pisa, for example<sup>1026</sup>), seems to reach an equilibrium: his greatest gift being his grand ducal coronet received in 1570 from Pius V.<sup>1027</sup>

There is a diplomatic context to this trend. In the late 1530s and 1540s, Cosimo's position remained unstable. The continued *fuoriusciti* presence in France and Rome, exacerbated by the Habsburg-Valois wars, and the hostility Paul III Farnese bore the Duke: forced Cosimo to remain on alert for any potential threats. With Spanish garrisons circumscribing his ability to act militarily until 1543, and thereafter frustrated by imperial obfuscation of his policies to annex Piombino and Elba, "soft diplomacy" was an essential recourse to forge alliances with important power blocks within the Habsburg Empire. His lavish gifts to Francisco de los Cobos and Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle were necessary to win influence at the heart of the imperial administration. His alliance with the Álvarez de Toledo from 1539 created a new Medici-Toledo faction, and his engagement and relationship with his wife's family opened a busy channel of gifts. From 1541, with Granvelle taking on the role of governor of Siena, he became the major focus for Cosimo's diplomatic efforts in the 1540s. Such was the importance of this alliance that Cosimo continued to build links with Granvelle's sons in order to perpetuate the alliance through the next generation of the family. These relationships were successful in safeguarding and promoting Cosimo's interests at the imperial court. Importantly, these interests were not solely territorial expansion, but the acquisition of prestige and honours, notably Cosimo's investiture with the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1546.

"Soft diplomacy" or "cultural diplomacy" cannot be viewed as a secondary activity to "hard diplomacy" (assuming we can even define the latter). Indeed, one outcome of this thesis has been to see that all early modern diplomacy is "cultural": in order to achieve the

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<sup>1026</sup> See "Donazioni fatte da Cosimo I alla Religione di S. Stefano di diverse cose preziose," ASF, MM 24, fol. 26r-v.

<sup>1027</sup> See below, pp. 402-403.



tangible concessions of land, money, men, and material, or the intangible benefits of titles, honours, prestige, nuptial celebrations, and triumphal visits, sixteenth-century ambassadors and diplomatic agents used gifts, entertainments, and ceremonial to argue their patrons' cases. Having the honour of precedence over another was seen by Cosimo as important as taking Piombino and Elba. This was not vanity, but an issue of vital importance for Cosimo: precedence meant access, it meant that the voice of his envoy was louder than those of others, in sum, it meant that his priorities and interests trumped those of his rivals. Competing with the Este of Ferrara was as "hard" as diplomatic practice can get.

The consequence of these interests with regards Cosimo's gift-giving meant that he would gift lavishly (with a high value object: usually an artwork or a gemstone, but rare and precious animals too) to win the attention of someone from whom he wanted something – this was normally a long-term obligation to the house of Medici – and thereafter, should the recipient be gratified by the gift, enter into an exchange of other objects, normally of less monetary value – food and wine being the most likely – to maintain this relationship. We must be careful, though, by assuming monetary value (or at least "wow" value) of objects is any less meaningful than the values that food and wine could convey. Indeed, the overarching pattern of this thesis has been to find that all gifts to and from Cosimo are "high value": they all reflect a particular context of the exchange, they are all calculated to affect an action and promote an interest.

The act of giving itself imbued the objects – regardless of typology – with a particular social value. The choice of the gift, the effort placed in its carriage, the symbolic meaning it held, the context in which it was given, the respective status of sender and recipient, could all elevate any object to one of high diplomatic value. Gifts therefore fall into two categories of diplomatic value: *impact value* and *intimacy value*. This loose division has an important purpose. Gifts of an impact value – e.g., the San Giovannino, Bronzino's altarpiece, portraits, gemstones, antiquities – were sent to Cosimo's ambassadors to be gifted at court in order to be seen by many and grab the attention of all, in particular, the target recipient. The intermediary role played by the diplomatic agent

was not solely logistical. By having a gift to offer, ambassadors were able to obtain access to important figures. Secondly, gifts of intimacy value – e.g., food, wine, hunting equipage – allowed the relationship, once kindled, to be perpetuated through frequent correspondence accompanied by a self-perpetuating cycle of gifts and reciprocation. So much so, that regular gifts could even become a form of tribute: to permanently establish a flow of material objects, not only as a sign of fealty (the gifts to Cosimo for his birthday or the Feast of St. John the Baptist, or the gifts of Innocenzo Cybo to Cosimo) but as a voluntary payment for the services of the recipient couched within the terms of paying respect (Cosimo's gifts to the College of Cardinals or to Andrea Doria).

Certainly, by the 1550s Cosimo was in a much stronger position than ever before. He had developed a strong network of contacts with which he maintained relations in regular correspondence and gift exchanges. As such, it is plausible to see the decrease in the number of impact value gifts in the 1550s. Indeed, Cosimo, as the defender of Italy from the Turks and "liberator" of Siena from the French had become a person with whom people wished to ingratiate themselves. This is most keenly seen with the two "Medici" popes, Julius III del Monte and Pius IV de' Medici. Cosimo's diplomatic acumen had won – against the odds – two of his candidates for the throne of St. Peter's. Both men were indebted to Cosimo, and both showed their gratitude by sending him *impact value* gifts, such as the blessed sword and cap, and of course, the massive granite column from the Baths of Caracalla, but also, by becoming intimates with the ducal family through the exchange of smaller gifts and more personal gifts, such as hunting equipment and animals for the growing Medici menagerie at Poggio a Caiano. Yet, there could also be another factor at play in the 1550s beyond Cosimo's increased standing in Europe and Italy. The war with Siena, following from the debts accrued from the fortification of the states of Piombino and Elba, had forced Cosimo to stretch his finances to the limit.<sup>1028</sup> As such, it simply could have been an unaffordable outlay of time and money to dispatch elaborate gifts. This, though, is only a theory.

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<sup>1028</sup> See the table on debts and capital expenditure in Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe. Funzione pubblica e privata del patrimonio della famiglia Medici nel Cinquecento*, p. 77.

Without doubt, Cosimo's diplomatic network was an essential tool in his war effort, but notably, one of his most able diplomats, Bartolomeo Concini, was sent as an attache to the field staff of Cosimo's *condottiero*, Giangiaco­mo Medici, for the duration of the conflict. It is difficult to decide whether this denotes that the ducal treasury was reallocating resources from the diplomatic service to the campaign chest: given the actual expenses, this would not be unreasonable.

Without variation during this time, Eleonora de Toledo continued her extensive activities in the field of gift-giving. This thesis has found that Eleonora is the fulcrum of Cosimo's gift-giving activities. Either on her own, or with Cosimo as part of the ducal couple, the majority of gifts are sent to and from the Medici court have Eleonora's involvement in some way. Such is the scale of Eleonora's gift-giving, that it could deserve a dedicated study, yet this would deprive a key element to her activities: she was sending and receiving gifts as an intrinsic part of the her husband's broader diplomatic strategy. It was Eleonora who could make the intimate gifts of fruit to Charles V, to popes, Julius III, Paul IV (to an extent, hostile to Cosimo), and Pius IV. It was Eleonora who could forge bonds with the other ducal houses of Italy, building relationships with the Este in order to attain a marriage alliance while her husband put pressure on foreign courts to ensure his precedence over the duke of Ferrara. Indeed, Eleonora seems to have been much more sophisticated with her understanding of how gifts should be given (for example, in whose name a gift should be given), or how her son, Francesco, should be depicted in the portrait sent to Antoine de Granvelle. These qualities are further emphasised when we consider the strength and efficacy of the Medici-Toledo alliance. Through Eleonora, frequent gifts were sent to the viceregal court in Naples. In return, Cosimo's cellars were filled with *vino greco* which he then re-gifted.

Eleonora's role in Medicean diplomacy was apparent from her arrival in the city in 1539. Not only did her marriage signal a secure supply of grain from Naples and Sicily for famished Tuscany, but it represented the promise of a secure future for the dynasty, which had so far proved illusive in the sixteenth century. While the gifting of food was highly symbolic, as has been discussed at length, it should be

noted that Cosimo, with Eleonora, was able to fashion an identity which allowed Tuscan cities to pay fealty to him and his family, rather than feeling themselves subjugated to the city of Florence. The climax of this iconographic programme was undoubtedly Cosimo and Eleonora's entries into the city of Siena in October 1559. The ducal couple were presented as givers of peace and prosperity, in return they required loyalty and service. This was the embodiment of the sociology of gift exchange writ large. The same dynamic of gift-exchange between individuals – and all the obligation to reciprocate that implied – was manifested in Medicean diplomacy as a way to pacify the newly conquered city of Siena. Tellingly, Eleonora's image and her own dedicated entry the day after Cosimo's, along with the depiction of the ducal children, all underline Eleonora's diplomatic importance both as a diplomatic actor and as a diplomatic icon.

This is of central importance to the conceptualisation of diplomacy this thesis has promoted, namely, that Cosimo was engaged in diplomacy within Europe, within the Habsburg Empire, within the Italian peninsula, and within Tuscany itself. This reflects the complex political system in which Cosimo existed. One of the most interesting dynamics to arise from the research presented here has been Cosimo's strong diplomatic relationships with the smaller feudal states of Pier Maria III de' Rossi, Innocenzo Cybo, Guidobaldo II delle Rovere, Andrea Doria, and Aurelio Fregoso. These were men, with varying degrees of autonomy, who held states in which they were the feudal lords. Despite the difference in scale, Cosimo, as a vassal of Charles V, was their equal (as much as he wanted to equal and better the larger northern Italian states of Este, Gonzaga, and by extension, the governors of Milan), and as such, enjoyed a certain familiarity of both culture and upbringing. Indeed, Pier Maria and Innocenzo had grown up at the Medici court of the early 1500s. It was not necessary to impress these men with lavish gifts (though Innocenzo Cybo would gift lavishly to Cosimo), instead food and hunt-related objects formed the basis of their amicable communication.

While this communication was of a more personal nature, it was not devoid of meaning or significance. Every gift was calculated to say something. This was especially true of objects made to be gifted.

Diplomatic portraiture was one such object, and while this thesis has not engaged in this subject directly, it suffices to say that early modern portraiture has been well-studied (and continues to receive attention) as rulers and their families represented themselves with various meanings appropriate to the exchange. Instead, one object presented here in particular has been the subject of particular attention as a means to communicate through gifts: Poggini's *Elba Medal* of 1549. While an important object to project his claims over Elba, the use of coins and medals was nothing new. Indeed, Cosimo's gift exchanges can often be traced to older models of exchange. As Varchi's introduction to Seneca's *De beneficiis* conveyed, Cosimo and Eleonora were expected to give gifts. In this, Cosimo was following from other models of princely, papal, and republican largesse within his own family's history and from practices already established between European courts. This is neatly conveyed by gifting of lions as a status symbols signifying Cosimo's entrance into the highest strata of European society.

This thesis has attempted to provide an in-depth study of how Cosimo (and Eleonora) used gifts to further his political ambitions. As such, this study stands alone as a first attempt to complete a full dissection of the gift-giving activities of an early modern ruler. While other studies have provided important overviews of cultural diplomacy and early modern gift-giving, the research presented here has sought to understand the role of gifts through the life of one man. By doing so, it has been possible, given Cosimo's well-known and easily traceable life story, to posit individual gifts and gift typologies within their historical contexts. If anything, this dissertation adds a new biographical study to the field of gift-giving, and moreover, a contribution to our understanding of the material culture of early modern life. This has not been so much as to write "object biographies" but to write a biography of Cosimo through objects. Given his successes and achievements – maintaining, strengthening, and expanding his hold on the government of Florence, her *dominio*, and neighbouring states – this has necessitated a detailed study of Cosimo's diplomacy as the sphere in which objects were most potent. Consequently, given the wealth of manuscript material and extant artefacts available, and the copious bibliographical traditions surrounding each event in Cosimo's life and each object typology, selections had to be made. Important discussions of the gifts

of books, people, clothes, medicine, and position (a professorship at the *studio di Pisa*, for example), have had to be relegated to passing references. So too has much of Cosimo's final years and his relationship with Camilla Martelli. Beyond the limits of time and space, there is little reason for this abrogation, though it could be argued that from 1560, any continued study would need to include the role of Francesco de' Medici, which would, like the nature of gift-giving itself, perpetuate a cycle of study.



With multiple case studies drawn from around forty-five years of Cosimo's life, can we now propose an answer to the question: what did gifts mean for Cosimo? For Cosimo, they meant the difference between success and failure, they represented him, communicated for him, they travelled for him. They were agents in their own right, effecting the policies which he pursued for the security of his dynasty and his state. One more example suffices to illustrate Cosimo's relationship to the power of material objects. His abdication in 1564 had allowed Cosimo to pursue his ambition of a royal title. He had gambled everything on securing this higher status. His life's work culminated in Rome on 4 March 1570<sup>1029</sup> when he received a single gift from Pius V, the grand ducal coronet: "And not much later he was called to Rome, and in the Chapel, with all the Cardinals present, was publicly crowned with a Royal crown, and with that the title which it confers (this was the 4th of March, 1569 [O.S.] which brought together in a new spectacle a great multitude of Lords and great persons) adding also the cause of this

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<sup>1029</sup> On the coronation, see Cipriani, G., "Pio V e l'incoronazione romana di Cosimo I dei Medici nel 1570," *Studi e ricerche*, 2 (1983), pp. 263-273; Pancucci, F., "La questione del titolo granducale: il carteggio diplomatico fra Firenze e Madrid," in *Toscana e Spagna nel secolo XVI*, pp. 7-58. Contini Bonacossi, A., "La concessione del titolo di granduca e la "coronazione" di Cosimo I fra papato e impero (1569-1572)", in Schnettger, M. & Verga, M. (eds.), *L'impero e l'Italia nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003), pp. 417-438.

[honour], in other words, for the religious zeal and fair justice [of Cosimo] which one reads on the crown.”<sup>1030</sup>

PIVS V PONTIFEX MAXIMVS, OB EXCIMIAM DILECTIONEM: AC  
CATHOLICAE RELIGIONIS ZELVM, PRAECIPVVMQUE IUSTITIAE  
STVDIVM DONAVIT

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<sup>1030</sup> “Et non molto dopo lo si chiamò à Roma, & vuole, che in Cappella, presenti tutti i Cardinali, pubblicamente fosse coronato di Corona reale, & qual à quel titolo si conveniva (ciò fu IIII. di Marzo, MDLXIX [O.S.] il quale sì nuovo & sì degno spettacolo dalle convicine parti trasse à se gran moltitudine di Signori, & Personaggi grandi) aggiungendovene anco la cagione, cioè, per lo zelo della Religione, & buona giustitia, come si legge nel cerchio della Corona.” Manuzio, *Vita di Cosimo de Medici primo gran duca di Toscana*, p. 148.

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## PLATES



Fig. 1. Benedetto Pagni, *The Medici Madonna*, 1547, oil on panel, Ringling Museum, Sarasota.





Fig. 2. Bronzino, *Lamentation*, 1553, oil on wood, Chapel of Eleonora, Palazzo Vecchio.



Fig. 3. Bronzino, *Lamentation*, 1545, oil on panel, Chapel of Eleonora, Palazzo Vecchio.



Fig. 4. Pierre d'Argent, *Lamentation*,  
1572, oil on panel,  
Église Saint-Laurent, Ornans, France.



Fig. 5. Baccio Bandinelli, *Bust of Cosimo I de' Medici*, 1544 (?), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

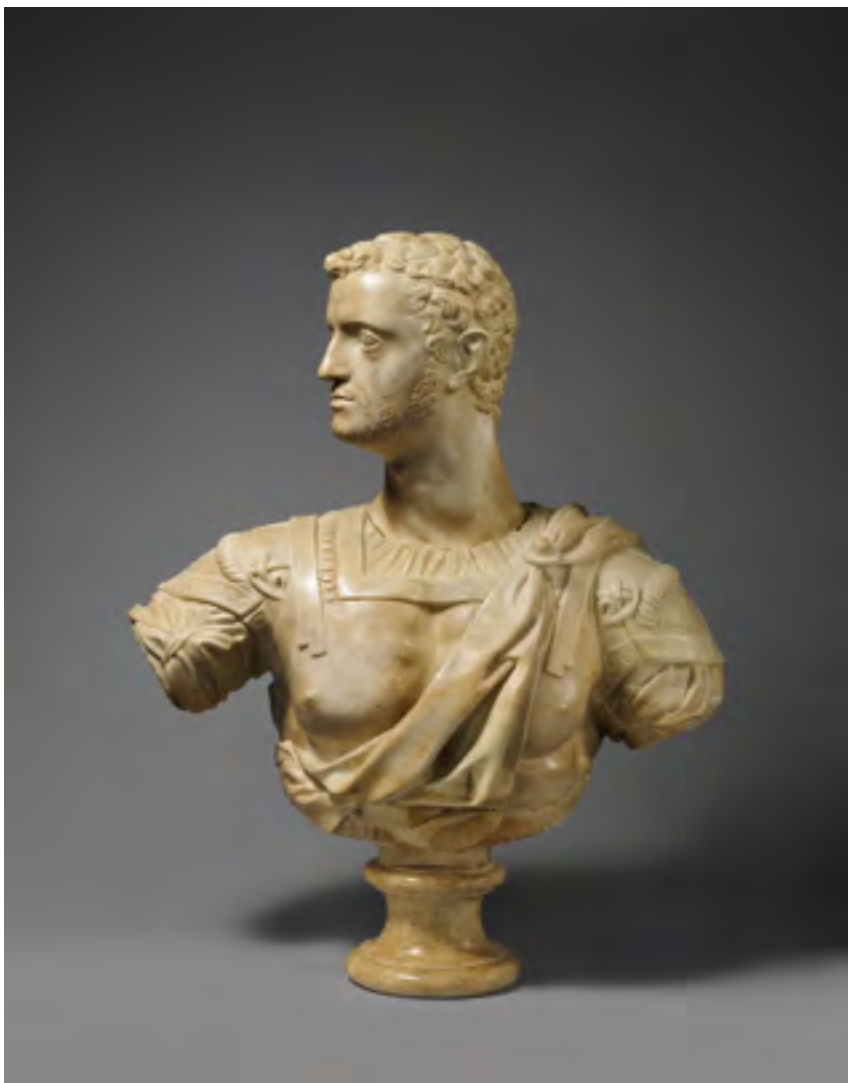


Fig. 6. Baccio Bandinelli (Vincenzo de' Rossi?), *Bust of Cosimo I de' Medici*, c.1539-1530, The Metropolitan Museum of New York.





Fig. 7. Michelangelo (?), *San Giovannino da Úbeda*, 1494-1495 (?) Cappella del Salvatore, Úbeda, Andalusia, Spain



Fig. 8. Domenico Poggini, *Elba Medal* / Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-1574), 1549, cast bronze, (misdated as 1570), Royal Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



Fig. 9. Giorgio Vasari and helpers, Allegory of the Quartieri of Santa Maria Novella and San Giovanni, flanked by the Allegories of the Mugello, Fiesole, San Miniato nel Valdarno, and Pistoia , 1555-1565, Salone dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. [uncrowned Marzocco and Flora highlighted in central tondo: cornucopias of the subject cities highlighted]





Fig. 10. Giorgio Vasari, *Cosimo I as Augustus*, 1556-1558, Sala di Leone X, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.



Fig. 11. Federico Zuccari, *Caccia al cervo* (model for "*La Cofanaria*", 1565), Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, Florence.

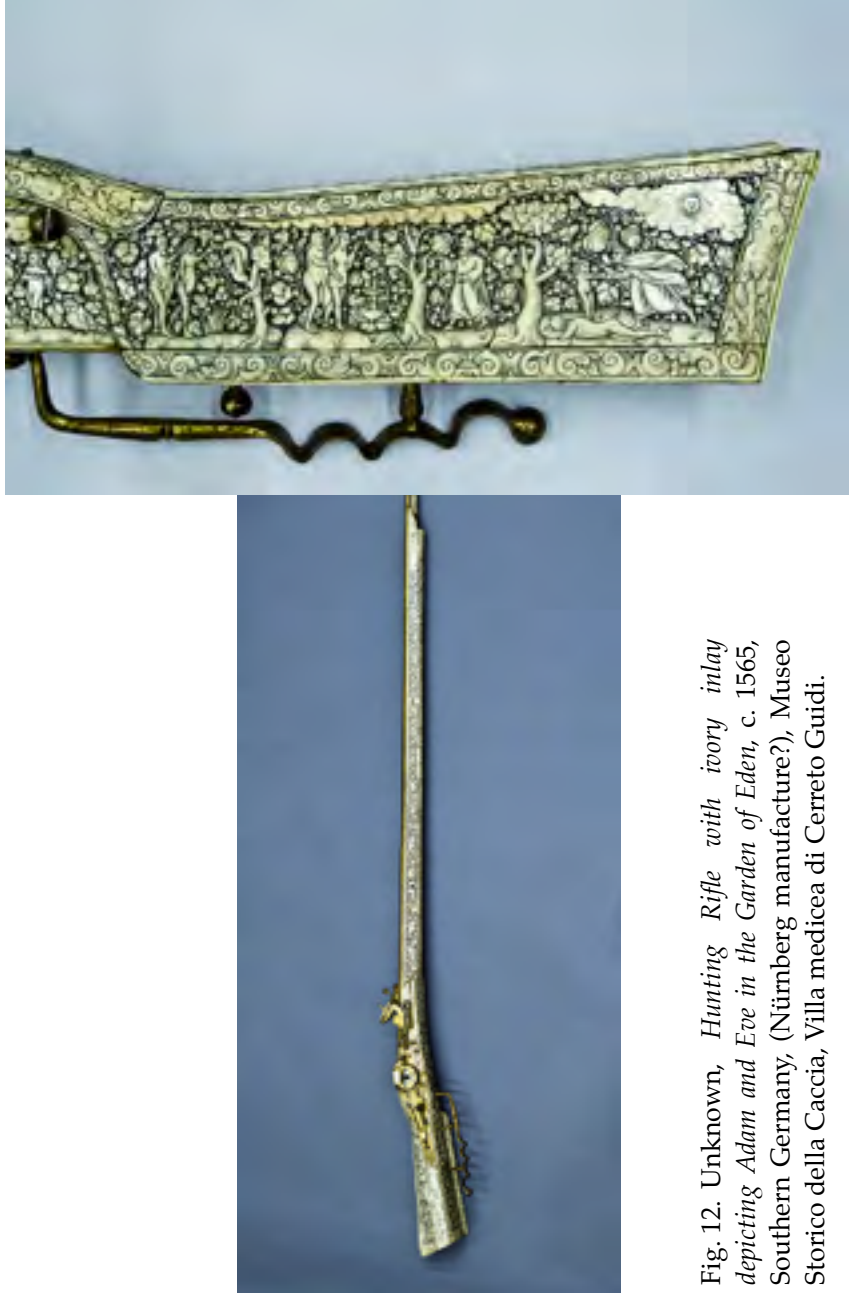


Fig. 12. Unknown, *Hunting Rifle with ivory inlay depicting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*, c. 1565, Southern Germany, (Nürnberg manufacture?), Museo Storico della Caccia, Villa medicea di Cerreto Guidi.



Fig. 13. Giorgio Vasari & Michele da Faenza, *Lorenzo il Magnifico receives the ambassadors*, Sala di Lorenzo il Magnifico, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.





Fig. 14. Bartolomeo Ammannati & Francesco del Tadda [statue of Victory], *Column of Justice*, 1563-1581 Piazza Santa Trinita, Florence.



Fig. 15. Agnolo Bronzino, *Prince Francesco de' Medici*, 1551, Tempera on wood, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.



Fig. 16. Giorgio Vasari & Cristofano Gherardi, *Saturn receives the first fruits of spring*, 1555-1557, Sala degli Elementi, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.



Fig. 17 Giorgio Vasari and helpers, *Allegory of Santa Croce and Santo Spirito*, 1555-1565, Salone dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.





Fig. 18 Giorgio Vasari & Giovanni Battista Naldini, *Apotheosis of Cosimo I*, 1563-1565, Salone dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.



Fig. 19. Agostino Carracci, *The Grand Ducal Coronet of Tuscany*, printed etching, 1586, in Aldo Manuzio il Giovane, *Vita di Cosimo de Medici primo gran duca di Toscana*, p. 156.

