

1 | *Euridice* in Context

The reign of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici from 1587 until his death in 1609 was marked by three prominent weddings: his own to Christine of Lorraine in May 1589; that of his niece Maria de' Medici to King Henri IV of France in October 1600; and that of his son Prince Cosimo de' Medici (later Grand Duke Cosimo II) to Archduchess Maria Magdalena of Austria in October 1608. The festivities celebrating the 1589 and 1608 weddings culminated in the performance of a comedy (Girolamo Bargagli's *La pellegrina* and Michelangelo Buonarroti *il giovane's Il giudizio di Paride*) with spectacular *intermedi* before, between, and after the five acts of the play: indeed, the six *intermedi* to *La pellegrina* (1589) are widely regarded as a pinnacle of the genre, and the epitome of Medici court entertainments as political propaganda.

Something quite different occurred in 1600, however. Here the noble guests saw not a play with lavish *intermedi* but, rather, two through-composed “plays in music” – *favole in musica* (what we now call operas): *Euridice*, with words by Ottavio Rinuccini (1563–1621) and music in the main by Jacopo Peri (1561–1633); and *Il rapimento di Cefalo*, to a text by Gabriello Chiabrera (1552–1638) and music by Giulio Caccini (1551–1618) and others. For the Medici to celebrate a wedding of one of their own with a comedy and *intermedi* was to be expected: Duke Cosimo I (he became grand duke only in 1569) established the precedent with his wedding to Eleonora of Toledo in 1539, and the pattern continued through the celebration of the marriages of his son Francesco to Johanna of Austria (1565), and his daughter, Virginia, to Cesare d'Este (1586).¹ Opera, however, was different, and also confusing enough that at least one visitor to Florence in 1600 thought that *Il rapimento di Cefalo* somehow belonged to the older genre – though clearly it did not in terms of its structure and musical setting – perhaps by virtue of its mythological content and spectacular staging.² *Euridice*

¹ The literature on the Florentine *intermedi* is large, but one can start with Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici*; Pirrotta, *Li due Orfei* (translated as *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*); and M. Fabbri et al. (eds.), *Il luogo teatrale a Firenze*.

² Carter, “Rediscovering *Il rapimento di Cefalo*,” para. 4.3.

drew on Classical myth, too, but here, at least, there could be no doubt: something new was definitely in the air.

Michelangelo Buonarroti *il giovane* (1568–1646) had to tread a fine line in his official description of the 1600 festivities to place them at the apogee of this long tradition of Medici wedding celebrations.³ But the grand duke and grand duchess (or their advisers) may have cultivated such novelty to mark the great political significance of a marriage (with the King of France, no less) that also marked an important shift in Medici foreign policy. Such novelty also suited the ambitions of the relatively young Florentine patrician, Jacopo Corsi (1561–1602), who was involved in putting *Euridice* on the stage. It was the culmination of a decade of theatrical experimentation in Florence, in which Corsi and others had been actively, and sometimes competitively, involved. They, in turn, built on theoretical investigations into ancient Greek and Roman music and drama going back several decades on the part of Florentine groups such as the “Camerata” sponsored by Giovanni de’ Bardi (1534–1612), also involving Vincenzo Galilei (1520–1591), Giulio Caccini, and Piero di Matteo Strozzi (1551–1614).⁴ The Accademia degli Alterati in Florence had a role to play here, too: it was founded in 1569 and included a significant number of intellectuals and poets, such as Giovanni de’ Bardi, Lorenzo Giacomini, Girolamo Mei, and Giovanni Battista Strozzi *il giovane*, among many others. Although the academy barely met during the 1590s, it was briefly revived under the influence of Don Giovanni de’ Medici in late 1599–1600 (and again in 1604): Michelangelo Buonarroti *il giovane*, Jacopo Corsi, Piero di Matteo Strozzi, Alessandro Rinuccini, and Ottavio Rinuccini were among those who attended a session on 24 January 1599/1600.⁵ Both Peri and Rinuccini made the connection with such humanist endeavor – as did Buonarroti for *Il rapimento di Cefalo* in his account of the festivities (he associates it with a

³ Michelangelo Buonarroti (*il giovane*), *Descrizione delle felicissime nozze . . . della Cristianissima Maestà di Madama Maria Medici, Regina di Francia e di Navarra* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1600); it is also included in Buonarroti, *Opere varie in versi ed in prosa*, ed. Fanfani, 403–54. The 1600 edition lacks page numbers; in subsequent citations we follow the numbering added in pencil to the copy now digitized at www.cinquecentine-crusca.org/scheda2.asp?es=0&radice=000111569_1.

⁴ Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata*. Care must be taken not to confuse this Piero Strozzi (baptized as Piero Vincenzo di Matteo Strozzi) with other members of this extended family with the same first name; for the most current information, see Fantappiè, “Strozzi, Piero Vincenzo.”

⁵ Palisca, “The Alterati of Florence”; Blocker, “The Accademia degli Alterati and the Invention of a New Form of Dramatic Experience.” Girolamo Mei (mostly in Rome) was in correspondence with members of the Camerata and also had a significant influence on their thinking. For the January 1600 meeting of the Alterati, see Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 558.2 (Diary of the Accademia degli Alterati, vol. 2), fol. 105.

revival of the power of ancient music to arouse the emotions of its listeners)⁶ – although they also hedged their bets on the fidelity of *Euridice* to any Classical model.

That hedging was inevitable when squaring theoretical investigation with practical exigency. It also reflected a problem of genre. Peri and Rinuccini may have referred to ancient tragedy in their statements on *Euridice*, but they knew full well that they were also working within the more modern context of the pastoral play on the model of Tasso's *Aminta* (1573) and Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (1590), a genre that also gained considerable favor in Florence (and elsewhere) in the 1590s as a suitable medium for princely entertainment.⁷ As Guarini discovered to his cost, the pastoral "tragicomedy" was controversial given its lack of Classical precedent and its apparent hybridity. But it had the further advantages of being relatively easy to stage (with fewer demands for complex scenery), and, still more, of offering a more conducive and plausible environment for music by virtue of its location in an idealized Arcadia where songs were naturally in the air. Various theatrical entertainments staged in Florence in the early 1590s inhabited the same mythological–pastoral world, including three (now lost) entertainments with texts by Laura Guidiccioni Lucchesini and music by Emilio de' Cavalieri: *Il satiro* and *La disperazione di Fileno* in 1590 (or early 1591) and *Il giuoco della cieca* (based on an episode in *Il pastor fido*) in 1595. Grand Duchess Christine of Lorraine also seems to have favored pastorals as appropriate for women in her circles, whether as creators (for example, an untitled *tragicommedia* by Leonora Bernardi performed *in villa* in 1591, and Laura Guidiccioni's collaborations with Cavalieri) or in terms of audience.⁸ Thus although the first "opera," *Dafne* – to verse by Ottavio Rinuccini and music by Jacopo Corsi and Jacopo Peri – was performed at Corsi's residence in Florence in the presence of Don Giovanni de' Medici in early 1598, it was repeated in the Palazzo Pitti

⁶ Buonarroti, *Descrizione delle felicissime nozze*, 22, praises Giulio Caccini for offering a true demonstration of what many might have thought was just unbelievable hyperbole on the part of the ancients in terms of music's ability to arouse the emotions (*Il perché in questa impresa tutto intendendo a sì fatto termine ei la condusse, che in rappresentandosi, quello, che quasi incredibile, et iperbole dell'antica musica da alcuno saria credutosi, tutti gli affetti movente; egli, per la chiara esplicazion degli articoli, e degli accenti, per verissimo ne fè conoscere, svegliandone con efficacia movimenti veraci ne gli uditori*).

⁷ Fenlon, "A Golden Age Restored."

⁸ Cox, *The Prodigious Muse*, 97 (Bernardi); Riccò, *Dalla zampogna all'aurea cetra*, 55–131 (Guidiccioni and Cavalieri). Both Bernardi and Guidiccioni were singers taken into Medici service in August 1588; Newcomb, *The Madrigal at Ferrara*, 1: 272 (doc. 67). The issue also has a bearing on the projected performance of Tasso's *Aminta* in Florence in Carnival 1589/90 by *le principesse e le dame di palazzo*; see Riccò, "Ben mille pastorali", 264–67.

before the grand duchess and Cardinals Francesco Maria del Monte and Alessandro Damasceni Peretti di Montalto on 21 January 1598/99.⁹ That performance followed a revival of Cavalieri's *Il giuoco della cieca* on 5 January (or, more likely, on the 4th).¹⁰ *Dafne* may also have been staged at least once in 1600, if not necessarily with Peri's music (see later in this chapter). Both events in Carnival 1598/99 took place in the Sala delle Statue, which, we shall see, had an impact on the preparations for the production of *Euridice* during the 1600 wedding festivities. The grand duchess and Don Giovanni de' Medici made their influence felt here as well, the latter by being placed in some kind of charge of the celebrations as a whole.

These interconnections between the Medici and Florentine patricians were made particularly apparent in 1600 because of the political and other

⁹ For *Dafne*, see most recently Fantappiè, "Una primizia rinucciniana," discussing the newly discovered "original" version of Rinuccini's libretto (with 212 lines of verse rather than 445). In the preface to *Le musiche . . . sopra L'Euridice* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1600 [= 1601]), Jacopo Peri dates the inception of *Dafne* back to 1594, but some difficulty over the year of the first performance is caused by his subsequent comment that it was performed in three successive carnivals (*E per tre Anni continui, che nel Carnovale si rappresentò . . .*). This is commonly agreed to be Carnivals 1597/98, 1598/99, and 1599/1600, but it is possible that the entire sequence should be shifted back by one year, beginning with Carnival 1596/97. In the dedication to Maria de' Medici of his *L'Euridice . . . rappresentata nello sponsalizio della Christianiss. Regina di Francia, e di Navarra* (Florence: Cosimo Giunti, 1600), Rinuccini refers to the early version of *Dafne*, then notes that it was given a better form and performed at Corsi's residence, and was not only favored by the Florentine nobility but was heard and praised by Grand Duchess Christine and Cardinals del Monte and Montalto (*onde preso animo, e dato miglior forma alla stessa favola, e di nuovo rappresentandola in casa il Sig. Iacopo, fu ella non solo dalla nobiltà di tutta questa Patria favorita, ma dalla Serenissima Gran Duchessa, e gl'illustrissimi Cardinali Dal Monte e Montalto udita, e commendata*). However, he seems to be conflating performances of that "better" version of *Dafne* in two successive years, one in Carnival 1597/98 in Corsi's residence before Don Giovanni de' Medici, as noted later by Marco da Gagliano (*KirkCM*, 195), and one before the grand duchess and the two cardinals in the Sala delle Statue in the Palazzo Pitti on 21 January 1598/99 (*GM*, Diari d'etichetta 2, p. 95: *Adi 21 si fece nella sala delle statue la pastorella in musica del signor Jacopo Corsi*). The evidence of a performance in Carnival 1599/1600 is scant: an entry in Corsi's financial accounts dated 28 January 1599/1600 refers to purchasing *rimesse e ferri per la commedia* (*KirkCM*, 197), although this could refer to anything theatrical. In early April 1600, Emilio de' Cavalieri complained about comparisons being made between *Dafne* and *Il giuoco della cieca*; *KirkCM*, 197–98, uses this in further support of a performance of *Dafne* being held earlier that year, but it need not be so. Only portions of the music for the work survive; see Porter, "Peri and Corsi's *Dafne*."

¹⁰ *GM*, Diari d'etichetta 2, p. 94, notes the performance on 5 January 1598/99, and a comedy by zanni the next day (*Adi 5 detto se li fece nel salone delle statue la pastorella in musica dal signor Emilio de' Cavalieri che vi furno 60 gentildonne fiorentine. Adi 6 nella medesima sala e le stesse donne se li fece una commedia di zanni*). However, Belisario Vinta refers to the performance in palazzo of *una commedia pastorale molto vaga et piacevole con bellissima musica* that had been given "today" in his letter to Alessandro Beccheria (the Florentine resident in Milan), 4 (*sic*) January 1598/99; *MdP* 3135, fols. 679–80.

circumstances leading up to the wedding. But they also reflect a typical strategy of the Medici as a whole: although their rule as grand dukes of Florence was now undisputed, they were careful to foster patrician involvement in affairs of state, and were eager, of course, to showcase the intellectual and cultural vitality of their extraordinary city. Don Giovanni de' Medici (1567–1621) served a particularly useful function in this light. He was the illegitimate son of Duke Cosimo I and Eleonora degli Albizzi, and was thus in a somewhat similar position to Don Antonio de' Medici (1576–1621), born to Grand Duke Francesco and Bianca Cappello prior to their marriage in 1579. Both Don Giovanni and Don Antonio were subsequently legitimized within limits (and without rights of succession), and Grand Duke Ferdinando I tended to use them in various diplomatic capacities on ambassadorial missions abroad – Don Giovanni was often at the Spanish court – and as intermediaries to act in his interests in Florence and elsewhere. Don Giovanni had a distinguished military career (serving in Flanders, Hungary, and, later, on behalf of Venice), but when not abroad, he was active in Florentine intellectual and social circles such as the Accademia Fiorentina and the Alterati, given his own interests in the arts and sciences, as well as in the theatre. In addition he was an architect who played a leading role in designing military fortifications (for example, in Livorno and for the Fortezza del Belvedere in Florence) and churches (in Livorno, Pisa, and, somewhat controversially, the Cappella dei Principi in S. Lorenzo in Florence). In terms of his Florentine networks of associates and even friends, Don Giovanni was particularly close to, and cultivated by, Jacopo Corsi and Ottavio Rinuccini (they were roughly six and four years older than him, respectively). This created connections that would have a significant impact on the 1600 festivities.¹¹

Don Giovanni's role in the celebrations appears to have generated some bad feeling between him and the venerable architect and stage designer, Bernardo Buontalenti, on the one hand, and, on the other, with Emilio de' Cavalieri, who was notionally in charge of the court musicians but felt distinctly sidelined by the whole proceedings. Giulio Caccini also used the festivities to secure his reappointment to Medici service (on 1 October 1600) following his somewhat ignominious dismissal in 1593 (because of a dispute with Antonio Salviati over one of Caccini's female students),¹²

¹¹ For Don Giovanni de' Medici, see Dooley, *A Mattress Maker's Daughter*. His connections with Rinuccini and Corsi are discussed in Fantappiè, "Una primizia rinucciniana," 211–14.

¹² *KirkCM*, 131–36; Carter and Goldthwaite, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, 109–10. However, in the interim Caccini had continued to be supported by Florentine patrons, including Jacopo Corsi and Piero di Matteo Strozzi.

chiefly by way of *Il rapimento di Cefalo* but also, if to a lesser degree, by his involvement in *Euridice*. Meanwhile, Emilio de' Cavalieri was becoming increasingly isolated from events in Florence, and the issues surrounding them, despite his supposed authority over the court artists and musicians. Not everything seems to have gone smoothly, but that might well be said of the wedding arrangements as a whole, however much Michelangelo Buonarroti *il giovane* tried to put a positive spin on things in his official *Descrizione* of the festivities, as he was required to do.

The Marriage Negotiations

Don Giovanni de' Medici finds his typical place in the background of the well-known painting by Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli (1551–1640) of Maria de' Medici's wedding, or more properly, the ceremonial giving of the ring (see Fig. 1.1). This has all the hallmarks of such nuptial representations, and the absence of the groom, Henri IV, is not at all surprising: royal etiquette required the bride to meet him first on his terrain rather than hers. Thus Maria's uncle, Grand Duke Ferdinando I (wearing the robe of the *gran maestro* of the Cavalieri di S. Stefano), stood as proxy for the king in the ceremony: Chimenti shows them standing to the left and right of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (nephew of Pope Clement VIII), the papal legate sent from Rome to officiate. They are bounded on either side by other members of the Medici family who, strangely enough, have consistently been misidentified in most scholarly accounts of this image.

Chimenti did the painting before, rather than after, the event: it was prominently displayed in the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio during the banquet on the evening of the ceremony, on the south wall (toward the Uffizi) and to the left of the baldachin over the head table at which was seated Maria de' Medici, her immediate family, and the cardinal.¹³ To the right was Chimenti's representation (a mirror image, as it were) of the other royal "French" wedding involving the Medici, that of Caterina de' Medici to Prince Henri, Duke of Orléans (later King Henri II) in 1533. To have yet another Medici as Queen of France was indeed a sign of greatness, so Grand Duke Ferdinando and Grand Duchess Christine must have thought.¹⁴

¹³ Compare Buonarroti, *Descrizione delle felicissime nozze*, 13. He situates the painting *à man destra* of the baldachin, i.e., on Maria's right-hand side as she faced the hall.

¹⁴ As part of the pro-French Medici policy (and for the improving of relations between the Lorraines and the Bourbons), the grand duchess's brother, Henri II of Lorraine, had married King Henri IV's sister, Catherine de Bourbon, on 31 January 1599.



Fig. 1.1: Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli, *The Wedding of Maria de' Medici and Henri IV of France* (1600). Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (Inv. 1890/10304). By permission of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo della Repubblica Italiana/ Gallerie degli Uffizi.

For that earlier wedding, Chimenti had to draw on his imagination, but in his invoice for the two paintings submitted on 30 September 1600 (the week before the festivities), he made it clear that in the case of the current one he was representing those involved as they would indeed appear in the ceremony itself.¹⁵ Buonarroti likewise wrote that the painting represented the ceremony

¹⁵ GM 1152 (*Affari diversi* of the Guardaroba, 1575–1739), fol. 449: *Una Storia dello spozalizio dela regina quando il serenissimo Gran Duca in nome del Re li dà l'anello presente il Cardinale Aldobrandino figure intiere di b. 3½ ritratte a natural coli altri ritratti appresso ci[o]è Il Gran Principe, Madama[,] la Duchessa di Mantova e la di [sic] Bracciano. Il signor Don Giovanni, il signor Don Virginio e Don Antonio con li abiti ritratti et osservati li proprii che in tal cirimonia avevo da servire.* Chimenti charged sc.200 for the two paintings and was paid sc.110. This

officiated by Cardinal Aldobrandini “in the presence of those princes who had found themselves there that day.”¹⁶ The one person that Chimenti could not paint from life, as it were, was the cardinal himself.

Chimenti listed in his invoice almost all the other persons shown, if not quite in the order they appear. Those he names, save Cardinal Aldobrandini, were Maria’s close family members, with women on the left and men on the right (Chimenti switched their positions in his “mirror” representation of the 1533 wedding). The viewer looking leftward from Maria de’ Medici sees, in order, the Duchess of Bracciano (Flavia Peretti-Orsini, peeping from behind Maria), Grand Duchess Christine, Prince Cosimo de’ Medici (he was ten years old), and the Duchess of Mantua (Eleonora de’ Medici, Maria’s elder sister). In the rear, between Maria de’ Medici and Cardinal Aldobrandini, is what seems to be a young nun, perhaps Passitea Crogi (from Siena), who acted as a spiritual adviser to the Medici women and, so it is sometimes reported, had prophesied Maria’s wedding to the King of France.¹⁷ Looking rightward, the sequence is Don Antonio de’ Medici (Maria’s stepbrother, between the cardinal and the grand duke), Don Giovanni de’ Medici (her uncle), and the Duke of Bracciano (Virginio Orsini, her cousin).¹⁸ The apparent prominence given to Virginio Orsini (on the far right) might seem strange, but of the three noblemen shown in this portion of the painting he was the only legitimate son of a Medici: he was Ferdinando I’s nephew by way of the grand duke’s sister, the ill-fated Isabella, who was murdered (most assume) by her husband, Paolo

document is also transcribed in De Luca, *Le nozze di Maria de’ Medici con Enrico IV*, 29, but *Madama la Duchessa di Mantova* is misconstrued as a reference to one person rather than two, prompting surprise at the “omission” of the grand duchess from the list. A prior sketch by Chimenti for the painting (De Luca, *ibid.*, 19) had other figures, including, perhaps, French representatives. His representation of the wedding of Maria became the model for several subsequent ones, including a later version by Chimenti himself (c. 1627) in which the Duchess of Bracciano appears more clearly (*ibid.*, 29).

¹⁶ Buonarroti, *Descrizione delle felicissime nozze*, 17: *alla presenza di quei principi i quali il giorno vi si erano ritrovati*. However, they stood in somewhat different positions during the actual ceremony, according to Buonarroti’s account in *ibid.*, 5–6.

¹⁷ De Luca (*Le nozze di Maria de’ Medici con Enrico IV*, 21) does not identify the figure but refers to a sketch by Chimenti of an unidentified older nun (perhaps Maria Salviati). Another nun associated with Maria was Francesca Baglioni-Orsini (1538–1626), her governess from 1587 to 1596 (and who professed in 1593 after she was widowed), but her age does not match. For Passitea Crogi (1564–1615), see Formichetti, “Crogi, Passitea,” and Tabacchi, *Maria de’ Medici*, 25–26, 31–32.

¹⁸ For the most part, we follow the identifications in De Luca, *Le nozze di Maria de’ Medici con Enrico IV*, 29, 33, based on secure evidence from other portraits. Others have wrongly presumed the male figure on the far right (Virginio Orsini) to be Don Antonio, and the one between the cardinal and the grand duke (Don Antonio) to be Don Giovanni.

Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano.¹⁹ Chimenti's "family" group – plus Eleonora de' Medici's husband, Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga of Mantua – acted as a cohesive unit throughout the wedding festivities, standing close by Maria during the ceremony in the Duomo, taking key positions in the banquet, and lunching together privately in the Sala delle Statue (or its antechamber) in the Palazzo Pitti on Sunday 8 October prior to the entertainment in the gardens of the Palazzo Riccardi in Via Gualfonda.²⁰

The typical need to present a unified front at the wedding also helped counter the fact that the negotiations leading up to it had been both long and difficult. Maria de' Medici was born to Grand Duke Francesco and Johanna of Austria on 26 April 1575 and was now moving beyond the typical age for a dynastic wedding;²¹ her sister Eleonora (born in 1567) was seventeen when she married Prince Vincenzo Gonzaga on 29 April 1584. Indeed, the first steps toward Maria's union appear to have been taken when she herself was seventeen, as part of Cardinal Piero Gondi's efforts to have Henri IV return to Catholicism; Gondi (the archbishop of Paris) traveled to Italy in 1592 to explore the possibilities with the Pope, stopping in Florence to arrange an incentive to aid the French king's finances by way of the first of several large loans from Grand Duke Ferdinando I (made between 1592 and 1596, and repayable with interest) negotiated via the cardinal's cousin, the Florentine banker Girolamo Gondi. This sowed the seeds of a further alliance, even though Henri was currently married to (if long estranged from) Marguerite de Valois, the daughter of Henri II of France and Caterina de' Medici. Grand Duchess Christine also had her own family reasons for taking an active interest in favoring Henri IV as a means of ending the religious wars in France and neutralizing the increasing influence of the Duke of Savoy and his Spanish allies, a strategy brought

¹⁹ The other "legitimate" Medici son, Grand Duke Ferdinando's younger brother, Don Pietro (1554–1604), was currently in Spain, and out of favor because of his ongoing dispute with Ferdinando over his rightful inheritance from Grand Duke Cosimo I. Also absent from the festivities was Maria's aunt, Virginia, Duchess of Modena.

²⁰ Buonarroti, *Descrizione delle felicissime nozze*, 5–6 (wedding ceremony), 14 (seating, etc. at the banquet). For 8 October, see the records of Giovanni del Maestro, the *maestro di casa*, in ASF, Carte Stroziane I, 27, fol. 42: *Il dì 8 in domenica desinorno tutti insieme nel salotto delle statue e tutti da un un lato, la Regina in mezo, alla sua man dritta la Duchessa di Mantova, la Gran Duchessa, la Duchessa di Bracciano, da mano sinistra il cardinale legato Aldobrandino, il Duca di Mantova, il Granduca, il Duca di Bracciano, il signor Don Giovanni Medici e il signor Don Antonio Medici.*

²¹ For Maria de' Medici's birth (and baptism the following day), see Florence, Archivio dell'Opera del Duomo, Battesimi femmine, Registro 235, fol. 71v (http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/battesimi/visualizza_carta.asp?id=235&p=135&ricdir=a&Submit=Visualizza); compare Dubost, *Marie de Médicis*, 48–49; Tabacchi, *Maria de' Medici*, 19. For the persistent error that she was born on 26 April 1573, see Assonitis, "The Birth of Maria de' Medici."

to a head in the successful Florentine efforts to seize the Château d'If (off the coast of Marseilles) for Henri, in which Don Giovanni de' Medici played a leading role. The king (re)converted to Catholicism in 1595, and his marriage to Marguerite de Valois was officially annulled in December 1599 following an agreement reached with her after the death of the king's longtime mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées, the previous April. Instrumental in that annulment were the pro-Florentine Cardinals del Monte and Montalto (the latter the brother of Flavia Peretti-Orsini, Duchess of Bracciano), bringing yet more Medici supporters into the fray. Meanwhile, for as long as Maria de' Medici remained a pawn in this game of political chess, the grand duke resisted offers for her hand from Archduke Mattias of Austria and even from Emperor Rudolph II, as well as another that he considered derisory from Theodore, Duke of Braganza.²²

The grand duke and grand duchess clearly had broader political goals in mind by pursuing stronger relationships with France, not least as a counterbalance to Spanish influence on the Italian peninsula. But some significant pressure may also have come from Florentine patricians on more economic grounds, given that the French Wars of Religion, coupled with the death of Caterina de' Medici in 1589, threatened their access to the lucrative financial and commercial markets there: the Gondi family's extensive interests in Lyons were just one of many cases in point.²³ This is probably the reason why Jacopo Corsi, himself a prominent businessman, intervened personally with the grand duke on behalf of his fellow citizens to halt the arguments over the amount of Maria's dowry and to offer their own financial support for it.²⁴ Henri asked for sc.1,000,000 whereas the grand duke was prepared to offer only sc.600,000. The negotiations were conducted by the Florentine ambassador to France, Baccio Giovannini (the grand duke feared that Girolamo Gondi was too partial to the French king), and in the end the Florentines paid only sc.350,000 in coin, with the remaining sc.250,000 deemed as credit for expenses incurred over Château d'If (sc.200,000) plus the unpaid remainder of a loan made to the French crown by Grand Duke Cosimo I. That coin was delivered on Maria's arrival in Marseilles on 13 November 1600 by Bardo Corsi, Jacopo's brother.²⁵

²² Tabacchi, *Maria de' Medici*, 37.

²³ Milstein, *The Gondi*, 58–65; compare Orlando, *Le Grand Parti*, and Tognetti, *I Gondi di Lione*.

²⁴ So the eighteenth-century historian of the Medici, Riguccio Galluzzi, recounted, as cited in Malanima, "Corsi, Iacopo": *informato delle pendenti contestazioni sulla quantità della dote, ebbe il coraggio di supplicare il Gran Duca a nome dei suoi concittadini di desistere dalle opposizioni e offerire le ricchezze di ciascheduno per contribuire alla dote richiesta*.

²⁵ Giovannini's dispatches concerning the negotiations (including his criticisms of Gondi) survive in *MdP* 4615, fols. 5–283 (from 24 November 1599 to 24 April 1600). For the distribution of the