CHAPTER 6

The Patricians’ Contribution to Cultural Events the Medici Organised for Public Ceremonies and in Honour of Visiting Guests

Introduction

The Medici created status in many ways, and one of them was its use of court ceremonies like marriage spectacles, the baptism of a new prince, memorial ceremonies, and festivities to honour a visiting cardinal, king, prince, or duke.\(^1\) All these ceremonies helped create a positive image of the Medici family and Grand Duchy for the Tuscans as well as at other European courts. The high cultural and artistic level of the Medici festivities had to impress foreign ambassadors and rulers.\(^2\) This chapter illustrates the important role the Florentine patricians played in bringing these ceremonies to a successful conclusion. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that, although the patricians operated often ‘behind the scenes’, their activities were nevertheless of the utmost importance for the cultural success and social prestige of the Medici court in seventeenth-century Florence (1600–1670).

Thanks to the fact that the patricians were rooted firmly in all the religious, social, and cultural structures of the city, the Medici could always count on them when they needed people who could assist them in organizing and

\(^1\) Conrieri 2001: 43–52; Fantoni 1999: 265. Important persons who visited Florence in the first half of the seventeenth century were the Cardinals Montalto and Del Monte, (in 1595), the prince of Modena (in 1605), Prince Federigo di Urbino (in 1616), Prince Condé Henri 11 Bourbon (in 1623) and Prince Wladyslaw of Poland (in 1625). Important marriages that took place in the same period were:

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

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

\(^2\) Maria Alberti in her talk ‘Il mondo arabo e la “scoperta” del teatro. Gli spettacoli medicei descritti da uno spettatore d’eccezione: l’emiro druso Fakhr ad-Din.’ during the conference I Medici e il Levante: culture e dialoghi tra Firenze e il Mediterraneo orientale (1532–1743) which was held in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, 7 June 2013.
financing large-scale events like marriages, Carnival, and memorial ceremonies. And they trusted in this case not only on the individual patricians, but also on their extensive patronage networks, which included composers, musicians, actors, painters, and architects.

6.1 Theatre Plays in Honour of Visiting Guests

6.1.1 Theatre Plays in Honour of Fakhr ad-Din
During the reign of Ferdinand I, the Medici tried to conquer the markets of the Near East and tighten their bonds with those territories. In 1598, they sent the patrician Neri Giraldi to the Ottoman Empire to conclude a trade agreement and in 1604 Niccolò Giugni went to compliment the sultan of Morocco on his succession. It was difficult to start commercial relations, because France and Venice seemed to have a trade monopoly on this region. Cosimo II continued the policies of his father and decided to welcome guests from the Orient. One of them was the prince of the Druze population, the Lebanese emir Fakhr ad-Din al-Maan (Fakhr ad-Dîn 1572–1635), who was called Il Faccardino in Italian (fig. 84). He arrived in Livorno on 20 November 1613 and stayed two

Figure 84 Fabrizio Boschi, Cosimo II Receives Emir Fakhr ad-Din al-Maan, 1621–23, Casino Mediceo, Florence.

3 Del Piazzo 1952. On Neri Giraldi, see 2.1 Patricians as diplomats.
5 Ibid.: 283.
6 Ibid.: 285. Thanks to the Tuscan representative Ippolito Leoncini Tuscany came into contact with emir Fakhr ad-Din, prince of the Druze in Lebanon. From 1598 on he ruled over the coast