

LADIES FIRST?
SOME THOUGHTS ON A TOURNAMENT PRESENTED TO PRINCE
LADISLAS SIGISMUND (FLORENCE, 10 FEBRUARY 1625)

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ABSTRACT

When Prince Ladislas Sigismund of Poland visited Florence in January–February 1625 as part of his Grand Tour, he was presented with a long series of entertainments comprising a *sacra rappresentazione* (Andrea Salvadori's *La regina Sant'Orsola*, with music by various Florentine composers), Ferdinando Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina* (set by Francesca Caccini), and a run of comedies, tournaments, and *balli*. Typically, the Medici involved various leading Florentine patricians in these events. No less typically, these patricians took advantage of the occasion to demonstrate their loyalty to the two Medici women who currently held most power as regents for the young Grand Duke Ferdinando II: his mother, Archduchess Maria Magdalena of Austria (widow of Grand Duke Cosimo II), and grandmother, Grand Duchess Christine of Lorraine (widow of Grand Duke Ferdinando I). One of the entertainments offered to the prince, the tournament *La precedenza delle dame* (text by Andrea Salvadori; music by Jacopo Peri; scenery by Giulio Parigi), might seem to fit the pattern, although it is not quite so straightforward. Moreover, the hitherto unnoticed complexities of handling his visit—the Medici were hosting other distinguished guests as well—prompts careful thought about such entertainments not just as a conventional display of conspicuous consumption, but also as part of an intricate etiquette of diplomatic engagement.

KEYWORDS

Prince Ladislas Sigismund; Medici; Florence; festivities; *barriera*; Andrea Salvadori; Jacopo Peri; Giulio Parigi; diplomacy

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Prince Ladislas Sigismund's stay in Tuscany in January–February 1625 has often been discussed as marking a high point in Florentine “court” entertainments in the 1620s.¹ This is especially the case given that the decade has otherwise tended to be viewed (if wrongly) as a rather dismal period by virtue of the fact that the rule of the young Grand Duke Ferdinando II (b. 1610), who was not yet eleven years old when his father died, was under the regency of his mother, Archduchess Maria Magdalena of Austria (widow of Grand Duke Cosimo II), and grandmother, Grand Duchess Christine of Lorraine (see Table 1).² The Polish prince was presented with a rich panoply of spectacular performances, including a *sacra rappresentazione*, *La regina Sant’Orsola*, in the Teatro degli Uffizi (28 January), a *balletto rappresentato in musica*, *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall’isola d’Alcina*, plus a *balletto a cavallo* in the Medici Villa del Poggio Imperiale (3 February), and a *barriera* in the Casino di San Marco, the Florentine residence of one of the grand duke’s uncles, Cardinal Carlo de’ Medici (10 February). Given that this was Carnival, Prince Ladislas was also treated to the standard civic entertainments (three *calcio* matches in Piazza Santa Croce), in addition to more private ones in the principal Medici palace in Florence, the Pitti (typically, *commedie all’improvviso*), hunting of various kinds (birds, hares, wild boar, etc.), and evening *festini* in the houses of various Florentine patricians, as well as maritime exercises during his subsequent visit to Pisa and Livorno. Clearly the Medici regents and their advisors were pulling out all the stops, in part to motivate further the prince’s campaigns against the Ottoman Empire, but also because Maria Magdalena was hoping (albeit in vain) to engineer his marriage to her daughter, Margherita, even though she was already promised to Duke Odoardo Farnese of Parma.

These entertainments have attracted significant scholarly attention, not just because they included what has been called the first “opera” by a woman composer (Francesca Caccini’s *La liberazione di Ruggiero*), but also given that they needed to engage with the somewhat unusual circumstance of a state currently in the hands of two powerful women, meaning that their content had to celebrate the manifold abilities of female rulers in matters of good government. Less covered in the literature, however, is the fact that the prince’s visit was an organizational *tour de force* on the part of the court administration as documented by the grand duke’s *aiutante di camera*, Cesare Tinghi. From July 1600 until his death in April 1626, Tinghi produced three manuscript volumes of what he styled (in the third, begun on 11 November 1623) a

¹ See Kelley Harness, *Echoes of Women’s Voices: Music, Art, and Female Patronage in Early Modern Florence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 79–99, 152–62; Suzanne Cusick, *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court: Music and the Circulation of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 191–246. I rely significantly on both these texts, also for the more general historical circumstances outlined here. In addition, I am grateful to Maddalena Bonechi, Antonella D’Ovidio, Francesca Fantappiè, and Iain Fenlon for their comments on a draft of this text. All dates are given in modern style, not *stile fiorentino* (where the year began on 25 March).

² Grand Duke Cosimo II originally designated as regents Maria Magdalena and his eldest surviving brother, Cardinal Carlo de’ Medici, but he replaced the cardinal with his mother in a codicil to his will. The two regents were also advised by a council made up of prominent Florentines; see Assunta Petrosillo, *Maria Maddalena d’Austria: una figlia dell’Impero nella Firenze medicea* (Naples: Guida Editori, 2018), 93.

Table 1: An outline genealogy of the Medici family

Ferdinando I (1549–1609; *r.* 1587–), *m.* (1589) Christine of Lorraine (1565–1637)

- Cosimo II** (1590–1621; *r.* 1609–), *m.* (1608) Archduchess Maria Magdalena of Austria (1587–1631)
 - Maria Cristina (1609–1632)
 - Ferdinando II** (1610–1670; *r.* 1621–), *m.* (1633) Vittoria Della Rovere (1622–1695)
 - Giovanni Carlo (Giancarlo; 1611–1663), Cardinal (1644)
 - Margherita (1612–1679), *m.* (1628) Odoardo Farnese, Duke of Parma (1612–1646)
 - Mattias (1613–1667)
 - Francesco (1614–1634)
 - Anna (1616–1676), *m.* (1646) Archduke Ferdinand Karl of Austria (1628–62)
 - Leopoldo (1617–1675), Cardinal (1667)
- Eleonora (1591–1617)
- Caterina (1593–1629), *m.* (1617) Ferdinando I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1587–1626)
- Francesco (1594–1614), Prince of Capistrano
- Carlo (1596–1666), Cardinal (1615)
- Filippo (1598–1602)
- Lorenzo (1599–1648)
- Maria Maddalena (1600–1633)
- Claudia (1604–48), *m.* (1621) Federigo Della Rovere, Duke of Urbino (1605–1623); *m.* (1626) Archduke Leopold of Austria (1604–1648)

diary . . . of all the days in which His Most Serene Highness will go to Mass with the Papal Nuncio and with the resident ambassadors to His Most Serene Highness, and when with the Most Serene Archduchess and with the Lord Princes his brothers, and when with foreign princes; and of all the foreign guests which His Most Serene Highness will accommodate and by whom they will be handled and served; and of all the gifts which His Most Serene Highness will give and will have given; and of all the hunts which His Most Serene Highness will undertake and will have undertaken; and of all the public matters in which His Most Serene Highness will engage; and of all those things which happen from day to day which will concern the service of His Most Serene Highness; and of all the campaigns done, and booty gained, by the galleys and vessels of His Most Serene Highness and of the Knights of St. Stephen; and of all those things which I will know.³

³ Angelo Solerti, *Musica, ballo e drammatica alla corte medicea dal 1600 al 1637: notizie tratte da un diario con appendice di testi inediti e rari* (Florence: R. Bemporad & Figlio, 1905; repr. New York: Broude, 1968; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1989), xii–xiii. Tinghi's *diario* is an official chronicle rather than a personal diary. His involvement in its third volume (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Miscellanea Medicea 11) ceased around the end of January 1626, when he fell ill prior to his death; it was continued by his successors in a more sporadic fashion until 1644. The position of



1. Jacopo Ligozzi (?), *Maria Maddalena, Grand-Duchess of Tuscany (1589–1631), with her Eldest Son Grand-Duke Ferdinand II (1610–1670), and Youngest Daughter Anna de' Medici, later Archduchess of the Tyrol (1616–1676)*. The National Trust Collections (Oxburgh Hall). Photo: © National Trust Images.

But despite the apparent singular focus of Tinghi's title on "His Most Serene Highness," the circumstances of the regency forced a more nuanced terminology upon him, with "Sua Altezza Serenissima" (Grand Duke Ferdinando II), "Loro Altezze Serenissime" (normally the grand duke and his mother, Archduchess Maria Magdalena), and "Madama Serenissima" (Grand Duchess Christine). Tinghi tended to keep "Madama Serenissima" separate from the closer "family" unit represented by "Loro Altezze Serenissime" and the grand duke's siblings, including his four

aiutante di camera was somewhat similar to what in the English royal household was called a "yeoman of the privy chamber," i.e., one of a group of non-noble attendants granted (highly prized) access to, and performing a range of personal services for, the ruler. Tinghi had a salary of 8 *scudi* per month, which places him midway between the lower-level servants and the grand duke's noble *camerieri* (in effect, gentlemen of the privy chamber).

brothers—Tinghi labels them the “Signori Principi Suoi fratelli”—and three sisters (see Fig. 1). Those sisters also appear less frequently, remaining relatively cloistered whether literally (in the case of the eldest, the disabled Maria Cristina) or figuratively.

Angelo Solerti (1865–1907) transcribed what he considered to be the most significant portions of Tinghi’s diaries in his chronological survey of music, dancing, and theatrical events at the Medici court from 1600 to 1637 (up to the marriage of Grand Duke Ferdinando II and Vittoria Della Rovere). But scholars have tended to neglect the fact that Solerti’s selective citations give a misleading impression, both because the surrounding text is often needed to put things in context, and given that these topics formed only a part of Tinghi’s massive enterprise.⁴ Indeed, as the account of the purpose of his diary suggests, such entertainments fell under the more general rubrics of the reception of visiting foreign dignitaries, the “public matters” in which the young grand duke was engaged, and any other day-to-day occurrences concerning his “service.” And while Tinghi kept a detailed account of events in these terms, his main aims were to memorialize his princely masters on the one hand, and on the other, to maintain a record of what was done when, and for whom, that could serve for future reference so as to ensure consistency in matters of etiquette. Moreover, he would not always have been an eyewitness; he must have drawn on other sources, whether written or by word of mouth, and before or after the fact (which explains some of his errors and misunderstandings). Thus, his descriptions of Medici entertainments, for all their value, cannot be read just on their own, but should be viewed in this broader light.

Like any heads of state, the Medici had the treatment of visiting dignitaries down to a fine art, from the moment they entered Tuscany (if travelling from Rome, via Radicofani) to when they left (from Firenzuola if continuing to Bologna). Given that etiquette was largely determined by way of rank, Tinghi was particularly concerned with who would be met at any border by whom; where the grand duke himself might (or might not) officially greet the visitor outside the city; where lodging and hospitality would be provided for the guest and his entourage; the type of escort provided as they moved around the Palazzo Pitti (including the number of pages with torches) or through the city (which carriages would be used when, with what number of horses); how private meetings might be held (“audiences” or “visits,” standing or seated, with or without a hat, and so forth); who might dine with whom; where the daily Mass would be celebrated; and what activities would be arranged in Florence and elsewhere in Tuscany. Such matters also varied according to whether the visitor was there in an official capacity on matters of state or was travelling incognito. And they became still more complicated during the 1620s

⁴ Compare the comments in Francesca Fantappiè, “La celebrazione memorabile: potere, arte e spettacolo nelle memorie di corte di Ferdinando I dei Medici,” *Arte, musica, spettacolo: annali del Dipartimento di Storia delle arti e dello spettacolo [Università di Firenze]* 2 (2001): 208–15; Fantappiè also provides fuller details of Tinghi’s career. Because of these issues, I draw on the more complete transcription of the relevant portions of Tinghi’s diary (fols. 102r–108v) in Giaeale Monaci, “Il cerimoniale alla corte medicea: Diario secondo e terzo del granduca di Toscana di Cesare Tinghi aiutante di camera,” 3 vols. (*tesi di laurea*, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1998–1999), 2:315–38 (entries can be located by date). I have silently edited Tinghi’s text where needed in the case of evident contractions (for example, *reverenze* for *revereze* and *l’altre* for *l’atre*), also adding accents, etc. In other cases, however, I have left his spellings intact save giving *v* for consonant *u* and *i* for *j*.

precisely because of the circumstances of the regency. Grand Duke Ferdinando II was scarcely out of childhood, and his brothers were younger still. While he was fully expected to undertake official duties, the disparity in age between him and most visiting dignitaries meant that other arrangements needed to come into play.

The handling of Prince Ladislas, who was travelling incognito, fits the pattern well enough. He and his entourage were met in Radicofani by the Governor of Siena (Fabrizio Colloredo), with a salvo fired from the fortress there;⁵ Don Lorenzo de' Medici (another of the grand duke's uncles) took over at San Quirico d'Orcia, south of Siena, to accompany the prince through Poggibonsi to San Casciano in Val di Pesa, where he was greeted (on 26 January) by the fourteen-year-old grand duke and his two brothers next to him in age, Giancarlo, as he was commonly styled (aged thirteen), and Mattias (eleven), with an appropriate armed escort. After a midday meal at the Villa de' Corsini (near Impruneta; it was assigned to Prince Giancarlo), the entourage entered Florence through the Boboli Gardens, where Prince Ladislas was welcomed at the entrance to the new wing (still under construction) of the Palazzo Pitti by Archduchess Maria Magdalena and Grand Duchess Christine, plus the grand duke's other brothers, Francesco (aged ten) and Leopoldo (seven). The Polish prince was lodged in the guest quarters on the *piano nobile* of the palace (served by Marchese Vincenzo Salviati), while his principal travelling companion, Prince Albrycht Stanislaw Radziwiłł, was given rooms on the top floor (served by Marcello Agostini, *bali* of Siena).⁶

Prince Ladislas's mother, Anne of Austria (1573–1598), was the daughter of Archduke Charles II and Maria Anna of Bavaria, and the eldest sister of Archduchess Maria Magdalena. Given that the prince was the archduchess's nephew and therefore part of the family, as it were, he (but not Prince Radziwiłł) was able regularly to take the midday meal with her and her sons (including the grand duke), occasionally joined by the grand duchess, although in the evenings he tended to dine "alone" (so Tinghi would note). Likewise, he attended Mass with them, whether in the chapel in the Pitti ("in casa") or in some Florentine church. However, it was Don Lorenzo de' Medici who acted as the prince's chief escort: he and Ladislas Sigismund were just some four years apart in age (they were born in 1599 and 1595 respectively). In addition to seeing the sights of Florence, the prince joined the grand-ducal family on a visit to Pisa and to Livorno before his leave-taking audiences in Pisa with Grand Duchess Christine (on 17 February) and Maria Magdalena (on the 18th). The grand duke and Don Lorenzo then accompanied him to Pontedera, where the grand duke took his leave. After spending the night at the Medici Villa Ambrogiana, Don Lorenzo escorted the prince on the 19th back through Florence and north to Firenzuola and the border.

⁵ For Colloredo (Governor of Siena from 1622 to 1627), see <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/fabrizio-colloredo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/>. In 1609, he made an extended diplomatic tour of Germany and Poland to announce the death of Grand Duke Ferdinando I.

⁶ Navigating one's way around the Palazzo Pitti can be tricky given that it was a constant work in progress in terms of construction, and also of the movement of family members from "summer" to "winter" quarters within the building, or to other residences within and outside the city. For more on the palace's various spaces for formal functions and for guests, see Tim Carter and Francesca Fantappiè, *Staging "Euridice" (1600): Theatre, Sets, and Music in Late Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 47–48, 199.

Maria Magdalena had encouraged Ladislas Sigismund to visit Florence during Carnival (Lent began on Wednesday 12 February) precisely because there would be more opportunity to enjoy the public and private entertainments typical of the season. They could not have known that matters would be affected by her being in official mourning for the death of her brother, Archduke Charles, in Spain on 28 December 1624 (Tinghi reports that the news reached Florence on 15 January); the archduke was also playing a key role in the marriage negotiations between Florence and Poland. The Medici certainly arranged matters with the Polish prince in mind: one of the allegorical figures in the prologue to *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* (3 February) was the Vistula River; on 6 February, Prince Ladislas visited the Medici stables where the seven-year-old Prince Leopoldo demonstrated his equestrian skills dressed in the Polish manner (“vestito alla pollacha”);⁷ and during his visit to Pisa and Livorno, he saw a mock naval battle (17 February) between a Turkish *caramussale* and five Florentine “frigate armate all’usanza di galere.” It is also clear that the various events associated with the Medici military order, the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano (Knights of St. Stephen), which the prince attended were meant to impress him with his hosts’ willingness to further the anti-Ottoman cause. But otherwise, these entertainments were of a standard kind, even if the Medici gave them particular care and attention by regularly attending rehearsals for them from December 1624 on (so Tinghi notes), if not before.

In fact, greater organizational problems were caused by the fact that Ladislas Sigismund was not the only visiting dignitary in Florence during this period. In his diary, Tinghi followed the practice he had established in 1623 of giving separate chronological accounts of each visit rather than a single, conflated one. Thus for the period of Prince Ladislas’s time in Tuscany, he provided no fewer than five separate listings of day-to-day events, also for Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi (23–31 January), Prince Niccolò d’Este (29 January to 12 February), and the ambassador of the Duke of Mantua, Francesco Suardo (2–6 February), plus a final account of the daily business of the grand duke, Archduchess Maria Magdalena, and Grand Duchess Christine.⁸

It follows that just reading Tinghi’s account of Prince Ladislas’s visit does not give the full flavour of all the goings-on in Florence during this hectic period. Even Tinghi himself could get confused, such as when he gives the date of *La liberazione di Ruggiero* and its *balletto a cavallo* as 2 February (a Sunday) in his sequence of events for the Polish prince, whereas it actually took place on 3 February, as is clear in his other entries (and all other sources).⁹ But reading all five of Tinghi’s sequences, as one must, offers an experience akin to those

⁷ It was common practice to put the Medici children on display in this manner (and we shall see another case, below); for an example from 1618 also involving the princesses, see Daniela Sarà, “I principini sulle scene della corte medicea del primo Seicento,” *Arte, musica, spettacolo: annali del Dipartimento di Storia delle arti e dello spettacolo [Università di Firenze]* 9 (2008): 213–38.

⁸ Cardinal Ludovisi was the nephew of former Pope Gregory XV; and Prince Niccolò d’Este was the third son of Duke Cesare d’Este of Modena and Virginia de’ Medici (the grand duke’s great-aunt). Relations between Florence and Mantua were close given that the current duchess, Caterina de’ Medici, was the grand duke’s aunt.

⁹ Hence the discrepancy in Solerti, *Musica, ballo e drammatica*, 179 (2 February), 180 (3 February). Tinghi also misattributed the text of *La liberazione di Ruggiero* to Andrea Salvadori. This is an understandable mistake given that Salvadori styled himself as “court poet” and was significantly involved in the other entertainments presented here, but the author was, in fact, Ferdinando Saracini.

novels (films, etc.) that provide multiple accounts of the same happenings each from a different point of view. More to the point, it provides crucial evidence of the tricky matters of protocol that had to be handled very carefully indeed by the Medici's administrators, given that each visitor needed to be treated according to rank, standing, and the political advantages that the Medici were hoping to gain. In addition, those administrators were required to leave time for the daily business required of the grand duke, the archduchess, and the grand duchess: formal audiences, informal meetings, letter writing, and in the case of the grand duke, attending to his studies. During such hours, their guests had to be kept occupied in other ways.

This involved a significant amount of juggling of events—and of manpower—also to ensure that these visitors did not cross paths save at appropriate moments. As a straightforward example, both Cardinal Ludovisi and then the Mantuan ambassador were given accommodation in different parts of the Palazzo Pitti (the cardinal on the top floor and the Mantuan ambassador on the bottom one); Niccolò d'Este, on the other hand, stayed in the residence of the Modenese ambassador to Florence. But neither the cardinal nor the ambassador had any noteworthy encounter with Prince Ladislas within the palace, even though he had rooms on the *piano nobile*. In part, this was because the prince was travelling incognito (as was Prince Niccolò) and so could not be “recognized” in any official capacity. But it meant that any such contact—if it occurred at all—would take place elsewhere whether by happenstance or by design, or for that matter, by designed happenstance.

Events on Wednesday 29 January 1625 reveal the careful planning that went on behind the scenes. Cardinal Ludovisi attended Mass in S. Croce, had a midday meal in the Palazzo Pitti with Cardinal Carlo de' Medici, and then gave audiences before dining privately. Prince Ladislas went to Mass in the chapel of the Pitti, was led by Don Lorenzo to eat with the grand duke and Maria Magdalena, stayed in his rooms all afternoon, and in the evening saw (with the grand duke and Maria Magdalena) a “commedia all'improvviso” presented by members of the Accademia degli Incostanti in the Sala delle Commedie.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the grand duke and Maria Magdalena had gone later in the afternoon (“alle 22 ore”) to Poggio Imperiale, presumably to oversee some kind of a rehearsal of the entertainments to take place there on 3 February.¹¹ That evening (it is unclear when), the grand duke, Archduchess Maria Magdalena, and Grand Duchess Christine also greeted Prince Niccolò d'Este, who had arrived in Florence that day and who was met at the Palazzo Vecchio by Roberto degli Obizzi and led through the *corridore* to the Pitti. The grand duke dined alone, while Prince Ladislas did so with Maria Magdalena (or alone; Tinghi is inconsistent).

As for “chance” encounters, even though Cardinal Ludovisi and Prince Ladislas were both lodged in the Pitti on their arrivals (on 23 and 26 January respectively), their first contact, it seems, only took place on Tuesday 28 January, and not in the palace. That morning, the cardinal celebrated Mass in SS. Annunziata in the presence of the grand-ducal family joined by

¹⁰ The Sala delle Commedie, on the third floor of the Palazzo Pitti, is one of those rooms in the palace often misidentified by scholars; see Francesca Fantappiè, “Sale per lo spettacolo a Pitti (1600–1650),” in *Vivere a Pitti: una reggia dai Medici ai Savoia*, ed. Sergio Bertelli and Renato Pasta (Florence: Olschki, 2003), 135–80.

¹¹ For the twenty-four-hour clock beginning at sunset or shortly thereafter, see Michael Talbot, “*Ore italiane*: The Reckoning of the Time of Day in Pre-Napoleonic Italy,” *Italian Studies* 40 (1985): 51–62.

the prince, at the end of which Ladislás Sigismund crossed paths with him, with appropriate greetings and bows (“s’abocorno insieme ritti salutandosi l’uno a l’altro con molte reverenze”). However, they then returned separately to the Pitti, the cardinal for a midday meal with Cardinal Carlo de’ Medici, while the prince dined informally (“alla domestica”) with the grand duke and Maria Magdalena. That separation continued. Later in the afternoon (“alle 23 ore”), the grand duke visited the cardinal in his rooms, and an hour later (“alle 24 ore”) the cardinal was met by Cardinal Carlo and the Archbishop of Pisa (Giuliano de’ Medici, from a cadet branch of the family) and led along the *corridore* to the Teatro degli Uffizi to see the performance of Andrea Salvadori’s *sacra rappresentazione, La regina Sant’Orsola*, with music (now lost) mostly by Marco da Gagliano, plus contributions by various other Florentine composers (depending on which account one reads they included Francesca Caccini, Muzio Effrem, and Jacopo Peri).¹² But that meeting with the grand duke must have been brief because also “alle 23 ore,” Prince Ladislás was fetched from his rooms by Don Lorenzo and was received by the grand duke in the Sala delle Figure (also known as the Sala delle Statue, now called the Sala delle Nicchie), one of the principal reception rooms in the palace (on the *piano nobile*). The grand duke and Maria Magdalena then escorted him along the *corridore* to the theatre.

Tinghi described *La regina Sant’Orsola* as being offered by Maria Magdalena in honour of Prince Ladislás (although it repeated a performance given on 6 October 1624 for the visit of Archduke Charles). This had an impact on the typical seating arrangements in the Teatro degli Uffizi. On a central dais sat Maria Magdalena with (in order) Prince Ladislás and Don Lorenzo on her right, and the grand duke and Prince Giancarlo on the left, with Princes Francesco, Mattias, and Leopoldo on a lower level (“più a basso”), and Princesses Margherita and Anna sitting in front of Maria Magdalena. Prince Radziwiłł and another leading member of the Polish entourage, Stefan Pac, sat at a lower level behind Prince Giancarlo.¹³ Various *dame di corte* were seated on either side of the dais. Grand Duchess Christine had brought her daughter, Claudia (the widowed former Duchess of Urbino), from the Monastero della Crocetta, and both sat incognito in a balcony above the entrance door to the theatre. The two cardinals and the Archbishop of Pisa watched through one window from the *corridore*, while Cardinal Ludovisi’s *favoriti* (and his escort, Fabritio Montalto) stood at another, and at a third was one more foreign nobleman in Florence, the German “Principe di Nolte.”¹⁴

¹² Tim Carter and Richard Goldthwaite, *Orpheus in the Marketplace: Jacopo Peri and the Economy of Late Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 266, 432.

¹³ “Et dreto al principe Giancarlo sedeva in segiola più bassa il duca di Rezilil con uno altro signore suo parente, intratenuti dal bali di Siena.” Stefan Pac (Steponas Pacas; Prince Radziwiłł’s “relative”) took third place in Tinghi’s list of the Polish entourage as they took their midday meal in the Villa de’ Corsini on 26 January (“il signore Pazi del ducato di Lituania”). For his links to the Florentine Pazzi family, see Aušra Baniulytė, “Italian Intrigue in the Baltic: Myth, Faith, and Politics in the Age of Baroque,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012): 31–32. Pac wrote a diary of the tour, as did Jan Hagenaw (attached to Prince Radziwiłł); see Adam Przyboś, ed., *Podróż królowicza Władysława Wazy do krajów Europy Zachodniej w latach 1624–1625 w świetle ówczesnych relacji* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1977). Both diaries are important, but Tinghi, inevitably, provides far greater detail so far as events in Florence are concerned, so he remains my primary source.

¹⁴ He had established some kind of residence in Florence on 6 January 1625 (when Tinghi styles him “il principe Ernesto Monaltes todescho” and “Ernesto da Nolte”); “da Nolte” suggests a typical Italian attempt at grappling phonetically with foreign names, but I have not yet been able to pin this one down.

As for Prince Niccolò d'Este (who arrived on 29 January), any encounter with Ladislav Sigmund also appears to have taken place outside the Pitti, at least so far as one can tell from Tinghi's diary. The first occasion when they were both in the same place at the same time was on Monday 3 February, when Maria Magdalena and Cardinal Carlo de' Medici offered a lavish set of entertainments at the Villa del Poggio Imperiale.¹⁵ Francesca Caccini composed the music for *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* ending with a *balletto delle dame*, both performed in the courtyard of the villa with magnificent scenery by Giulio Parigi, and this was followed by a *balletto a cavallo* in the area (the "prato") in front of it. Here there was another visitor to take into account as well: Francesco Suardo, the Mantuan ambassador (who had arrived on 2 February). There were also other dignitaries present, forcing an elaborate choreography of meeting and greeting, with various members of the Medici household deputized to lead them variously to their seats. Prince Ladislav saw *La liberazione di Ruggiero* from a central position under the loggia in a similar order to the one adopted in the Teatro degli Uffizi (with Maria Magdalena in first place);¹⁶ Prince Niccolò and the resident Modenese ambassador sat on a separate platform ("palco") underneath the loggia; the Papal Nuncio was seated in front of the first row of benches to the side of the stage; and Francesco Suardo, other ambassadors, and the Principe di Nolte were on the benches behind, while Prince Ladislav's entourage sat on a different row of benches facing the stage. The *gentildonne* (160 of them) were on tiered seating under the loggia, while the *gentiluomini* stood in front of them. As for the *balletto a cavallo*, which lasted some twenty minutes ("una terza d'ora"), the entire gathering went upstairs, the grand-ducal party watching from the balcony ("in sul terrazzino o balatoio") above the main door to the villa, and the others from various windows. However, all the participants and guests then came together for refreshments ("una nobile colatione") spread across Maria Magdalena's and Christine's rooms in the villa before returning to Florence.

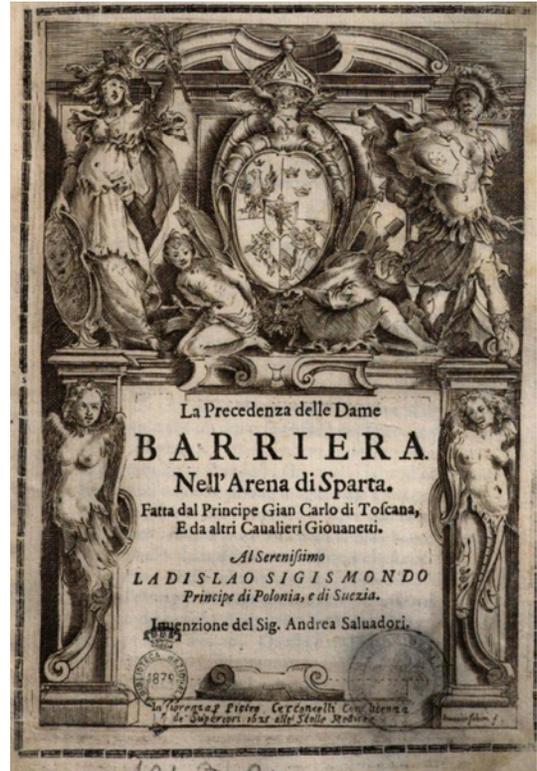
They were back by around sunset given that "alle ore una di notte," Francesco Suardo had an audience in the Pitti with Maria Magdalena and the grand duke, and then with Grand Duchess Christine, presenting letters from Mantua in both meetings. Given that engagement, it was convenient (and presumably designed) that Prince Ladislav was invited to an evening of dancing and gaming (a "festino del ballare et giocare") at the residence of Alessandro Del Nero (in Piazza de' Mozzi in the Oltrarno)—who had participated in the *balletto a cavallo*—from which he returned "a le ore 4," dining privately in his customary manner. Such commitments for Maria Magdalena and the grand duke, or just the need to conduct other business, probably help explain why the prince attended similar "festini di casa" hosted by Florentine patricians

¹⁵ See Ilaria Hoppe, "Die Räume der Regentin und der Ort der Inszenierung: Poggio Imperiale unter Erzherzogin Maria Magdalena von Österreich," in *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina: Räume und Inszenierung in Francesca Caccinis Balletoper (Florenz, 1625)*, ed. Christine Fischer (Zurich: Chronos, 2015), 67–88. Poggio Imperiale is on the southern outskirts of Florence, some two kilometres from the Palazzo Pitti. Maria Magdalena took ownership of the villa in 1618 (it was previously in the hands of a Medici relative, Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, who had died in 1615). The architect Giulio Parigi was in charge of rebuilding and expanding it between 1622 and 1625.

¹⁶ Grand Duchess Christine was also present with the former Duchess of Urbino plus Maria Magdalena's two daughters, but Tinghi does not say where they sat.

on subsequent evenings: Francesco Giraldi on 4 and 5 February, Filippo Manelli on the 6th, Cosimo de' Pazzi on the 7th, Giovanni Battista Strozzi on the 9th, and Alessandro Del Nero again on the 11th.¹⁷ Such outside events no doubt provided some variety for Prince Ladislas, and they allowed Florentine patricians to make their own contribution to his entertainment, thereby emphasizing their place in the city's highest social networks. However, they also kept him out of the Medici's way.

All this discussion of scheduling and protocol serves also to develop a broader argument about courtly entertainments in this period. We are accustomed to viewing them as princely diversion, as propaganda, as a way of impressing foreign guests by some manner of conspicuous consumption, and at least in the case of Florence, as part of a strategy on the part of Medici to keep the patriciate engaged in common purpose for the benefit of the state.¹⁸ Now, however, we catch a glimpse of their role in matters of diplomacy more broadly defined, and as a way to arrange encounters and interactions that might not otherwise arise in the strict formal circumstances conventionally dictated by rules of etiquette. The Palazzo Pitti may have been the private residence of the Medici, and Prince Ladislas was certainly treated as part of Maria Magdalena's (and therefore the grand duke's) "family," but even here the rules were clear. For example, his meetings with Grand Duchess Christine were less frequent and more formal, and he had to come across Cardinal Carlo de' Medici by chance, as it were, after his midday meal with the grand duke and Maria Magdalena on 1 February, when they met in a doorway in much the same way as had occurred with Cardinal Ludovisi in SS. Annunziata on 29 January: Cardinal Carlo crossed paths with the prince and they greeted each other face-to-face, with



2. Title page (one version of two) of *La precedenza delle dame: barriera nell'arena di Sparta . . . Inuentione del Sig. Andrea Saluadori*, 1625, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, <https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_pRGPstEarygC>.

¹⁷ On 4 February, for example, Maria Magdalena and the grand duke gave "molte udienze a diverse persone." On the 5th, the grand duke went to the Casino di San Marco to see a rehearsal of the *barriera* to be performed on the 10th, while Maria Magdalena and the princesses went to the Monastero della Crocetta for a "festicina" prepared by the former Duchess of Urbino. For the 9th, however, Tinghi says elsewhere that Prince Ladislas saw a "commedia all'improvviso" with Maria Magdalena and the grand duke that evening.

¹⁸ For patrician involvement in Florentine entertainments, see Carter and Goldthwaite, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, 104–20.

many bows one to the other (“s’abochò con il principe di Pollonia et si salutonno l’uno l’altro in faccia, ritti con molte reverenze l’uno a l’altro”).¹⁹

One entertainment offered to Prince Ladislas, *La precedenza delle dame* (see Fig. 2), brings all these issues together in useful ways, even if it has received less discussion in the literature.²⁰ On Monday 10 February, it was the turn of the thirteen-year-old Prince Giancarlo de’ Medici to make a courtly presentation to the prince. Typically, it took the form of a chivalric tournament, in this case, a *barriera*, with teams of combatants on either side of a barrier “fighting” either on horseback or, as here, on foot (cf. Fig. 3).²¹ No less typically, the combat was set within a dramatic frame that involved spectacular scenery (again by Giulio Parigi), with a text by Andrea Salvadori and music by Jacopo Peri. Following a morning Mass with the grand-ducal family at S. Giovannino dei Gesuiti (now S. Giovannino degli Scolopi, on the corner of Via de’ Martelli and Via de’ Gori, opposite the Medici-Riccardi Palace)—plus the investiture of Francesco Maria Girdali as a Cavaliere di Santo Stefano—Prince Ladislas proceeded up the Via de’ Martelli to the Casino di San Marco, the residence of Cardinal Carlo de’ Medici, where he was given a midday meal. He then went to the menagerie on the other side of Piazza San Marco to see a lion hunt (“caccia de’ leoni”) and the other “animali feroci” held there.²² Prince Niccolò d’Este was also present. Following their return to the Casino, with a further promenade through the city streets, the *festino* began “alle 24 ore” (but Tinghi elsewhere says “l’una di notte”), with social dancing in which Princes Ladislas and Niccolò took part.²³ Again, the extended family was present, including Grand Duchess Christine and the former Duchess of Urbino (Claudia de’ Medici), as well as Maria Magdalena’s daughters, Margherita and Anna. The grand duke and Cardinal Carlo were seated “a basso” (with the Principe di Nolte behind them). Prince Ladislas and his entourage were positioned on one side of the room, and Prince Niccolò next to a doorway, although Tinghi notes elsewhere that the seating was arranged “randomly” in no order of precedence (“e stettono a sedere alla rinfusa senza precedenza”). Maria Magdalena and her ladies-in-waiting watched from shuttered windows, as did Christine,

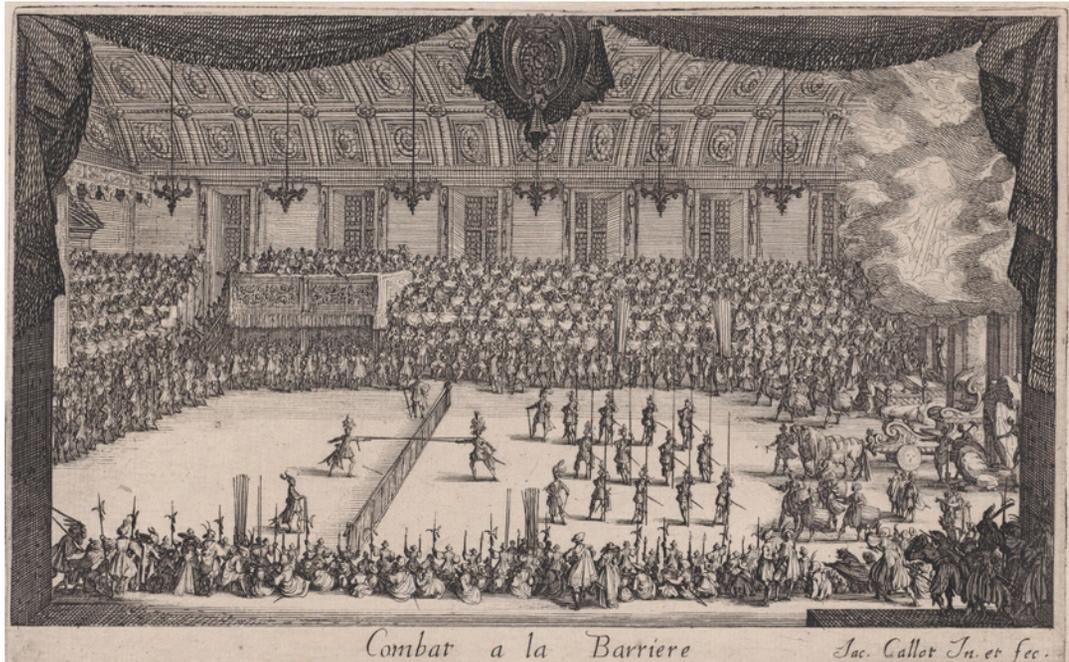
¹⁹ As Tinghi notes, the prince’s itinerary that day began with morning Mass in the palace chapel (“cantata con la musica”) and an event relating to the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano in S. Lorenzo, followed by a midday meal in the Pitti with the grand-ducal family. As they then made their way to Maria Magdalena’s rooms for further conversation “alla domestica,” they happened to encounter Grand Duchess Christine and the cardinal. The prince then continued to the archduchess’s suite, while the cardinal turned back into the grand duchess’s one.

²⁰ For example, Petrosillo, *Maria Maddalena d’Austria*, 108–9, devotes only a brief paragraph to it covering the basic facts, with no attempt at any broader reading.

²¹ The *barriera* had been in preparation at least since mid-December 1624. According to Tinghi, the grand duke and Maria Magdalena attended a rehearsal (in the Sala delle Commedie in the Palazzo Pitti) on 19 December 1624, as they variously did on subsequent dates, including one on 14 January “con le musiche et cantilena,” and one “con le cantilene” on 17 January.

²² For the menagerie, see Maria Matilde Simari, “Serragli a Firenze al tempo dei Medici,” in *Natura viva: Animal Paintings in the Medici Collections*, ed. Marilena Mosca (Florence: Centro Di, 1986), 23–26 (an English translation, “Menageries in Medicean Florence,” follows on 27–29).

²³ For Stefan Pac’s and Jan Hagenaw’s accounts of the *barriera*, see Przyboś, *Podróż królewicza Władysława Wazy*, 352. Both are consonant with what I say here (and note that the entertainment began in or around early evening), although Pac does make a point of remarking that the music was performed “by the local nobility themselves” (I am grateful to Jacek Żukowski for the translation).



3. Jacques Callot, *Combat à la Barrière*, from *Le Combat à la Barrière in the Palace at Nancy* by Henri Humbert, printed by Sebastien Phillippe, 1627, The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Gift of Edwin De T. Bechtel, 1941. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Claudia, and Margherita and Anna. The *gentildonne* were on tiered seating on the left-hand side of the room, while the *gentiluomini* stood on the right.

After the initial dancing, a drumroll signified the start of the *barriera*, titled *La precedenza delle dame nell'arena di Sparta*.²⁴ A stage set was revealed ("s'aperse la prospetiva") from which Mars emerged, followed by Prince Francesco de' Medici and Camillo dal Monte, plus six armed Spartan knights (Florentine youths, the first of which was Prince Giancarlo), who paraded and took their place on the right side of the barrier. After another drumroll, Pallas Athene appeared, followed by Prince Leopoldo and Orazio dal Monte, leading six Spartan "nymphs" (in fact, more young men) who processed to the opposite side.²⁵ Mars presented the

²⁴ *La precedenza della dame: barriera nell'arena di Sparta, fatta dal Principe Gian Carlo di Toscana, e da altri Cavalieri giovanetti, rappresentanti Spartani, e Spartane. Nella venuta à Fiorenza del Sereniss. Ladislao Sigismondo, Principe di Polonia, e di Svezia. Invenzione del Signor Andrea Salvadori* (Florence: Pietro Cecconcelli, 1625). This edition appeared with two different title pages (as was not unusual): a simpler one (<https://archive.org/details/case_ml_50_2_p73_s25_1625>); and one with a slightly shortened version of the title in a more elaborate frame incorporating the Vasa coat of arms (see Fig. 2). The text was also included (with one cut in a passage for Pallas Athene) in Francesco Salvadori, ed., *Le poesie del Sig. Andrea Salvadori . . . parte prima* (Rome: Michele Ercole, 1668), 422–31. For the broader context of these common kinds of chivalric exercises in Florence, see Anna Maria Testaverde, "Trattino i cavalier d'arme e d'amor": epica spettacolare ed etica dinastica alla corte medicea nel secolo XVII," in *"L'arme e gli amori": Ariosto, Tasso and Guarini in Late Renaissance Florence*, ed. Massimiliano Rossi and Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi (Florence: Olschki, 2004), 2:231–53.

²⁵ It was not uncommon to have men (or youths) playing women in these kinds of entertainments. Compare Salvadori's tournament, *Le fonti d'Ardenna*, presented by the Accademia de' Rugginosi in the Palazzo della Gherardesca (the current residence of the Rinaldi family) on 3 February 1623, where the six "nymphs" who entered the field,

challenge, accusing Pallas Athene of being in the wrong place at the wrong time given that men were by definition superior to women in arms; Pallas rejected the charge; and each side fought two rounds with lance and rapier (“lancia et . . . stocho”). Then at the sound of a thunderbolt, the heavens opened to reveal Jove in the air on an eagle, surrounded by the gods, plus on the stage floor (“a basso in su la prospetiva”) another group of gods with Mercury at their head.

The following action is predictable enough. Jove orders Mars to lay down arms, ruling that men are fit to defeat monsters, giants, cities, and armies, but should yield to the fairer sex, while women should leave fighting to men because they will triumph instead by virtue of their beauty. However, Pallas Athene resents the claim that women are not fit for combat and asks for a stronger judgement in favour of her troops. This leads Jove to make a somewhat awkward compromise:

Io sommo Giove, io voglio
 ch'ogn'anima gentile,
 ogni petto più fero,
 a beltà femminile
 doni di sè l'impero.
 Voglio ch'ogn'or costante,
 o come servo onori,
 o come amante adori,
 l'huomo nato à gl'imperi, un bel sembiante,
 e che più riverita
 sia beltà mansueta in umil pace,
 ch'in fiero campo, armata destra audace.²⁶

[I, great Jove, wish / that every noble soul, / every proud breast, / to female beauty / should yield the right to rule. / I wish that now in constancy, / either should honour as a servant, / or should venerate as a lover, / man born to power, a fair countenance; / and that more revered / should be gentle beauty in humble peace, / than any bold right hand in arms on a violent battlefield.]

Mercury promises to send that message across the world; Mars grumbles but gives way; and the combatants reenter the stage, with the set removed from view. A chorus of deities remains to offer a final comment on divine couples: Juno stands with Jove, Amphitrite with Neptune, and Proserpine with Pluto, and therefore

dressed in elaborate female garb, to dance with the combatants were in fact represented by six male members of the academy; see Solerti, *Musica, ballo e drammatica*, 164–66. Harness does not mention the cross-dressing in her account of this entertainment in *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 147–52. The *Ballo di donne turche* (26 February 1615) offers a similar example; see Solerti, *Musica, ballo e drammatica*, 93–97.

²⁶ *La precedenza delle dame*, 22 (with some editing to the punctuation). Like a few other passages in the printed text, this one has commas in the left-hand margin before each line. According to a typical convention in later opera librettos, this might suggest that Jove's speech was omitted in performance, although it would still be read by anyone following along with the book in hand.

Da gl'onor dell'alme dive
 d'onorarvi il mondo apprenda,
 belle dame; e su le rive
 del bell'Arno pria s'intenda
 ch'oggi dan Giove ed Amore
 alle donne il primo onore.²⁷

[From the honour of the propitious goddesses / the world learns to honour you, / fair ladies;
 and on the banks / of the fair Arno let it be understood / that today Jove and Amor / give
 pride of place to women.]

The entertainment then concluded with still more social dancing for a lengthy period of time (“per un gran pezzo,” so Tinghi says).

Tinghi's own report of the end of the *barriera* was more straightforward, if somewhat less plausible given the gender of the participants: he says that Jove commanded Mars to put aside his anger and arms to make peace with Pallas Athene, also ordering the knights to take as brides the nymphs who were in combat.²⁸ But the fact that the poet of the *barriera*, Andrea Salvadori, was trying to navigate more difficult terrain is revealed by Pallas Athene's rejection of Jove's initial command. As Kelley Harness has shown, a significant number of Medici entertainments in the 1620s engaged with the somewhat unusual circumstances of a regency that left two women—Archduchess Maria Magdalena and Grand Duchess Christine—with considerable political power. In terms of those offered to Prince Ladislas, *La regina Sant'Orsola* fit the model: Saint Ursula was a military martyr killed in an attempt to liberate Cologne from the Huns. However, *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* had a more complex message that sought to navigate the tensions between a gynocentric world and its gynophobic consequences: Ruggiero is liberated from the devious Alcina's pleasure garden by way of a stern call to arms and duty from the sorceress Melissa (disguised as Atlante).²⁹ That call is explicitly linked to military action in “all of Europe.”³⁰ Prince Giancarlo's *barriera* got things back on track, however, by giving women pride of place over men—if still in ambivalent terms—and by suggesting that the peace they generate is preferable to war. Salvadori tried

²⁷ Ibid., 24–25. This is the fourth and last stanza of a text in eight-syllable lines that would therefore have been set to music in a more tuneful style than the declamatory “recitative” used for other portions of the *barriera*.

²⁸ “. . . et Giove cantando in musica comanda a Marte che depongha l'ira et le arme et che faccia pace et che e' cavalieri pillino per consorte le ninfe conbatenti.”

²⁹ Compare Cusick, *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court*, 207–8, which treats Maria Magdalena as Melissa/Atlante. Cusick extended that reading to include Grand Duke Ferdinando II as Ruggiero in her “Gender, Politics, and Gender Politics in *La liberazione di Ruggiero*,” in Fischer, “*La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*,” 27. No one has yet dared to link Alcina with Grand Duchess Christine. But Cusick does seem to regard *La liberazione* as somehow playful or even satirical; see *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court*, 213 (“funny, inventive, and moving by turns”), 214 (the “fabulously campy lament scene for a chorus of enchanted plants”), 221 (the “over-the-top comedy” of the Siren's song), 224 (the “hilarious sendup” of Alcina's lament), etc.

³⁰ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 152–62. As Harness notes, although Saracinelli's plot derives from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, it is significantly inflected by way of the Armida/Rinaldo episode in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*.

to put still more of a spin on that outcome in his prefatory material in the printed edition of his libretto, including a dedication “Alle bellissime dame dell’universo” (To the most beautiful ladies of the universe), which notes that men too often view women as the weaker sex but gives as a counterexample Veturia, the mother of Gaius Marcus Coriolanus, who dissuaded her son from leading the Volscians in their attack on Rome and thereafter was honoured for her patriotism and courage as a model of female virtue. But an additional message was also clear in the entertainment itself: Prince Ladislas might be encouraged to do battle against the Turks, but he needed a Medici princess by his side.

As was customary, Salvadori’s poetry for the *barriera* was delivered in music, in this case composed by Jacopo Peri (who had long been involved in such entertainments):³¹ in his dedication, Salvadori notes how those who willingly took up arms in the tournament were no less eager to act as musicians in Apollo’s theatre.³² It is not clear whether the combat itself was choreographed to music. But certainly the dialogue was sung, according to the libretto, by “most noble Florentine gentlemen” (“i versi . . . furono cantati da nobilissimi Gentilhuomini Fiorentini”). They included, so Tinghi notes:

Mars: Francesco Bonsi

Pallas Athene: “quel castrato musico che sta con il signore [Carlo] Rinuccini”

Mercury: Lorenzo Scimenes [Ximenes]

Jove: Filippo Del Nero

Chorus of deities: Giovanni del Turco, Francesco Rondinelli, *capitano* Piero Grifoni, *cavaliere* Dessi [Agnolo Dassi], Francesco Medici, and Gian Domenico *castrato*.

The two castrati were in some sense professional musicians.³³ But the other singers were not, although a number of these patricians are known for their involvement in other musical activities. Francesco Bonsi (the nephew of Cardinal Giovanni Bonsi) was the dedicatee of Domenico Belli’s *Il primo libro dell’arie a una, e a due voci per sonarsi con il chitarrone* (Venice: Ricciardo Amadino, 1616). He also performed in a set of *intermedi* with music by Belli, *L’Andromeda*, performed under the auspices of the Rinaldi family in the Palazzo della Gherardesca on 9 March 1618: the Florentine singer Giulio Caccini said that Bonsi was one of “many gentlemen” who took part, and that he had “the most beautiful and most sonorous voice that there has ever been . . . among the gentlemen of this city, with an indescribable grace in handling it.”³⁴

³¹ For a complete list of Peri’s contributions to such entertainments, see Carter and Goldthwaite, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, 427–33.

³² “Egolino, si come per gloria vostra si pregiato di travagliare ne’ Campi di Marte, così non si sdegnano per diletto delle medesime, esercitarsi come Musici ne’ Teatri d’Apollo.” *La precedenza delle dame*, 4.

³³ The castrato (as yet unidentified) associated with Carlo Rinuccini also performed in *La regina Sant’Orsola* in October 1624 and January 1625; see Harness, *Echoes of Women’s Voices*, 107, 109. I am grateful to Antonella D’Ovidio for noting that like a number of Florentine patricians, Rinuccini (Marchese di Baselice; 1596–1666) was often involved in recruiting virtuoso singers, sometimes also taking care of their accommodation in Florence or in Rome.

³⁴ Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence during the Principate of the Medici, with a Reconstruction of the Artistic Establishment* (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 357; Caccini noted that Belli’s music was given even greater

Filippo Del Nero was the owner of an important manuscript of Florentine solo songs from the second quarter of the seventeenth century (Bologna, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Q49).³⁵ He and Agnolo Dassi were also associated with the Compagnia dell'Arcangelo Raffaello, a distinguished Florentine confraternity, and supported its musical activities in various ways.³⁶ Giovanni del Turco (1577–1647) was a nobleman composer who, for a time, had been superintendent of the court music.³⁷

Allowing the male members of the Medici family and their patrician peers to exercise their prowess in matters of arms on foot or horseback was nothing new, and tournaments of different shapes and sizes had long been a feature of Carnival and similar entertainments in Florence. There were also obvious advantages to mounting such displays for Prince Ladislas, himself a would-be military hero, while reminding him of the need of a consort to share his regal burdens. But there are other lessons to be drawn here. Scholars such as Suzanne Cusick, Kelley Harness and others have quite rightly noted that the frequent acknowledgments of female power present in entertainments such as *La precedenza delle dame* and their like in Florence in the 1620s must surely be read in light of the current political situation there during the regency. However, the elaborate courtly rituals devised for the prince's visit to Florence of which these events were a part remind us that, as usual, it was still a man's world.

perfection by having it sung by "molti gentiluomini, et in particolare il signor Francesco Bonsi la più bella, e la più sonora voce che mai sia stata almeno a' miei tempi, tra gentiluomini in questa città, con una grazia in maneggiarla indicibile." I am grateful to Maddalena Bonechi for informing me that Bonsi married Cristina Riario in 1624.

³⁵ Maddalena Bonechi also informs me that Filippo di Nero Del Nero married Luisa di Luigi Ardinghelli in 1632 and died in 1649. It has not hitherto been realized that the first song in Q49 ("Filippo, e qual tesoro" by Francesco del Niccolino) is directly associated with his wedding.

³⁶ Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411–1785* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 281–82. In addition, Dassi performed in *Le fonti d'Ardena* in 1623; see Solerti, *Musica, ballo e drammatica*, 165 (misprinted as "Dossi").

³⁷ Of the other performers, Francesco di Raffaello Rondinelli (1589–1665) became a prominent *letterato*; see <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-rondinelli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)>](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-rondinelli_(Dizionario-Biografico)>). Gian Domenico *castrato* is unknown, unless he is Domenico Sarti; Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence*, 367–68.

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