The Medici Women

Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence

Natalie R. Tomas

Women and Gender in the Early Modern World

THE MEDICI WOMEN

Women and Gender in the Early Modern World

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The Medici Women

Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence

NATALIE R. TOMAS
Monash University, Australia

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For my mother, Anna, Jordan, Isabelle and Ethan

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Abbreviations

ASF:	Archivio di Stato di Firenze.
AB:	Archivio Bardi.
Acq e Doni:	Acquisti e Doni.
C.S.	Carte Strozziane.
Copialettere:	Copialettere di Goro Gheri (5 vols).
CRS:	Corporazioni Religiose Soppresse dal Governo Francese.
Dipl.:	Diplomatico
MAP:	Mediceo Avanti il Principato.
Misc. Med.:	Miscellanea Medicea.
Misc. Rep.:	Miscellanea Repubblica.
N.A.:	Notarile Antecosimiano.
O.G. e.r:	Otto di Guardia, epoca repubblicana.
Ospedale:	Ospedale di San Paolo dei Convalescenti.
Signoria, Dieci, ... Leg. e Com. Miss. Resp.:	Signoria, Dieci di Guerra, Otto di Pratica, Legazione e Commissione, Missive e Responsive.
Signori Responsive:	Signori, Carteggi Responsive Originali.
ASMa:	Archivio di Stato di Mantova.
AG:	Archivio Gonzaga.
ASP:	Archivio Salviati, Pisa.
BMaF:	Biblioteca Marucelliana, Firenze.
BMF:	Biblioteca Moreniana, Firenze.
Frullani, Autog.:	Raccolta Frullani d'autografi.
BML:	Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana.
BNF:	Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze.
GC:	Ginori Conti.
Magl.:	Magliabecchiana.
Autographs Misc.:	Pierpont Morgan Library, N.Y. Autographs Miscellaneous, House of Medici.
UCLA:	University of California, Los Angeles.
c.	carta.
cc.	carte.
Doc.	Documento.
fasc.	fascicolo.
n.d.:	no date given.
n.m.:	no month given.
n.y.:	no year given.

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Notes on the Text

A Note on Dates

Dates are given as day/month/year in the notes. Florentines began the year on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25. Dates will be given in the modern style in the text and both styles of dating will be given in the notes; for example, a letter dated 11 January 1525 in modern style will be written as 11/1/1524/5. Pisa began its year on the same day as the Florentines, but was a year ahead; eg. 25/5/1472 (modern style) was 25/5/1473 (Pisan style). Rome began its year on January 1st therefore all letters from Rome are dated in modern style.

A Note on Names

To avoid confusing women with the same first name, I will adopt the following method of identifying individual women of the Medici family. Those who marry into the family will also be identified by their natal surname (for example Lucrezia Tornabuoni), while women who were born into the family will also be referred to by their married name (for example Lucrezia Salviati). The exceptions are: (a) Luisa de' Medici, Lorenzo's and Clarice Orsini's third daughter, who died before her marriage and (b) Caterina de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, the future Queen Regent of France, where she is referred to before her marriage to the Duke of Orléans.

A Note on Translation

All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

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An earlier and shortened version of Chapter Six appeared as 'Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici and the "Problem" of a Female Ruler in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence', *Renaissance Studies* **14** (1) (2000), pp. 70-90. © 2000 The Society for Renaissance Studies, Oxford University Press. I am thankful for their permission to reprint it here. I am also grateful to the editorial and production staff of Ashgate Publishing Co., for their assistance with this project. Particular thanks must go to my Commissioning Editor, Erika Gaffney, a dream to work with, and also to the editors of the series 'Women and Gender in the Early Modern World'. Valuable suggestions for revisions were received from two anonymous reviewers. Finally, thanks to Max McMaster for preparing the index.

I dedicate this book both to my mother, who has taught me always to remember my roots, and to Anna, Jordan, Isabelle and Ethan who are the future.

School of Historical Studies
Monash University, Australia
June 2003

Introduction

'O do not be born a woman if you want your own way', wrote an exasperated Nannina Rucellai, sister of Lorenzo de' Medici 'the Magnificent', to her mother Lucrezia Tornabuoni in July 1479 after losing an argument about their children's education with her husband Bernardo Rucellai. Faced with having to dismiss the children's tutor on his order, Nannina cleverly chose to resolve the situation by asking her mother if the man could be placed in the household of Lorenzo for two to three months until an outbreak of plague in his hometown of Figline subsided.[1] Lucrezia would have had to use considerable influence to convince her son to take in the hapless man, suggesting that Nannina was well aware when she asked her mother for assistance that her own situation did not apply to all women in all circumstances. But Nannina's lack of influence with her husband exemplifies the general situation that many historians have argued was the lot of Florentine women (particularly of the upper class) during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[2] Indeed, it has even been suggested that Florence was possibly the worst of all places in Renaissance Italy to be born a woman.[3]

It is probably for this reason that historians writing about powerful women in Renaissance Italy in recent years, have generally focussed on the women of the princely courts. Eleonora of Aragon, duchess of Ferrara; her two daughters, Isabella, marchioness of Mantua and Beatrice d'Este, duchess of Milan; Bianca Maria Visconti Sforza; Lucrezia Borgia, duchess of Ferrara; Caterina Sforza, ruler of Imola; Battista da Montefeltro; Ippolita Maria Sforza, duchess of Calabria; and Barbara of Brandenburg, marchioness of Mantua, are just a few of the names that spring immediately to mind.[4] Women of ruling families in republican regimes (such as the Medici) have not received much attention since it is generally agreed that they had fewer options, able to exercise only informal power through their connections with influential male relatives in contrast to the more formal power often exercised by women in courts or kingdoms.[5]

However, it is well known that in medieval and Renaissance Europe all females were presumed to be naturally subordinate and morally and intellectually inferior to males, with the consequence that men were deemed to be suited to the position of ruler and women to that of the ruled.[6] So the nature of women's power and/or the matter of women as rulers were vexed issues to contemporaries, regardless of the type of regime. Most women rulers had to exert considerable effort to legitimise their position. Therefore, women, and their apologists or advisers, tried to predicate their right to rule on the construction of images that stressed their chastity, maternal nature and intercessory powers.[7] Certainly, women's opportunities to demonstrate their political skills and abilities were different and greater in monarchies and seigneurial regimes than in republics. But in republics too, women were able to act decisively in the political sphere since the informal networks they utilised were themselves an integral part of the political process.

Therefore, although an important factor, the type of regime alone (monarchy, princely court or republic) did not determine whether women in ruling families could or could not be involved in politics.

I would argue that the relationship between gender and power and how that was understood by contemporaries was a much more significant influence.[8] How, and under what circumstances, such women came to exercise that power and to what extent they and their male supporters were able to justify successfully their actions in terms that did not subvert the existing gender order, were equally important factors in influencing the extent to which women in ruling families could get their own way.[9] The Medici women provide an outstanding opportunity for us to examine the possibilities for positive and purposeful action as well as the pitfalls for powerful women in Renaissance Italy. Over the century between Cosimo de' Medici 'the Elder''s assumption of *de facto* power in 1434 and Duke Alessandro de' Medici's assumption of *de jure* power in 1532, the Medici went from being the chief family in an oligarchic republic to hereditary dukes in a principate. The assassination of Duke Alessandro in 1537 saw Duke Cosimo I elected to succeed him and he consolidated and strengthened Medici power so that the family's rule of Florence and later, all of Tuscany, continued on until the male line became extinct in 1737. Hence the women's involvement in the Medici regime between 1434 and 1537 forms an illuminating series of case studies through which to explore the negotiations of gender and power in both oligarchic republics and hereditary principates.

Their gender was a crucial determining factor in the Medici women's access to influence, power and authority how that was perceived at the time.[10] This book, then, investigates when, how, and why certain women members of the Medici family were able to utilise power and influence, and sometimes even authority, in fifteenth and early sixteenth century Florence and how that exercise of power was viewed and represented by contemporaries and near contemporaries.[11] It is also primarily concerned with their contribution to the gradual shift of the Medici from being first among equals in an oligarchic republic to absolute rulers of a principate. This investigation involves examining the actions of the women of the family in the political arena, and how their *modus operandi* altered over time. Throughout this book I will argue that we cannot hope fully to comprehend the process of Florence's change from a republic to a principate and the domination of the Medici in the life of the city unless we analyse the activities and contemporary representations of the women in the Medici family. This present study therefore seeks to investigate their continuous and changing contribution to the character, development and strengthening of the Medici regime over the course of the century between republican and ducal rule in Florence.

Hidden From History?

The Medici were the most famous Florentine family of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Their name has long been linked to the history (and myth) of Florence's celebrated political, intellectual and artistic achievements — stemming from the

classical revival of Greece and Rome that later writers have called the 'Renaissance'. The role of the leading men of the family has been the subject of both popular and scholarly work on the contribution and impact of the Medici on Florentine political, economic, religious, social and cultural life. The history of Renaissance Florence is often written in terms of the Medici men's successes and failures over the course of roughly a century between Cosimo 'the Elder''s assumption of *de facto* power in 1434 and the consolidation of Medici ducal rule in 1537 with the accession of Duke Cosimo I. (Medici control during this period was not unbroken as the family was in exile between 1494 and 1512 and 1527 and 1530.) In this story of Renaissance Florence and the Medici, Cosimo de' Medici, 'the Elder' (1389-1464); Piero di Cosimo, 'the Gouty' (1416-1469); Lorenzo 'the Magnificent' (1449-1492); Pope Leo X (1475-1521); Pope Clement VII (1478-1534); and Duke Cosimo I (1519-1574) are some of the best known names.[12]

In stark contrast to this plethora of historical interest in the Medici men, there has been virtually no scholarly study of the women in the Medici family for more than sixty years either as a group or individually, with the notable exception of Lucrezia Tornabuoni. Earlier studies focussed more on providing biographical detail about individual Medici women rather than any critical analysis of their position as women and how and why their gender affected their access to power.[13] Lucrezia Tornabuoni alone has received significant attention in recent years, in part because of her writing of religious poetry.[14] I want to place the women of the Medici family in the centre of the historical frame rather than at its edge. Now I want to focus on questions of gender and to explore the ways in which Renaissance concepts and expectations of masculinity and femininity affected the ways that the Medici women understood and exercised power.

A number of women will be referred to in this study, namely: Contessina Bardi de' Medici (c.1400-1473); Ginevra Alessandri de' Medici (died after 2 August 1478); Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici (1427-1482); Clarice Orsini de' Medici (1450-1488); Bianca de' Medici Pazzi (1445-1488); Lucrezia (called Nannina) de' Medici Rucellai (1447-1493); Maria de' Medici Rossi (died before March 1473); Lucrezia de' Medici Salviati (1470-1553); Maddalena de' Medici Cibo (1473-1519); Contessina de' Medici Ridolfi (1476-1515); Luisa de' Medici (1477-1488); Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici (1472-1520); Clarice de' Medici Strozzi (1493-1528); and Maria Salviati de' Medici (1499-1543).[15] (See Figure 1 for genealogical relationships.) All the individual members of the Medici family were able to achieve influence by virtue of possessing or acquiring the surname Medici, but while the men who had that surname were able to exercise authority in their own right, the women could not. Their ability to exert influence, power and sometimes authority, derived from their various positions as daughters, sisters, mothers, wives, and/or widows of key men in the Medici regime. In all cases, the Medici women needed not only to claim family membership similarly to the men, but also to demonstrate that they sought and were using power and influence because of their interpretation of their feminine duties.

However not all of the women in the Medici family will receive equal attention. Of particular interest are Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Clarice Orsini, Alfonsina Orsini, Maddalena Cibo, Lucrezia Salviati and Maria Salviati. Their lives are the best

documented of all the women under study, and cover the range of possible familial relationships to the Medici men. Together they span the whole period under consideration. Their differing understandings of power and how it should be employed elucidate the continuities as well as the changes in Medici control of Florence as well as in contemporary attitudes towards and perceptions of the Medicean regime and of women of power.

Power Through the Family

It is true that their position as members of Florence's chief family gave the Medici women a position of influence generally not available to other women of the city. Such familial connections were of great importance. Political power was lost or won generally throughout Europe at the time because of familial connection, so this type of power held by the Medici women — that is, power through the family — cannot be under-estimated or trivialised. They were able to use their traditional duties and responsibilities as wives and mothers to justify their actions in the political sphere. Their exceptional status thus did not subvert the existing gender order. As a consequence of their position of privilege, women in the Medici family during the fifteenth century were frequently called upon by Florentines and others from all strata of society to intercede with their husbands, brothers, or, when widowed, with their sons. This intercession took place in order to obtain government offices, jobs, legal redress, charity and a multitude of other items either for the petitioners themselves, their relatives, and friends or for the Medici women's own clients. Their ability to act as intercessors with the men of the family on behalf of supplicants gave these women the capacity to exercise legitimately a considerable degree of influence, even power, through their participation in an under-government (*sottogoverno*), which was fundamental to the way in which politics (outside of the formal government processes) worked in Renaissance Florence.[16] I argue in Chapter Two that even though women were excluded from the formal political processes of government and office holding, and therefore denied the opportunity to exert power and influence officially, the Medici women could negotiate significant space for themselves within the Florentine *sottogoverno* through an alternative feminine model of patronage by intercession, which was premised on their authority as wives, widows and mothers.

Therefore it would be a mistake to discount the importance of these informal networks of influence in republican Florence. Nannina had in fact, asked her mother to do for her what many other people — rich and poor, male and female, Florentine and non-Florentine, lay and clerical — had been asking Lucrezia Tornabuoni, successfully, to do for them for several years: that is, to intercede with her eldest son, Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici. At the time Lorenzo was — like his father and grandfather before him — the *de facto* ruler of the city. Despite the fact that she could not hold any public or political office, Lucrezia, as the widow of the previous head of the family and mother of the current one, could instead exercise successfully substantial power and influence.

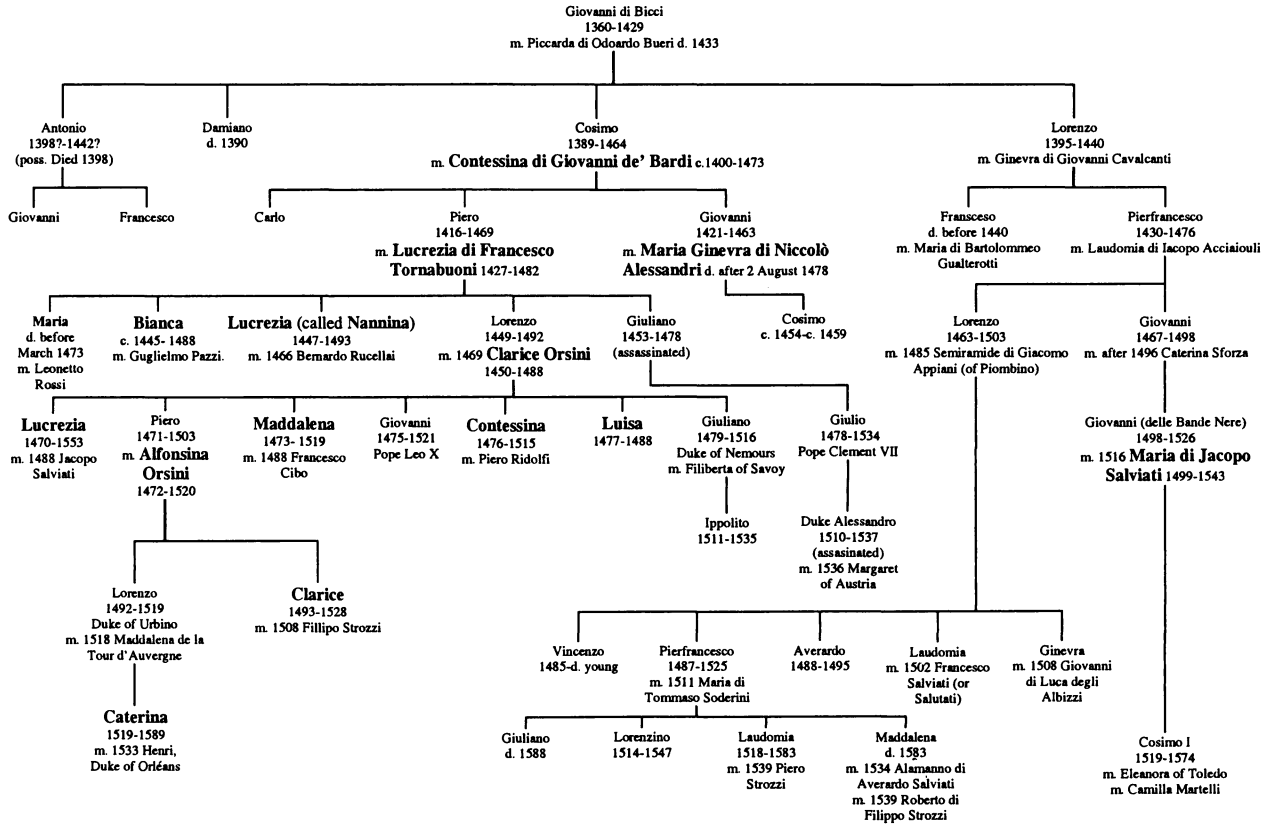
The discussion in Chapter Three suggests that the Medici women's patronage of culture provided a further opportunity for them to exert much power and influence through their choice of patronage projects. These projects both served to advance the Medici regime's political agenda and were also considered appropriate for women to undertake because most of them were religious or culturally conservative in nature. Alfonsina Orsini's building works at the Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano and her palace building in Rome are exceptions that point indeed to the extraordinary nature of Alfonsina's power in the mid-1510s, since such patronage usually was the prerogative of men. The patronage process itself was gendered.

Women of the family in the early sixteenth century were able to employ great power and influence in Florence and beyond. Lorenzo 'di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici's marriage strategies were designed to heal political rifts within Florence and, more importantly, to assist the launching of the Medici onto the broader Italian stage. Thus from the late 1480s onwards, Lorenzo's daughter Maddalena in Rome and daughter in law Alfonsina from Naples also often arranged patronage connections that spanned the area from Florence to Rome. Furthermore, after the Medici were expelled in 1494 all the Medici daughters and Alfonsina were called upon to exert their influence. Crisis necessitated their involvement in the political arena, as Chapter Four demonstrates. Indeed, their influence stretched from Florence to Rome with the accession of a Medici Pope in 1513. Chapter Five deals with the unusual phenomenon of the Medici women's presence at the all-male bastion of the Curia during the pontificates of the two Medici Popes, Leo X and Clement VII. Lorenzo's eldest daughter, Lucrezia Salviati had extensive involvement in the management of the household of her son, Cardinal Giovanni (1490-1553), from the mid-1520s and her protection and extension of Salviati family interests in Rome was a successful strategy that adapted traditional means of exercising power and influence in a very non-traditional environment without incurring any negative press. The last part of that chapter documents her daughter Maria's support of her husband's and then, more importantly, her son Cosimo de' Medici's interests in both Rome and Florence, using every opportunity possible to advance both their respective causes with the leading figures of the Medici regime. Maria was later instrumental in ensuring that Cosimo was chosen to succeed the assassinated Duke Alessandro de' Medici as Florence's hereditary ruler in 1537, by predicating her right to be involved in deliberations to choose a new ruler on her authority as the young man's mother.

Much more than the men of their family throughout their period of *de facto* rule, the Medici women always had carefully to negotiate the extent of political space they allowed themselves if they were not to incur severe censure and even vilification for exercising the power of a ruler. Alfonsina Orsini's influence was unprecedented in a republic and representative of the style attributed to influential women of the Renaissance courts; thus many Florentines despised and vilified her. Chapter Six examines in detail these views of Alfonsina as well as her position and activities as the 'ruler' of that city.

Of great import is the fact that the scope of the activities of these women in the Medici family, as well as the gradual increase in their power and authority over

this hundred-year period, are major indicators of changes in the nature of Medicean influence. Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Alfonsina Orsini, for example, had differing methods of exercising power that reflected the very different conditions facing the two Medici regimes. These very differences in their methods of operation and in contemporary reactions to these two women provide a greater understanding of Medici strategies to achieve increasingly greater power and continuity of rule. Each woman had the agency to negotiate her own forms of influence and the ability to make the best use of the opportunities available. I argue that a study of the Medici women and the gendered nature of their power is crucial to understanding how the Medici family eventually became hereditary rulers of Florence. What I wish to explore is the continuities and changes over time of the Medici women's power and its relationship to the power and authority of the Medici regime between 1434 and 1537. Where then was the locus of their power? That is the subject of Chapter One.



1 A Medici Family Tree

Notes

[1] ASF MAP 80, 69 12/7/1479. (All references are to the ASF unless otherwise indicated.) 'O pure non si vole nascere femina chi vuole fare a suo modo'. The full letter is printed in G. Pieraccini, *La stirpe de' Medici di Cafaggiolo* v. 1 (Florence: Vallecchi, 1924; repr. Florence: Nardini, 1986), p. 147. A complete English translation of this letter is found in Y. Maguire, *Women of the Medici* (London: Routledge, 1927), p. 115.

[2] This is probably because of the influence of Joan Kelly's groundbreaking article, 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?', which was overwhelmingly concerned with women in the Northern Italian courts rather than the republics. It was originally published in 1977 and reprinted, posthumously, in her collected essays *Women, History and Theory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), pp. 19-50. Negative views of women's position in Florence can be found in C. Klapisch-Zuber's collected essays *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985); I. Chabot, 'Widowhood and Poverty in Late Medieval Florence', *Continuity and Change* **3** (2) (1988), pp. 291-311; I. Chabot, '"La sposa in nero": La ritualizzazione del lutto delle vedove fiorentine (secoli xiv-xv)', *Quaderni Storici* **29** (86) (1994), 421-462; I. Chabot, 'Lineage Strategies and the Control of Widows in Renaissance Florence', in S. Cavallo & L. Warner (eds) *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1999), pp. 127-144; I. Chabot, 'Seconde nozze e identità maternale nella Firenze del tardo medievo', in S.S. Menchi, A.J. Schutte & T. Kuehn (eds) *Tempi e spazi di vita femminile tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Mulino, 1999), pp. 493-523; S.K. Cohn, 'The Social History of Women in the Renaissance', in his *Women in the Streets: Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore & London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 1-15. An equivocal view is provided by E. Rosenthal, 'The Position of Women in Renaissance Florence: Neither Autonomy nor Subjection', in P. Denley & C. Elam (eds) *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein* (London: Westfield Publications, 1988), pp. 369-381. More positive views can be found in H. Gregory, 'Daughters, Dowries and Family in Fifteenth Century Florence', *Rinascimento* n.s. **27** (1987), pp. 215-237; F.W. Kent, 'La famiglia patrizia fiorentina nel Quattrocento: nuovi orientamenti nella storiografia recente', in D. Lamberini (ed.) *Palazzo Strozzi, metà Millenio 1489-1989: atti del convegno di studi, Firenze, 3-6 luglio 1989* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1991), pp. 70-91; S. Strocchia, 'La famiglia patrizia fiorentina nel secolo XV: la problematica della donna', in *ibid.* pp. 126-137; S. Strocchia, 'Gender and the Rites of Honour in Italian Renaissance Cities', in J.C. Brown & R.C. Davis (eds) *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1998), pp. 39-60; N. Tomas, *'A Positive Novelty': Women and Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Melbourne: Monash Publications in History 12, 1992). From a legal point of view, see T. Kuehn, *Law, Family and Women: Toward a Legal Anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1991); T. Kuehn, 'Understanding Gender Inequality in Renaissance Florence: Personhood and Gifts of Maternal Inheritance by Women', *Journal of Women's History* **8** (2) (1996), pp. 58-80; T. Kuehn, 'Person and Gender in the Laws', in Brown & Davis (1998), pp. 87-106. For a detailed case study of one upper class Florentine woman, Alessandra Macigni Strozzi, see A.M. Crabb, *The Strozzi of Florence: Widowhood and Family Solidarity in the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

[3] Cohn (1996), p. 15.

[4] On powerful women in Italian courts, see M.L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1991), pp. 157-164 and ch. 3 with full bibliography; W.L. Gundersheimer, 'Women, Learning and Power: Eleonora of Aragon and the Court of Ferrara', in P. Labalme (ed.) *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 43-65; B.

Edelstein, 'Nobildonne napoletane e committenza: Eleonora d'Arogona ed Eleonora di Toledo a confronto', *Quaderni Storici* **35** (104) (2000), pp. 295-330; S. Kolsky, 'Images of Isabella d'Este', *Italian Studies* **39** (1984), pp. 47-62; R.M. San Juan, 'The Court Lady's Dilemma: Isabella d'Este and Art Collecting in the Renaissance', *Oxford Art Journal* **14** (1991), pp. 67-78. On Bianca Maria Visconti, see E.W. Swain, 'Il potere d'un amicizia: iniziative e competenze di due nobiledonne Rinascimentali', *Memoria* n. **21** (1987), pp. 7-23; G. Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court: Milan Under Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); E.S. Welch, *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995). A brief introduction to Lucrezia Borgia — including her notorious historical reputation — is provided by N. Rubinstein, *Lucrezia Borgia* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1971), and for her patronal activities, see W. Prizer, 'Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music: The Frottola at Mantua and Ferrara', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* **33** (1985), pp. 1-33. A modern biography of Caterina Sforza is E. Breisach's, *Caterina Sforza: A Renaissance Virago* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1967). On the women of the Montefeltro family, see now C.H. Clough, 'Daughters and Wives of the Montefeltro: Outstanding Bluestockings in the Quattrocentro', *Renaissance Studies* **10** (1) (1996), pp. 31-55; M.G. Pernis & L.S. Adams, *Federigo da Montefeltro and Sigismondo Malatesta: The Eagle and the Elephant* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 43-57. On Ippolita Maria Sforza, Duchess of Calabria, see the insightful article by E.S. Welch, 'Between Milan and Naples: Ippolita Maria Sforza, Duchess of Calabria', in D. Abulafia (ed.) *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy: Antecedents and Effects* (Aldershot & Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1995), pp. 123-136; On Barbara of Brandenburg, there is Swain (1987), and her '"My Most Excellent and Singular Lord": Marriage in a Noble Family of Fifteenth Century Italy', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* **16** (2) (1986), pp. 171-196. Chapters 1-4 of L. Panizza (ed.) *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society* (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000), are devoted to women in courts. For the particular situation of mistresses, see H.S. Ettinger, 'Visibilis et Invisibilis: The Mistress in Renaissance Court Society', *Renaissance Quarterly* **47** (3) (1994), pp. 770-792.

[5] N.Z. Davis, 'Women in Politics', in N.Z. Davis (ed.) *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 167-183 at pp. 169-170. The specific circumstance of the wives of the Republic of Venice's elected leaders (the *dogaresse*), has just recently been addressed by Holly S. Hurlburt who has observed that '... the position occupied by [the Doge's ...] wife was unlike that of any other woman of the ... ruling elite in Italy or elsewhere'. According to Hurburt, her oath of office (like that of the Doge's) prevented her from employing political influence for either herself or her family, but at the same time she became Venice's supreme matriarch and had an extremely important ceremonial role. See her '"*La Serinissima Domina Ducissa*": The Dogaresse of Venice, 1250-1500', Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, (Syracuse University 2000; Ann Arbor Mich.: University Microfilms International, 2002), pp. 80-84, quotation at p. 80.

[6] P. Maddern, 'Origins of the Normative Citizen: Body, Household, Kingdom and Cosmos in the Middle Ages', in P. Crawford & P. Maddern (eds) *Women as Australian Citizens: Underlying Histories* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), pp. 13-47 provides a useful overview of this issue for medieval Europe. See also C. Casagrande, 'The Protected Woman', in C. Klapisch-Zuber (ed.) *Silences of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 70-104; For Renaissance and Early Modern Europe, see I. Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study of the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 6-27; 47-67; J. Schiesari, 'In Praise of

Virtuous Women?: For a Genealogy of Gender Morals in Renaissance Italy', in R. West & D.S. Gervini (eds) *Women's Voices in Italian Literature* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 66-87; O. Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe* v. 1 *1500-1800* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), pp. 25-58 with an extensive bibliography; M.E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1993; 2nd ed. 2000), pp. 13-47 with a comprehensive bibliography.

[7] L. Fradenburg, (ed.) *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1991), p. 1. For a recent review of literature on women rulers in the medieval and early modern periods and the issue of the complexity of gender images, see P. Stafford, '"More than a Man or Less than a Woman?": Women Rulers in Early Modern Europe', *Gender and History* **7** (3) (1995), pp. 486-490. The centrality of her role as an intercessor with her husband (or son) to the legitimacy of a queen's rule is discussed by L.L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in J. Carpenter & S.B. MacLean (eds) *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 126-146; and by J.C. Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth Century England', in the same volume, 147-177. Queen Esther as a model of moral womanhood and female power for Queen Elizabeth I, is discussed by M. Ephraim, 'From Jewish Monarch to Virgin Queen: Elizabeth I and the Godly Queen Hester', *Women Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* **30** (5) (2001), pp. 605-622, esp. pp. 609-610, 619.

[8] The key theoretical works that have influenced my understanding of the historical relationship between gender and power are: D. Riley, *'Am I That Name?': Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (London: Macmillan, 1988), esp. ch. 1; J.W. Scott, 'Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis?' in her collected essays, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 28-50. Critical discussions of Joan Scott's work and its reception with full bibliography, are found in K. Canning, 'Feminist History and the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience', in B. Laslett et al., (eds) *History and Theory: Feminist Research, Debates, Contestations* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1997), pp. 416-452, esp. pp. 420ff; and the *Journal of Women's History* **9** (3) (1997), pp. 113-136, articles by Bunzel and Zinsser. My understandings about gender and power have also been profoundly shaped by feminist anthropological discussions. See the classic work, M.Z. Rosaldo & L. Lamphere (eds) *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), esp. articles by Rosaldo, Collier & Lamphere. For Rosaldo's own critique of her earlier view, see M.Z. Rosaldo, 'The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross Cultural Understanding', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* **5** (3) (1980), pp. 389-417; For more recent understandings, see S.J. Yanagisako & J.F. Collier, 'Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship', in S.J. Yanagisako & J.F. Collier, *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 14-50, esp. pp. 38ff; M.J. Maynes et al. (ed.) *Gender, Kinship and Power: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary History* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 'Introduction', pp. 1-23. Useful sociological understandings of the relationship between gender and power are provided by K. Davis, M. Leijenaar & J. Oldersma (eds) *The Gender of Power* (Thousand Oaks, CA & London: Sage Publications, 1991), pp. 1-18; H.L. Radkte & H. J. Stam (eds) *Power/Gender: Social Relations in Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA & London: Sage Publications, 1994), pp. 1-15. An interesting philosophical discussion of the term gender and its uses, which emphasises the need to analyse gender in its various historical contexts, is L. Nicholson, 'Interpreting Gender', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* **20** (1) (1994), pp. 79-105, esp. pp. 101ff. Early modern European understandings of the relationship between gender and power are perceptively analysed in the context of recent

feminist theoretical developments by Wiesner (2000), pp. 288-317, with appropriate bibliography.

[9] This issue is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

[10] Some recent works building on theories of gender and sexual difference in reference to the Italian Renaissance are S. Chojnacki, 'Comment: Blurring Genders', *Renaissance Quarterly* **40** (4) (1987), pp. 742-751; S. Strocchia (1991), pp. 126-137; M. Migiel & J. Schiesari (eds) *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender in the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 1-15; J.C. Brown, 'Introduction' in Brown & Davis (1998), pp. 1-15; S. Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 1-24.

[11] I am using the following working definitions of influence, power and authority: Influence is the ability to persuade others to agree with and/or to do as one asks. Power is the ability to exert informally authority over others, including the recognised ability to make important decisions. Authority involves the use of more formal power, which can have the force of official command. Often the terms are interchangeable.

[12] On the origins of the Medici family and its history prior to 1434, see G. Brucker, 'The Medici in the Fourteenth Century', *Speculum* **32** (1) (1957), pp. 1-26. The bibliography of studies about the Medici after 1434 published prior to 1960 is well covered by S. Camerini, *Bibliographia Medicea* (Florence: Olschki, 1964). The following list of works published from 1960 covers many of the main studies of these men, but it is not exhaustive. See the various studies in E.F. Jacob (ed.) *Italian Renaissance Studies* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960); R. de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank 1434-1494* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963); N. Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434-1494)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966, 2nd ed. 1997); N. Rubinstein, (ed.) *Florentine Studies* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968) especially the articles by Holmes and Rubinstein; R. Hatfield, 'The Compagnia de' Magi', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* **33** (1970), pp. 107-160; A. Brown's collected essays, *The Medici in Florence: The Exercise and Language of Power* (Florence & Perth, W.A.: Olschki, 1992), chs 1-5; F.W. Kent & P. Simons (eds) *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), articles by R. Gaston, D. Kent and L. Polizzotto; D. Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence, 1426-1434* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) covers Cosimo de' Medici's rise to power. A sociological analysis of Dale Kent's work on Cosimo's networks is J. F. Padgett & C. F. Ansell, 'Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434', *American Journal of Sociology* **98** (6) (1993), pp. 1259-1319; See now D. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); A.D. Fraser-Jenkins, 'Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* **33** (1970), pp. 162-170. A. Molho, 'Cosimo de' Medici: Pater Patriae or Padrino?', *Stanford Italian Review* **1** (1979), pp. 5-33. F. Ames-Lewis (ed.) *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). On Cosimo's son, Piero, see A. Beyer & B. Boucher (eds) *Piero de' Medici 'il Gottoso' 1416-1469: Art in the Service of the Medici* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993) for several important studies. The bibliography on Lorenzo 'The Magnificent', after 1960 is massive and so only the most recent important studies will be specifically cited. *Archivio Storico Italiano* **150** (2) (1992) was devoted to Lorenzo de' Medici to commemorate the 500th anniversary of his death. Further commemorative volumes, which contain many valuable studies, are G.C. Garfagnini (ed.) *Lorenzo de' Medici: Studi* (Florence: Olschki, 1992); G.C. Garfagnini (ed.) *Lorenzo il Magnifico ed il suo tempo* (Florence: Olschki 1992); F. Cardini, (ed.) *Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Olschki, 1992); B. Toscani (ed.) *Lorenzo de' Medici: New Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); G.C. Garfagnini (ed.) *Lorenzo il Magnifico ed il suo mondo*

(Florence: Olschki, 1994). See now, M.M. Bullard's collected essays, *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and Anxiety, Politics and Finance* (Florence: Olschki, 1994); M. Mallett & N. Mann (eds) *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics* (London: Warburg Institute, 1996). Lorenzo's letters are progressively being published as L. de' Medici, *Lettere* (ed.) N. Rubinstein et al. 9 vols to date (Florence: Giunti Barbèra, 1977- [2002]). On the Medici men from 1494 until 1530, see H. Butters, *Governors and Government in Sixteenth Century Florence, 1502-1519* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); J. Stephens, *The Fall of the Florentine Republic, 1512-1530* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983); and L. Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation: the Savonarolan Movement in Florence, 1492-1545* (Oxford: Oxford University Press & Clarendon, 1994), esp. ch. 6. J.R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977) is a general overview that covers the family until its extinction in 1737; N. Rubinstein, 'Dalla repubblica al principato', in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500* no ed. v. 1 (Florence: Olshcki, 1983), pp. 159-176. This article has useful bibliography on Duke Cosimo I and several other articles in this book are relevant to research on the duke. See also J. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); K. Eisenbichler (ed.) *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* (Aldershot & Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2000).

[13] Most of the studies on the Medici women belong to the first half of last century. For studies of individual Medici women, see B. Felice, 'Donne Medicee avanti il Principato', *Rassegna Nazionale* I: 'Contessina de' Bardi, moglie di Cosimo il Vecchio', **146** (1905), pp. 631-645; II: 'Lucrezia Tornabuoni, moglie di Piero di Cosimo', **146** (1905), pp. 645-660; III: 'Clarice Orsini, moglie di Magnifico Lorenzo', **149** (1906), pp. 52-73; IV: 'Alfonsina Orsini, moglie di Piero de' Medici', **150** (1906), pp. 3-25; and [V]: 'Maria Salviati, moglie di Giovanni delle Bande Nere', **152** (1906), pp. 620-645. On Lucrezia Salviati, see C.O. Tosi, 'Lucrezia Medici Salviati', *Arte e Storia* n. **32** (1913), pp. 147-152. On Maria Salviati, see C.O. Tosi, Maria Salviati-Medici', *Arte e Storia* n. 27 (1908), pp. 74-75; L. Pratesi, 'Maria Salviati', *Rivista Fiorentina* n. **1** (1909), pp. 9-17. For studies covering more than one Medici woman, see E. Allodoli, 'Le donne dei Medici', *Atti della Società Colombaria di Firenze* (1930/40), pp. 437-458; Pieraccini (1986), v. 1. A selection of letters by and to the Medici women and commentary in English can be found in J. Ross (ed.) *Lives of the Early Medici as Told in their Correspondence* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1910) and in Maguire (1927). More recent, popular general surveys which go beyond 1537 are P. Bargellini et al. *Donne di casa Medici* (Florence: Arnaud, 1968; rev. ed. 1993); E. Micheletti, *Le donne dei Medici* (Florence: Sansoni, 1983). Micheletti's is the better researched and analytical of the two, and includes a bibliography. But similarly to Bargellini, she does not document her sources. See now M. Vannucci, *I malsposati: primato di casa Medici: in appendice: esperimento per un matrimonio* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995), pp. 15-34, which has a discussion of Medici marriages until the family's extinction that is entertaining but is not based on original research.

[14] Lucrezia Tornabuoni's political and cultural activities have been attracting popular and scholarly attention since the nineteenth century. For example, see G. Levantini-Pieroni, 'Lucrezia Tornabuoni', in *Studi storici e letterari* ed. G. Levantini-Pieroni (Florence: Le Monnier, 1883), pp. 1-83. M. Bosanquet's, *Mother of the Magnificent (a Life of Lucrezia Tornabuoni)* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960) is a novel for children broadly based on her life. The most recent scholarly studies are F. Pezzarossa, *I poemetti sacri di Lucrezia Tornabuoni* (Florence: Olschki, 1978), which includes two of her sacred poems; L. Tornabuoni, *La istoria della casta Susanna* ed. P. Orvieto (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitalli, 1992) with an excellent introduction to her life and her literary work at pp. 11-37; L. Tornabuoni, *Lettere: con una scelta di lettere a lei inviate* ed. P. Salvadori (Florence: Olshcki, 1993) with a extensive introduction and bibliography at pp. 3-45; M. Martelli,

'Lucrezia Tornabuoni', in *Les femmes écrivans en Italie au moyen âge et à la renaissance* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de la Université de Provence, 1994), pp. 51-86; M. Martelli, *Letteratura fiorentina del quattrocento: Il filtro degli anni sessanta* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1996), pp. 11-20, 47-57; F.W. Kent, 'Sainted Mother, Magnificent Son: Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Lorenzo de' Medici', *Italian History and Culture* **3** (1997), pp. 3-34; L. Tornabuoni, *Sacred Narratives* ed. & trans. by J. Tylus (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), which has a very insightful introduction at pp. 21-53. Alfonsina Orsini has very recently begun to attract historians' interest, see N. Tomas, 'Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici and the "Problem" of a Female Ruler in Early Sixteenth Century Florence', *Renaissance Studies* **14** (1) (2000), pp. 70-90; S.E. Reiss, 'Widow, Mother, Patron of Art: Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici', in S.E. Reiss & D.G. Wilkins (eds) *Beyond Isabella: Secular Women Patrons of Art in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2001), pp. 125-157. As this book was about to go to press, the following article came to my attention that publishes a letter of Alfonsina Orsini's not previously known. A. Petri, 'Una lettera di Alfonsina Orsini allo Spedalingo della Misericordia', *Archivio Storico Pratese* **40** (1973), pp. 289-290.

[15] I will not discuss the French royal wives of either Lorenzo's youngest son Giuliano de' Medici, Duke de' Nemours (1479-1516), or of his grandson Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino (1492-1519), in any more than passing terms because we currently know very little about their respective brief stays in Florence. Giuliano's wife, Filiberta of Savoy (1498-1524), was widowed within a year of marriage and left Florence shortly after her husband's death, while Lorenzo's wife, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne (c.1501-1519), died a little more than a year after her marriage. Lorenzo and Madeleine's daughter, Caterina de' Medici (1519-1589), the future Queen Regent of France, is only briefly referred to prior to her departure from Florence in 1533 to marry Henri, Duke of Orléans. I will also not discuss in any significant detail Duke Alessandro's wife, Margaret of Austria (1522-1586), as she spent only a few months in Florence between her marriage to the duke in 1536 and his assassination in January 1537. Brief biographical sketches of Filiberta of Savoy and of Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne are found in Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 226-227 and pp. 279-282 respectively. On Caterina de' Medici before her marriage, see *ibid.* v. 1 pp. 451-453; J.N. Stephens, 'L'infanzia fiorentina di Caterina de' Medici, Regina di Francia', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **124** (2) (1984), pp. 421-436. I will, however, refer to Caterina de' Medici in my discussions of contemporary representations of powerful women in chapter 6. In this context to avoid confusion, I will refer to her as Catherine de' Medici. A recent biography of Queen Catherine de' Medici with bibliography is R.J. Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici* (London & New York: Longman, 1998). On Margaret of Austria, see R. Lefevre, *'Madama' Margarita d' Austria (1522-1586)* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1986).

[16] The term *sottogoverno* and women's involvement in it is discussed in F.W. Kent & P. Simons, 'Introduction', in Kent & Simons (1987), pp. 1-21 at pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER ONE

The Locus of Power

Humanist treatises about wives and their domestic and familial responsibilities were sometimes associated with the women who married into the Medici family. The Venetian humanist Francesco Barbaro wrote *De Re Uxoria* (*On Wifely Duties*) in the Winter of 1415/16 to celebrate the occasion of the marriage of his friend, and Cosimo de' Medici's brother Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici, to Ginevra Cavalcanti.[1] Barbaro — who was concerned to ensure that a man should choose a spouse with noble breeding and virtue, who was obedient to her husband, modest, an appropriate educator of her children and a good household manager[2] — praised Lorenzo for choosing Ginevra as his wife. She was 'a young virtuous, beautiful, honourable woman with a noble lineage and very great wealth [...whose] fidelity, continence, intelligence, modesty and prudence...' were universally admired.[3] The death of Piccarda Bueri, wife of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and mother of Cosimo de' Medici, in 1433, and that of Bice de' Medici, mother of Nicola di Vieri de' Medici, in early 1434, resulted in the writing of consolatory letters to their surviving sons by two of Florence's celebrated civic humanists: Carlo Marsuppini and Leonardo Bruni respectively.[4] Marsuppini spoke of Piccarda's beauty, skill in domestic management, her devotion to her spouse as well as to her children and their families, and emphasised her serene and tranquil nature;[5] comparing her activities, in true classical style, to those of her son Cosimo de' Medici.[6] In his eulogy, Bruni began by describing Bice de' Medici as possessing all the attributes of '[an]...excellent woman and best of mothers...'. He later continued: 'The excellences of a woman's life are reckoned to be (unless I am mistaken), good family, a good appearance, modesty, fertility, children, riches and above all virtue and a good name'. But Bice was even more worthy of praise because of her exceptional character and abilities for a woman.

> Yet the gifts most visible in this woman were the gifts of her mind: her marvelous uprightness, her signal humanity, her nobility, her outstanding liberality, and most of all a lofty spirit attuned to the seemly and the good.... The greatness of her prudence can be estimated from the way she governed a very large household, a large crowd of clients and a vast and diversified business enterprise for more than thirty years after the death of her husband.[7]

These women were being cast as role models for future generations of brides who entered the Medici House.

They certainly seemed to embody the qualities generally expected of upper-class Florentine wives namely: lineage and nobility of blood; fertility; wealth; (that is, a large dowry); youth; a pleasing physical appearance; modesty; high moral virtue; an honourable and virtuous reputation; obedience to their husbands;

devotion to their children and good skills in domestic management.[8] Some of the qualities, abilities and skills attributed to this early generation of Medici women by Barbaro and Bruni, however, were more usually attributed to men, namely: prudence; liberality; intelligence; constancy and moral uprightness, or viewed as men's specific area of responsibility, skill and authority: that is, business acumen and the ability to meet the needs and competing demands of a large group of clients.[9] In light of the fact that civic humanists were experts in the art of using hyperbolic rhetoric and their works were designed to flatter and appeal to influential patrons and friends who could further their careers, excessive lauding of the recently departed to the letter's recipient was to be expected.[10] But even so, this was high praise indeed for Ginevra and for Bice who had effectively been gendered male in order to explain their exceptional abilities as women.[11]

Such role models suggest that the Medici women, either as wives or widows, sometimes had an opportunity to negotiate significant space for themselves beyond the traditional expectations of upper class women. Their locus of responsibility, influence and power was supposedly the household and familial realm. However it was not as restrictive as might be thought. The boundaries between the public and domestic spheres in traditional pre-industrial societies, such as Renaissance Florence, were fluid and women were able to use their authority in the domestic sphere to gain much influence and sometimes power beyond it.[12] This stretching of their allowable bounds of activity could occur as long as they placed the interests of their marital family and its patrilineage above any interests of their own. Moreover, widows could take on additional responsibilities traditionally seen as men's business if they did so to support the interests of their late husband's family.

The extent of the women of the Medici family's participation in the political arena reflected the changing character of the regime at the time. As time wore on, and Piero's and Lorenzo de' Medici's influence and power within the Florentine government increased (despite some setbacks), both Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Clarice Orsini, as their respective spouses, were able to extend the boundaries of their permissible sphere of action. The *de facto* rule of Cosimo, Piero and Lorenzo de' Medici ensured that their wives and widows had an opportunity to extend their horizons and exert influence, and sometimes even power, beyond the conventional sphere of patrician women in fifteenth-century Florence.

The dividing line between the political and domestic sphere for the Medici women became more permeable from the later years of Cosimo's *de facto* rule onwards as the focus of political power and influence shifted more towards the Medici Palace away from the political heart of Florentine republicanism and the supposedly male-only space that was the government palace (the *Palazzo della Signoria*).[13] This trend towards a more seigneurial, princely form of government was not however fully completed until Florence ceased officially to be a republic in 1532, after which time the well being of the regime was identified with the actual person of the Medici ruler and the seat of government was based at his court.[14] The Medici women certainly worked within traditional boundaries and were neither autonomous nor, during our period, able to exercise the power attributed to some women in Italian courts. Nevertheless, the Medici women's actions and activities from the beginning of the family's *de facto* rule in 1434 until

the Medici's expulsion in 1494, point to the very beginnings of this process. By the mid-1480s when Lorenzo began the task of arranging the marriages of his own children, the Medici were clearly more powerful than they had been at any point since Cosimo's assumption of *de facto* power. Lorenzo's choices at this time reveal his longer-term political ambition for himself and his family to exercise political power on the broader Italian stage. The choice of spouses for their children helps to illustrate how the Medici were able to become such a powerful force in Florence and beyond as they strove to acquire nobility, wealth, prestige, relatives, friends and powerful political and military allies in Florence and elsewhere in Italy.

Marriage Alliances

Barbaro's reference to the nobility of Ginevra Cavalcanti's lineage, her youth and large dowry, reflect what many Florentines thought were among the chief qualities one should look for in a bride.[15] Despite the fact that their position in a patrilineal family structure was ambiguous, through marriage women provided a crucial link between families.[16] Indeed a marriage was viewed as an alliance between two families (a *parentado*) rather than the choice of two individuals. These marriage alliances could be used to strengthen existing ties between two families, to reward friends and allies for their support or to forge new ones. Marco Parenti congratulated his brother in law Filippo di Matteo Strozzi in April 1469 on the birth of his daughter, reminding him that since he already had a son he should not be disappointed that this one was a girl because 'you will begin to draw advantage sooner than with a boy, that is you will make a fine marriage alliance [sooner] than if it were a boy...'.[17] Sons may have ensured the continuity of the patrilineage but men often delayed marriage until at least 30 or more, so it was their daughters, usually marrying in their mid to late teens, from whom their families drew earliest advantage because they strengthened cognatic ties.[18]

The Medici followed this general pattern. Cosimo's mother Piccarda Bueri, who was from a noble lineage, married Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici at about the age of 18 in 1386, bringing with her a very substantial dowry for its day of 1500 florins.[19] The Medici, who were prominent wealthy bankers and money lenders, drew even greater long-term advantage from Cosimo's marriage to Contessina Bardi which took place in about 1415.[20] The marriage alliances between the brothers, Cosimo and Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici and the Bardi and Cavalcanti families respectively, gave the Medici access to much additional wealth and the prestige of noble blood. The very nobility of these lineages was, possibly, an early indicator of the Medici family's long-term ambition to connect themselves eventually through marriage with an older, non-Florentine, aristocracy.

Indeed, the Bardi were a noble, feudal (magnate) family barred from political office.[21] Contessina was the daughter of Alessandro di Sozzo Bardi, count of Vernio. Her mother, Cammilla, was the daughter of Raniero di Guido Pannochieschi, count of Elci.[22] The Bardi had links with several noble families in Tuscany, and the Medici later relied upon their Bardi relatives for military support.[23] As magnates, they lacked political power but were extremely wealthy,

acting as key business associates and financial partners in the Medici bank prior to 1434.[24] The Medici derived additional benefit from the alliance during the years immediately prior to Cosimo's accession to power in 1434, when Contessina's paternal line of the Bardi di Vernio was one of only two of the many lines of the huge Bardi family to support Cosimo in his battle for power with the rival Albizzi faction. The other Bardi were key members of the Medici opposition.[25] The loyalty of particular Bardi to the Medici was rewarded in 1434, when Cosimo restored the political rights of the Bardi along with twenty other magnate families, except for those members who were particularly prominent anti-Mediceans.[26] In 1444, the men from the three principal lines of the Bardi of Vernio were exempted from the payment of several taxes.[27] The pivotal nature of this relationship for both the Bardi and the Medici is illustrated by the fact that both families continued to maintain it in the years after Contessina's death.[28]

Piero's marriage on 3 June 1444 to the seventeen-year-old Lucrezia di Francesco Tornabuoni repeated the pattern of prestigious marriage alliances of the previous generation of Medici men. An added advantage for the Medici was the not inconsiderable dowry of 1200 florins that she brought with her.[29] The Tornabuoni, who first appeared in the fourteenth century, were descended from the noble, magnate lineage of the Tornaquinci, with whom they never completely severed ties, despite the political disadvantages of familial connections to magnate families.[30] The Tornabuoni alliance also reaffirmed already existing strong ties between the family and the Medici, as Cosimo's marriage to Contessina had also done in relation to the Bardi. The Tornabuoni, like the Tornaquinci, and the Popoleschi, which were another family offshoot of the Tornaquinci lineage, had earlier made several marriage alliances with the Medici.[31] Lucrezia's father, Francesco, was one of Cosimo's staunchest allies prior to his accession to power.[32] Members of the Tornabuoni and Tornaquinci families had worked in the Medici bank from the early fifteenth century.[33] Tornabuoni loyalty to the Medici continued even after their expulsion in 1494. A member of the Tornabuoni family was among the five men executed for being part of a failed conspiracy to return the Medici to Florence in August 1497.[34]

We know little about Maria Ginevra di Niccolò Alessandri (called Ginevra), whom Cosimo's youngest son Giovanni married in 1452.[35] We do, however, know something about her paternal family. They were wealthy and politically prominent wool manufacturers, who had originally been part of the Albizzi family until Alessandro and Bartolommeo di Niccolò Albizzi took the name Alessandri in 1372.[36] Unlike the Bardi and Tornabuoni, the Alessandri were not traditional Medici allies. Niccolò Alessandri declared himself a Medici partisan only after Cosimo's exile in September 1433, though he was one of the men whom the anti-Mediceans wished to eliminate from the political arena.[37] The marriage of his daughter Ginevra to Cosimo's second son was probably Niccolò's reward for his support for the Medici. The Alessandri continued to find favour with the Medici regime throughout the fifteenth century, with one of their number being knighted and at least two others occupying key political offices in Lorenzo's day.[38]

Lorenzo's older sisters, Bianca and Nannina, each married into a distinguished Florentine family, namely: the Pazzi and Rucellai respectively.[39] Both Guglielmo

Pazzi and Bernardo Rucellai were youthful intimates of Lorenzo, members of his *brigata* or company of friends. Guglielmo's friendship with Lorenzo, as well as his marriage to a Medici, explains why he and his immediate family suffered comparatively little as a result of the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy of April 1478, in which Lorenzo was wounded and his younger brother Giuliano was murdered. Guglielmo, who did not participate in the conspiracy, was nevertheless confined to his villa outside Florence in its immediate aftermath, a light punishment, however, when compared to the exile, banishment and execution of other men of his family.[40] For the Rucellai, Nannina's betrothal to Bernardo di Giovanni Rucellai in 1461, seemingly initiated by Cosimo de' Medici, followed by their marriage in 1466, marked the Rucellai family's coming in from the political cold.[41] Bernardo's father, Giovanni, had been politically suspect since the Medici ascendancy in 1434, because of his marriage to Iacopa Strozzi, daughter of one of the Medici's chief political enemies: Messer Palla di Nofri Strozzi. Unfortunately, both Bianca and Nannina have left behind comparatively little evidence of their lives when compared to the next generation of Medici daughters.[42] Even less is known about Lorenzo's third sister, Maria Rossi, who is hardly mentioned by the Medici and may have been a natural child of Piero's. She married Leonetto Rossi, who with his wife spent his time in Lyons managing the Medici bank there.[43] Pope Leo X made their son Luigi a cardinal.

The stark difference between modern conceptions of marriage, with its emphasis on mutual compatibility and affection between the spouses as well as the importance of individual choice, and those of Renaissance Italy, is nowhere better underscored than in a series of letters between Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Piero de' Medici between the 28th of March and the 3rd of April 1467, in which they discussed their eldest son Lorenzo's prospective wife.[44] It was common for mothers to scrutinise their son's prospective brides and so Lucrezia met the fifteen or sixteen-year-old girl and her mother at St Peter's Basilica in Rome. She described her dress as 'in the Roman style' and the girl as someone 'who seemed to me to be very pretty, fair skinned and tall...'.[45] The next day, she got a better look and described Clarice as having 'a sweet manner, not however as refined as ours [in Florence], but she is very modest and could soon be led to adapt to our ways...'.[46] Lucrezia was pleased with her but added that '... she does not compare to Maria, Lucrezia [Nannina] or Bianca...'.[47] She then goes on to give Piero a description of her ancestry, family's wealth and property, mentioning that one brother, a cleric, was close to the pope and another was a mercenary soldier.[48] All of these factors were advantageous to the Medici, so she was acceptable to Lucrezia as long as Lorenzo was satisfied. In actual fact, Lorenzo seems to have had little influence or interest in the choice of his bride. He wrote in his diary, composed in March 1473, that he had taken as a wife, Clarice, the daughter of Jacopo Orsini 'or rather she was given to me...'.[49] Lucrezia, herself, only referred to the girl's name once she had been chosen as Lorenzo's wife, whereupon Lucrezia informed her husband that: 'Her name is Clarice'.[50]

More importantly she was an Orsini. They were a noble and powerful Roman lineage with significant military expertise. Clarice's father, Jacopo, was from the Monte Rotondo branch and her mother, Maddalena, was from the Bracciano

branch of the family. They had extensive land holdings in the Papal States to the north and west of Rome, in southern Tuscany and large estates in the Kingdom of Naples.[51] The decision to marry Lorenzo to an Orsini girl was a major departure by the Medici from their previous practice of marrying into Florentine families to whom they were closely allied by virtue of business, personal and/or political ties. But it took one step further their general practice of marrying into wealthy nobility. By the late 1460s the Medici were without doubt the first family of their native city. Indeed, Cosimo, Piero and Lorenzo de' Medici sometimes acted as marriage brokers, being vitally interested in proposed marriage alliances within the Florentine patriciate; while their approval was often sought before marriages went ahead.[52] This alliance with a Roman family also ensured that they did not offend most of the Florentine élite by preferring one family to another as in laws.

Marriages by citizens with non-Florentines were indeed rare. This fact was noted by the Milanese ambassador to Florence who wrote to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza in February 1468, saying that this marriage 'will give the mob and the leading citizens plenty to talk about ...'.[53] Lorenzo's bride being foreign-born (that is, a non-Florentine) was not the only novel aspect of the alliance. His marriage at the age of 20 to a woman only a year or two younger than himself, followed the pattern more common in Northern Italian seigneurial courts, rather than the general Florentine pattern that we have already noted of upper class men aged 30 or more marrying girls in their teens.[54] But unlike other Florentine men, Lorenzo did not have to worry about conserving his family's patrimony and/or being able to provide adequately for a wife and family. More important to Lucrezia and Piero was the opportunity to acquire political and military allies as well as powerful relatives beyond Florence and its environs by marrying their eldest son to a noble Italian girl as soon as possible. Obviously this would have furthered the family's status in their native city as first among equals as well as enhanced the Medici's political standing among the other Italian rulers. The lavish wedding festivities that took place in early June 1469 lasted for four days, and were, indeed, much talked about throughout Florence and the Italian courts.[55] This was the beginning of many such noble, non-Florentine marriages for the Medici family. Their status as Florence's chief family made them exempt from the usual norms and put them at the top of the marriage tree, where the Medici were able to control and manipulate the marriages of those below them. At the same time, the Medici were able to use this vantage point to search for advantageous marriage alliances beyond Florence for themselves.

Lorenzo de' Medici's choice of spouses for his children (Lucrezia; Piero; Maddalena; Luisa and Contessina) both continued the traditional marriage strategies of the Medici and also took them off in a new direction. His contracting of marriages for his children during the 1480s was contemporaneous with the steady increase in his personal influence, authority and control over the machinery of government.[56] It signalled Lorenzo's own desire to launch the Medici onto the wider Italian stage and provide opportunities for them thereby to advance their own interests. He had a two-pronged marriage alliance strategy designed to further this goal: firstly, to regain and improve his access to the papacy and its sphere of ecclesiastical patronage in the aftermath of the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478 and the

subsequent war with the papacy and Naples and, secondly, in time honoured Florentine fashion to heal rifts as well as to silence critics within Florence.[57] Lorenzo's decisions regarding his children's marriages were made in the full knowledge of the social and political significance that other members of the Florentine patriciate would attribute to these marriages.

The average Florentine dowry for the period 1475-1499 was 1430 florins.[58] In contrast, in 1488 Piero's Neapolitan bride Alfonsina Orsini, brought an enormous dowry of 12,000 ducats. Lorenzo gave 4000 ducats to his daughter, Maddalena, who married Pope Innocent VIII's son Francesco Cibo and 2000 florins each for the dowries of his daughters, Lucrezia and Contessina, who both married Florentines, namely: Jacopo Salviati and Piero Ridolfi respectively.[59]

The marriage of his eldest son Piero to Alfonsina Orsini, the daughter of Roberto Orsini, count of Tagliacazzo and Alba and his second wife, Countess Caterina di Sanseverino, reaffirmed and extended Lorenzo's ties with the Orsini and was part of his strategy to maintain peace with Naples.[60] Alfonsina's father, Roberto, was apparently a favourite of King Ferrante of Naples and she was named for either his father or son, both called Alfonso.[61] The size of the dowry itself confirms the nobility and wealth of the family. The marriage negotiations were conducted by Lorenzo's brother in law and friend, Bernardo Rucellai, who was ambassador to Naples, and Virginio Orsini, Alfonsina's cousin, and Lorenzo's close confidant.[62] Bernardo reported having seen the young girl and he seemed satisfied with her if not particularly enthusiastic about her appearance, which he described as 'neither good nor bad'. Bernardo then added: 'I am only offended a little by her throat which seems to me a little bit thick from the front'.[63] Clarice's description was even more cursory: 'I have seen my Alfonsina whose manner satisfies me...'.[64] Her brevity on the physical features of her future daughter in law (particularly when compared with Clarice's own mother in law's lengthy earlier description of her) does not mean that all concerned did not consider it a very significant match. The importance of this marriage to the Neapolitan Court was underscored in Bernardo Rucellai's description of the marriage ceremony in February 1488, which took place in the presence of the King and Queen of Naples, 'with the greatest of honour, celebration and joy of everyone'.[65]

Lorenzo's decision to marry his second daughter, Maddalena, to Francesco Cibo, was part of an initiative that he began in late 1486 to make peace with the pope and was also designed to benefit Florence's League with Milan and Naples.[66] Pierfilippo Pandolfini, the Florentine ambassador to Rome, told Lorenzo in a letter of late February 1487 after the announcement of the betrothal that 'all the Roman Court were overjoyed about it, that the daughter of Florence had been made the daughter of His Holiness ...'.[67] Because Maddalena was only 13, the marriage itself was delayed until January 1488.[68] This *parentado* with the pope bore almost immediate fruit for Lorenzo. It reinforced his popularity in Florence, made him spokesperson for the League, and re-established political ties between Florence and Rome. In the longer term, he was able to acquire rich benefices for his son Giovanni as well as the ultimate prize of a cardinal's hat for him. The Medici bank re-acquired the contract for the papal alum mine in Tolfa and Florentine banks in general profited from this alliance. Florentines were also able to use Lorenzo and

the Florentine ambassador as conduits for requests for the lucrative benefits of papal patronage. As a result of this alliance, Lorenzo was able to further his dynastic ambitions and claim that he brought 'honour and profit' to Florence.[69]

Lorenzo married his other daughters to Florentines. As his grandfather Cosimo had done before him when Lorenzo's own sister Nannina was betrothed to Bernardo Rucellai, he chose to heal rifts by betrothing them to the sons of former enemies. His eldest child, Lucrezia, was betrothed to Jacopo di Giovanni Salviati in 1481 and married him in early February 1488.[70] The purpose of this marriage, according to the *Commentari* of Lucrezia's own son in law, the historian Filippo Nerli, was to make peace with the Salviati, who had been involved in the Pazzi conspiracy.[71] In a similar fashion, Lorenzo betrothed his ten-year-old daughter, Luisa, in April 1487 to Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, in a bid to heal the rift which had occurred between the two branches of the family.[72] Unfortunately, this marriage never took place as Luisa died in May 1488.[73] At about the same time, Lorenzo announced the betrothal of eleven-year-old Contessina to Piero Ridolfi.[74] His motive for these two final betrothals was explicit. 'I think I will decide quickly and marry them here [...Luisa and Contessina]. Because having made these marriage alliances [... Maddalena's and Piero's], outside of Florence, these citizens should not believe however that I wish to forget them or think them unworthy...'.[75] And Lorenzo was sure to announce them immediately following the announcement of Maddalena's betrothal.[76]

All of Lorenzo's children, then, were effectively married to their particular spouses for reasons of state. These alliances were part of a deliberate strategy on his part to maintain a delicate balance between the need to maintain a strong Medici power base in Florence and the requirement to further the family's interests in Rome, Naples, and on the broader Italian political stage. Lorenzo's maintenance of this 'balance of power' signalled the Medici family's increasingly seigneurial ambitions. Even though the women who married into the Medici family may not have been involved in choosing their own spouses, once they entered the family they could expect, for the most part, to be able to have eventually a considerable degree of authority in the domestic sphere.

Domestic Authority

In his humanist dialogue *Della Famiglia (On the Family)* written in the 1430s, Leon Battista Alberti suggested that older, mature men seek out young brides because young girls were thought to be more easily taught good and industrious habits as wives than their older sisters who were viewed as more set in their ways. A much older husband could effectively 'mould' his young wife's character as he wished, educating her in how she was to manage the household according to his specific instructions. Her responsibility was to supervise the affairs of the household, including management of the servants and the care and rearing of the children, so that her spouse could attend to business and political affairs outside the home.[77] The maintenance, protection, and increasing of household goods were matters of vital importance to the Florentine patriciate, who saw them as markers

of financial prosperity and wealth as well as of social and political standing.[78] Thus the activities of a wife as the guardian and manager of household goods cannot have been considered at all trivial, particularly given that it was a subject much written about by Florence's civic humanists such as Alberti. Not surprisingly, in the surviving correspondence of the Medici women in the fifteenth century the management of the Medici household and the responsibility for providing food, drink, clothing, and linens for its members, was a subject to which they often referred. Such domestic duties were on a large scale, involving not only the care and management of the domestic space in Florence but also that of several Medici villas dotted around the Tuscan countryside. This domestic management and childrearing were not only their areas of responsibility and duty; they were also in their domain and thus the locus of their authority within the family.

Contessina Bardi's correspondence provides particularly good examples of the importance of such responsibilities to the women in the Medici family. For instance, in a letter to Cosimo in Ferrara of March 1428, she mentions Antonio Martelli's having sent her 'nine bundles of our linens' from their villa at Careggi, just outside Florence, adding that she had them dried so as not to ruin them.[79] Contessina told Ginevra in late 1457 about the quality of the oil which had recently been extracted from olives at another Medici villa at Cafaggiolo.[80] Lastly, in 1467, as if to remind her family of her skills in household management, Lucrezia Tornabuoni was informed by her mother in law that the spices she had asked for were being sent and that she had received the knives Lucrezia had dispatched which would be dealt with as requested. Contessina then added: 'Concerning Ginevra, do not give it a thought, since I have anticipated [her need] and will provide everything appropriate for her household'.[81] Some years later, when she was staying at Gagliano in the Florentine countryside, Clarice Orsini, too, was preoccupied with her family's domestic needs. She asked Lucrezia to send her household goods from Florence because nothing had arrived as expected from Cafaggiolo and so she could not provide for her family.[82] Clarice was also responsible for the management of domestic affairs at the family's villa of Poggio a Caiano, as illustrated in a letter by Lorenzo of 16 September 1485 in which he assured his secretary, Niccolò Michelozzi, that: 'On the matters at Poggio I will answer Clarice'.[83]

Domestic responsibilities could also extend to oversight of a building project in the absence of one's husband, as occurred for Ginevra Alessandri in relation to Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici's villa at Fiesole. The villa was constructed between 1453 and 1457 and Ginevra was one of the people, along with an agent named Macingi, who reported to Giovanni on the progress of the building and any problems with construction.[84] As Giovanni's wife, it was highly appropriate for Ginevra to take on this important reporting role as she had a duty to monitor and protect her husband's interests. But Ginevra's role was limited, as the actual management of the project and the finding of solutions to any problems was beyond her purview. In Giovanni's absence, the ultimate responsibility for fixing structural problems, such as those pertaining to one particular retaining wall, belonged to Piero de' Medici. 'Via Agniol Tani, I am advising you that Piero has sent several masters to Fiesole to see if anything can be done about that wall...'.,

Ginevra told Giovanni in August 1455.[85] The building of villas and palaces in fifteenth century Florence was the province of male citizens seeking to glorify both their lineage and their city, and consequently was a gendered process that excluded Ginevra.[86] However, the oversight of domestic matters and the receipt of reports from Medici factors on such issues were well within her realm.[87]

Husbands and Wives

There is no available evidence to suggest that Contessina was involved in the political intrigues of the early 1430s, which resulted in Cosimo's imprisonment and subsequent exile in September 1433. This was followed by his triumphant return to Florence exactly a year later, to begin what effectively became 60 years of *de facto* Medici rule by Cosimo and his descendents.[88] No correspondence between Contessina and Cosimo survives for his period of exile to Venice; however, we do know that as Cosimo's wife, she was permitted to bring him food in prison.[89] Contessina was not affected by the exile decree, for it was rare indeed for women to be included among those formally exiled from Florence. Her situation contrasts sharply, as we shall see, with that of the Medici women's experience in the aftermath of the exile of the men of the family in late 1494. In Contessina's day, the time had not yet come for the women of the Medici family to be involved in political intrigue.[90]

In her earliest surviving letter, written to Piero on 17 May 1446, Lucrezia Tornabuorni begins 'Lord and master mine'.[91] Accordingly, she tells her husband, in relation to their infant daughter, Bianca, that: '...concerning a husband, I will leave it up to you ...',[92] and ends the letter with 'whatever pleases you pleases me'.[93] This letter, written two years after their marriage, reflects Lucrezia's youth and sense of duty, rather than the character of the relationship as a whole. Her marriage was based upon mutual affection, and was truly a partnership of two companions, which was comparatively rare at the time.[94] In the spirit of that partnership, Lucrezia and Piero visited Rome in 1450 as pilgrims for the Jubilee.[95] At that time it was rare for a woman to visit the papal court, but even so they both had an audience with Pope Nicholas V who granted them the right to have a portable altar in the Medici family chapel on which divine offices could be performed.[96] With regards to the political education of their eldest son Lorenzo, Piero may have taken the major responsibility but his request to his wife in July 1469, when their eldest son was sent to visit the Duke of Milan, that she should 'say to Lorenzo not to step out of line in any respect, and not being the ambassador, he should not act as if he were, because in my judgement the young should not teach their grandmothers to suck eggs', suggests that Piero discussed their son's political education with his wife as he would have domestic issues.[97] He obviously trusted that Lucrezia would convey the message and we know that Lorenzo relied on his mother for much advice and support after he, in turn, became the *de facto* ruler of Florence upon his father's death, a few months after this letter was written.[98]

Unfortunately, Lorenzo and Clarice's relationship was not such a happy one, with Lorenzo's letters to his wife, unlike those of Piero to Lucrezia, being

infrequent and sometimes terse.[99] His absence from her funeral, held two days after Clarice's death on July 30 1488, was probably unfortunate timing, as indicated in a letter written by two of his secretaries, who defended Lorenzo's absence on the grounds of his ill-health requiring him to take a cure at baths near Lucca, but it was also telling.[100] A chronicler recorded the events.

> On the 22nd [sic] of July 1488, Mona Clarice, wife of Lorenzo de' Medici, died ... and Lorenzo was not there at the time of her death, he had gone to Lucca at that time to speak to Signore Lodovico [Gonzaga] about important matters and then went to the Baths. And on the first day of August 1488, a funeral was given for the said Mona Clarice and Lorenzo had not yet returned....[101]

Lorenzo told the pope shortly after Clarice's death that she was his 'most dear and beloved wife', whose death was so grievous to him, 'having been deprived of such a sweet manner and company', that he could find no peace.[102] But such seemingly sorrowful sentiments echoed the conventional humanist language of consolation and grief, rather than necessarily being an expression of Lorenzo's true feelings about his wife's passing.[103]

In fact he did not seek his consort's companionship or her advice regarding the upbringing of their sons. This is illustrated by the well-known quarrel between them in the spring of 1479 over the dismissal of the humanist poet Angelo Poliziano by Clarice because of a dispute over the education of her sons, particularly Giovanni di Lorenzo, who was destined for the priesthood.[104] The dispute began in the summer of 1478, a terrible time for the Medici family in general, when Clarice and the children were at the Medici villa of Cafaggiolo after the Pazzi conspiracy. Angelo wished to teach the Medici boys Latin and Greek as part of a humanist education, while Clarice wished them to be taught the scriptures in Italian.[105] (A cleric from Castello, possibly wishing to ingratiate himself with the Medici, could not have picked a more perfect gift for Clarice when he wrote to Lorenzo in April 1477, asking that he accept 'a brief compendium of confessional prayers that I have newly composed and written for Mona Clarice and for your little Piero'.[106]) The situation was made worse by Poliziano's rather difficult temperament, his isolation from Florence, and Clarice's desire to assert her domestic authority. In October 1478, Poliziano informed Lucrezia that he was unable to return some books to the library of the Badia as he was not able to get someone to take them to Florence: 'Because Madonna Clarice has forced this upon me'.[107]

Matters came to a head in May 1479, when Clarice threw Poliziano out of the villa at Cafaggiolo because he had replaced the priest whom Clarice had charged with her children's education and re-instituted his own curriculum while she was in Florence, Poliziano wrote on the sixth of that month to Lorenzo. 'I am here at [the villa of] Careggi, I left Cafaggiolo by order of Madonna Clarice'.[108] Lorenzo was extremely angry with his wife but could not force her to rescind her decision.[109] Clarice, in turn, was furious at her spouse for having allowed Angelo to remain 'in your house to spite me', fearing that he would make her an object of ridicule.[110] Clarice, here, asserted her right as the mother of Lorenzo's children — and the one

most responsible for their religious education[111] — to demand the respect from Lorenzo that she thought was her due. Eventually, Piero di Lorenzo and Giovanni were taught by Martino della Commedia, the man of his mother's choice, with Piero also being tutored by Bernardo Michelozzi.[112]

This solution to the quarrel illustrates Clarice's ability, in difficult circumstances, to take decisive action to maintain overall authority within her traditional sphere of the household, including the management of her children's religious education, even in the face of her husband's extreme displeasure.[113] It is ironic that only two months later, as we have seen, Lorenzo's sister, Nannina Rucellai, complained furiously to her mother about her husband's decision to send away their children's tutor in spite of her protests: 'O do not be born a woman if you want your own way'.[114] Nannina, it seems, had years earlier been regarded as a woman who would not be likely to give in so easily. At the time of her wedding to Bernardo in June 1466, a contemporary observer considered the couple ill-suited. He described Bernardo as 'very weak', while Nannina was, in contrast, 'most vigorous and lively'.[115] Perhaps Clarice's position as an Orsini, and as Lorenzo's wife, gave her more authority in her own sphere, including with Lorenzo and with Medici employees, than other women of her day enjoyed, even her own sister in law.

Mothers and Sons

The duty and responsibility of mothers to care for, advise and educate their children could extend into their sons' adulthood when, in addition to receiving the respect and reverence due them as a parent, they could also exert a degree of authority in the relationship through the giving of advice. Therefore, the women in the Medici family who had adult sons had the opportunity sometimes to act and advise on matters outside the domestic sphere, even those of a political nature. On April 20 1438, Contessina Bardi told her son Giovanni di Cosimo:

> Antonio degli Strozzi has been to see me and has bothered me a lot about the matter; he has to come over there [Ferrara] in these holidays, tell him what you like. And if he tells you that I promised him anything, don't believe him, because he has not been able to get anything from me of [your] intent. Therefore, be cautious in how you deal with him.[116]

Antonio had probably visited Contessina to ask for assistance in his dealings with her son. But in this instance, her loyalty to Giovanni precluded this possibility. Yet Contessina was not loath to advise her younger son on how to deal with this situation, or with other difficult political affairs in which he found himself. She warned Giovanni 'look now to yourself' when Cosimo resigned his membership of the committee of the *Otto di Guardia* (the Eight on Security) in late August 1460 and put his nephew, Pierfrancesco, in his place — for such was a mother's duty, responsibility and even her right.[117]

The ability to exercise this maternal authority extended beyond the walls of the Medici Palace for Contessina Bardi, who seems to have become a figure of some significance as a Medici dowager following Cosimo's death in 1464.[118] Contessina

could play an important role, it seems, as an arbiter of influence in relation to the key issue of the contracting of marriages between members of the Florentine patriciate. In October 1465, Marco Parenti informed his exiled brothers in law, Filippo and Lorenzo di Matteo Strozzi, of widespread disquiet at a proposed marriage between Fiametta Adimari and Bernardo Buonaguisi, specifically noting that especially opposed to it was 'mona Contessina di Cosimo [...de' Medici]'.[119] Interestingly, we know that this marriage did not proceed as Filippo Strozzi married Fiametta Adimari after his return from exile in 1466.[120] We have already noted that various male members of the family were often consulted before important marriages went ahead, but as far as we know, this is the only instance of one of the Medici women of the day expressing disapproval at a proposed marriage alliance. Contessina's express wishes would have been viewed as worthy of note by contemporaries, and may, in this instance, possibly have prevented the Adimari-Buonaguisi alliance from going ahead. Her authority is also in evidence during the political crisis of the summer of 1466, when Piero's political opponents, most notably, the powerful Luca Pitti, endangered his regime. According to a contemporary account, Luca was summoned to an ill Contessina's bedside whence she demanded that he attempt to reconcile with Piero. At the time of writing the chronicler of this incident noted that such a *rapprochement* appeared to have been made.[121] Contessina was effectively exercising power available to her as both Cosimo's widow and Piero's mother to demand an end to the conflict and her authority in this matter seems to have been accepted by her son's chief opponent.

Similarly, it was well known that Lucrezia exerted tremendous influence with her elder son after he assumed the *de facto* leadership of Florence upon his father's death in December 1469. This was not only due to his youth (being only 20 at the time) because this influence lasted until her death, some 13 years later. Lorenzo's comments regarding the loss of his mother on March 25 1482 first to Eleonora of Aragon, the Duchess of Ferrara, that: 'I remain almost inconsolable ... having lost not only my mother, but the only refuge from many of my troubles',[122] and second, to her husband the duke that: 'I have also lost the instrument that used to relieve me of many of my burdens',[123] reflects not only the strong emotional attachment between Lorenzo and Lucrezia, but also the extent to which she was a trusted confidant and aide to her son.[124] Authority within the home and family sometimes, then, gave the Medici women opportunities to engage in activities that may have properly belonged to the public (political) sphere of men, but were permissible and even required of them when they were redefined as activities that dutiful wives, mothers or widows undertook to support the interests of their men folk.

Widows

It is not surprising that Lucrezia Tornabuoni was able to exercise such influence with Lorenzo after Piero's death as the condition of motherhood was also bound up with that of widowhood. Generally, widows had considerably more opportunities for autonomous decision-making than wives. Exactly how much additional influence has been a subject of great historical debate in recent years and more research remains to be done.[125] Widows made up 25 percent of the female

population and widowers four percent of men, according to the 1427 tax census (the *Catasto*), an unremarkable figure given the generally significant age difference between husbands and wives that we have already noted.[126] Younger widows frequently remarried, their natal families eager to reclaim their dowries so that they might marry them off quickly, thereby creating yet another *parentado* from which the girl's family could draw honour and profit. Any children remained with the dead husband's family and contemporaries considered that a woman who had 'abandoned' her children because of an (often forced) remarriage was a 'cruel mother'; while a woman who remained with her children, thereby preserving their patrimony, was considered to be a 'good mother'.[127] Giovanni Rucellai's eulogistic comment about his mother provides a perfect example of this attitude. He praised her for not abandoning her children when widowed at a young age: 'She was a venerable woman, and it is worth remembering her because, although she was widowed at the age of nineteen, had three sons and was expecting a fourth, she did not want to remarry *so as not to abandon us*; to her we are greatly beholden' [my emphasis].[128]

Lucrezia's position as a *Medici* widow made her situation an unusual one.[129] Apart from the fact that her being aged 42 at the time of Piero's death made another marriage extremely unlikely, Lucrezia's natal family of the Tornabuoni would not have wanted to break their ties with the chief family of the city who were also their long-term business partners. By virtue of her position as a member of the chief family of the republic, she was able to escape the many vicissitudes of widowhood, such as the poverty and litigation over the return of their dowries that plagued some other women.[130] Also Lucrezia was able to occupy an important role within the regime based on her position both as the mature widow of Piero and as the mother of Lorenzo.

Lucrezia's activities as a businesswoman are indicative of the type of independent action in which it was possible for wealthy widows to engage. She owned several houses and shops in Pisa and Florence as well as some farms in the Pisan countryside, which provided grain and ran cattle, and one in Fiesole.[131] Lucrezia began the process of acquiring houses and shops in Pisa before her husband's death.[132] Her capacity to buy property and manage land was taken for granted. In 1475, Lucrezia's eldest daughter, Bianca de' Pazzi, asked her to purchase some farmland for her from two other women in the Medici family, without telling them that it was actually for her daughter, because 'they would sooner please you than other women'.[133] Lucrezia was kept informed by various employees of conditions on these farms and they took their instructions from her. Rinaldo da Panzano, for example, informed her that the farmland he examined near the dilapidated thermal baths of Bagno a Morbo had adequate water and was suitable for grain, fodder, and cattle. He concluded: 'Here [at Bagno a Morbo] the building will not proceed until you have advised us'.[134]

Lucrezia rented out her property in Pisa to artisans of various trades, including barbers and goldsmiths.[135] Her authority over her employees was undeniable and her instructions were always obeyed. Andrea di Francesco, a barber, was one such man who appears frequently in the correspondence. Andrea told Lucrezia that, despite his dearest wish, he could not outfit a shop as requested, because her Pisan

factor, Antonio di Pace 'says not to do anything without your special license'.[136] Andrea clearly accepted Lucrezia's authority in this matter, but in return for his acceptance of his subordinate position, he expected her to assist him regarding difficulties experienced in opening and outfitting the shops he rented as well as ensuring that competitors did not remain in the vicinity. Lucrezia indeed did help Andrea with the costs of outfitting his shop and attempted to aid him in disputes.[137]

One activity in which Lucrezia engaged that was comparatively rare for women, even widows, was that of literary production. She was a writer of religious poems, some of which were put to music.[138] They were sung in churches and confraternities to the tunes of popular songs, and may also have been performed by singers of sacred songs and stories in Piazza San Martino.[139] Currently we know of only one other Florentine contemporary woman who wrote religious plays, namely, Antonia Tanini Pulci (1452-1501), to whom Lucrezia has been compared favourably by an eminent recent editor and historian of some of Lucrezia's literary works.[140] This type of writing was seen by contemporaries as being particularly appropriate for women because of its religious content, and was therefore the only permissible form of literary self-expression available to them at the time. It was often emphasised that women's writing should be of a religious nature and their education was designed to make them virtuous wives and mothers rather than learned humanist orators.[141]

Because the poems and sacred stories that Lucrezia wrote have been much analysed and discussed by literary and other historians, I propose to discuss them only briefly here. They clustered around a familiar and similar set of themes: her devotion to St John the Baptist and the praise and glorification of chaste women who were model wives, widows or mothers. They included a life of St John the Baptist, sacred songs of praise (*laude*) concerning the Virgin Mary and Jesus, and sacred stories (*sacre rappresentazioni*) about Judith, Susanna, Queen Esther, Tobias, and possibly a life of the Virgin.[142] (In keeping with this theme, it is not surprising that a *laude* on Saint Anne, the Virgin's mother, was anonymously dedicated to her.[143]) It is worth noting that the biblical women (apart from the Virgin Mary) that Lucrezia chose to write about were all women who, in some sense, took risks in order to achieve their goals: Susanna defied the Elders' sexual advances and risked death in order to preserve her chastity, while both Esther and Judith, respectively, used the supposed positive power of female intercession (the Virgin Mary) and the presumed negative power of female sexuality over men (Eve) to rescue their people.[144] Esther and Judith were able to act as they did, without having been seen to have contravened the boundaries of permissible action for women, because they were both depicted as 'mothers of their people'. From Lucrezia's perspective, all three biblical women would have been highly appropriate female role models for her to promote through her own writings.

However unlike Lorenzo's poetry, which was both secular and sacred in nature, Lucrezia's was not printed until four years after her death.[145] Nor were her sacred plays performed for an audience beyond the immediate family as Lorenzo's own *sacra rappresentazione* was in 1490. Yet it has been well acknowledged that Lucrezia's literary production of sacred texts in the vernacular probably influenced

her eldest son to write his own religious works in Italian.[146] It was, one might suggest, a rather unusual example of Lucrezia's domestic authority with Lorenzo.

Lucrezia's poems were privately circulated among her literary friends and were generally intended for the spiritual and moral edification of her granddaughters, suggesting that these works were all written during her widowhood as her eldest granddaughter and namesake, Lucrezia, was born in 1470.[147] As a woman, she did not have the freedom available to male poets, in her circle or elsewhere, to publish and distribute her work more widely. Niccolò Valori, in his laudatory biography of Lorenzo, written in the early sixteenth century, praised Lucrezia for her literary eloquence but noted that it was rare to find such ability in a woman, and he was careful to state that her religious and domestic duties were not neglected because of her writing.[148] Lucrezia's literary production, like her other activities, was circumscribed by contemporary notions of gender and power that only allowed her to operate within the limited parameters of a model of acceptable female behaviour which emphasised the centrality of domestic responsibilities and the piety, chastity, virtue and motherhood of the Virgin Mary, as well as other biblical heroines, as qualities worthy of emulation.

Incorporated Wives

The involvement of women of the Medici family in entertaining visiting dignitaries at the Medici palace exemplifies this blurring of the boundaries between the political and domestic arenas. They were 'incorporated wives'; that is, women whose position as the spouses of the chief men of the Florentine government ensured that they had a specific 'job' or 'role' to play within Florentine political culture.[149] The concept of 'incorporation' is a useful one for analysing the relationship of the wives as well as that of daughters and widows of Medici men to the Medici regime. It enables us to examine the gendered nature of Florentine political power and explains how the women in the Medici family could act within the public arena without fear of retribution. The women of the family's lives were centred on the home, but because of their entertainment of important guests they also performed their 'role' or 'job' as wives and homemakers on a wider public stage.

This explains why Contessina was present at an occasion of political significance that was centred on both the Medici Palace and the family's villa at Careggi in April 1459. She played host, together with Cosimo and their children, daughters in law, and grandchildren, to Galeazzo Maria Sforza, son of Duke Francesco Sforza the ruler of Milan, who stayed in the Medici palace. According to an anonymous rhyme, when he was about to leave Florence Galeazzo said farewell to all the family, including the women and girls. 'Finally ... Chosimo and his wife were there/ with their sons and daughters in law and granddaughters....' He said goodbye first 'to the women' and then went to Piero and Cosimo.[150] Contessina, and indeed the other female family members, were able to participate in this semi-formal visit because it involved the traditional responsibility of a wife to provide

hospitality to her husband's guests. But this was not simply another of Contessina's household duties. The diplomatic, political character of her entertaining the son of a lord such as Galeazzo Sforza made this occasion highly significant because the familial domestic space was used as a vehicle for projecting powerful political messages outwards beyond its walls.[151] For Cosimo, the entertaining of the son of a ruler from another Italian city in his own home could only have enhanced his political status, emphasising his and his family's extremely powerful position in the city as the first among equals. For the duration of Sforza's visit at least, the centre of political power was the Medici Palace and not the traditional seat of republican government, the *Palazzo della Signoria*. Her wifely duty was the mechanism of inclusion that enabled Contessina to be 'incorporated' into Cosimo's 'job' as the *de facto* head of Florence's government.

The entertaining of distinguished guests fell to other women in the Medici family as well. During his visit, Sforza was entertained by one of Cosimo's young granddaughters who played the pipe organ.[152] He was also invited to Careggi where the young man was treated to what he himself described as 'a women's festivity', namely, a display of women dancing together.[153] Less than a year later, Cosimo's granddaughters were called upon to entertain Pope Pius II and his entourage who had stopped off in Florence on the way to Rome after the Council of Mantua. According to a contemporary account: '... Bianca, the married daughter of Piero di Cosimo [de' Medici], went with other ladies of Piero and Jacopo de' Pazzi to visit the cardinal of Rohan ...' and played the organ for him.[154] Another member of the papal entourage, Monsignor Rodrigo Borgia who was friendly with Bianca's husband's family the Pazzi, requested that she also play for him. Bianca, her younger sister Nannina and several women from the Pazzi family, then went to entertain the Monsignor with organ playing, dancing and unaccompanied singing.[155] It was common for young upper class girls to have such accomplishments, and in a group it was quite acceptable for young women to entertain visiting dignitaries outside of their own homes without harming their reputations.[156] Her musical ability was the means by which Bianca became an 'incorporated' Medici daughter and Pazzi wife.

But the participation of women in Florentine official public ceremonies was limited. When Galeazzo Maria Sforza, by then the Duke of Milan, and his wife, Bona of Savoy, visited Florence in March 1471, for example, the Duchess and her own extensive entourage, including ladies in waiting, were not accompanied into the city by Florentine women, a Mantuan observer informed his duke, but rather they proceeded 'to Lorenzo's house [the Medici palace], where there were many women to welcome Madam'.[157] The fact that the writer noted the failure of leading Florentine women to receive Bona until she reached the Medici palace, suggests that he was surprised at their reticence to move beyond the hearth, as this was not typical of women in Italian courts who often travelled far from home.[158]

When a woman did move beyond Florence and acted in a way that was viewed as unseemly and too seigneurial for a woman from a republic, then criticism was not slow to follow. It is not surprising, then, that some did not view Lucrezia's visit to Rome in early 1467 to find a wife for Lorenzo in a favourable light. A bitter Jacopo Acciaiuoli, who had been exiled a year previously for his participation in an

anti-Medicean plot, was extremely critical of her actions while there. Together with some Florentine merchants, she visited several cardinals and had an audience with the pope. In a letter to his brother, Neri, Acciauoli reported that Lucrezia 'is acting the proper lady and going about all dolled up as if she was 15 years old. And there are those here who laugh at her but more so at Piero [...who by his actions] has ... reduced [Florence] to the vilest repute'.[159] Here the presence of Lucrezia in the male-only domain of the papal court — acting in a manner that seemed to be excessively lordly to Jacopo and effectively exercising a semi-official role as her husband's 'ambassador'[160] — was linked to the perceived seigneurial character of Medici behaviour. To Jacopo, Lucrezia's actions in Rome had brought shame upon her, and exposed not only her husband to ridicule, but also the men of the city who allowed her to interfere in political matters not properly the domain of a female. This attack on her supposed immodest and lordly behaviour was then used as reason enough to criticise the Medici. Even for a woman of Lucrezia's stature in Florence, her ability to act outside the domestic sphere was still circumscribed by republican conventions.[161]

Another Lorenzo: Clarice as Lorenzo's Representative

Clarice Orsini travelled to Rome far more frequently than Lucrezia. She did so in order to visit her natal family. Her position as Lorenzo de' Medici's consort meant that Clarice received a positive reception wherever she went. Indeed, she was fêted by officials and townspeople when travelling through towns within the Florentine dominion. They treated Clarice with appropriate honour and dignity as her husband's (and the Medici's) representative. In 1472, according to a letter Clarice wrote to Lorenzo, while returning to Rome for a visit, she was entertained and honoured by various dignitaries in towns along the way. In San Cerbone, her party stayed with Giovanni d'Antonio di Salvestro Serristori, a prominent Medicean of the district, 'by whom we were treated with great honour ... in company with all the women [of his House] and several sisters in law'.[162] The next day, she continued, they stayed with the poet Morello at Arezzo, where the town's Captain and *podestà* (the chief judicial official), visited her.[163] In Castiglione, Clarice dined with members of the town's *Signoria* (governing council), 'where we were even visited by the townspeople', and finally, in Cortona they stayed with the city's Captain and were honoured by both him and his town.[164]

In May 1485 Clarice's role as Lorenzo's representative was made even more explicit. Matteo Franco, the Medici family chaplain, accompanied her on a trip from the baths at Volterra to Florence.[165] Clarice was given gifts by the community of Colle, who were expecting her husband, but still gave her the presents 'as they presented them to Clarice as if to another one of him [Lorenzo], ...and wanted her to recommend them and their city to Lorenzo'.[166] The ambassador from Siena, who was expecting Lorenzo, met with Clarice and Franco in Colle to discuss events in his native city. Her designation as 'another Lorenzo' was indicative of Clarice's status as the 'incorporated wife' of Florence's leader, and it provides a good example of how she was perceived by others as being a replacement for Lorenzo, and as someone who could influence him greatly. Clarice's role in this situation

points to the increasingly 'public', semi-political and quasi-diplomatic role that she, as Lorenzo's wife, was expected to play by the mid-1480s — one which Lucrezia, a generation earlier, had not yet been able to do without censure. But as an 'incorporated wife', Clarice could not replace her spouse completely. The next day, she did not go with Franco to meet Colle's *podestà*.[167] Clearly, such formal meetings with government officials were outside Clarice's sphere of activity as Lorenzo's delegate. More appropriate however, was a meeting with the female relatives of the Prefect of Val D'Elsa. She was introduced to these women who, in their eagerness to meet her, mobbed her, so that Franco had to rescue her.[168] Clarice Orsini's position, then, as 'another Lorenzo' to Medici supplicants and supporters made explicit the position that all the women of the family achieved in the first 60 years of Medici rule as legitimate representatives of the Medici family in the public arena when required.

Clarice's entry into the Medici family, and that of the other women discussed in this chapter, definitely was not of their own making. Nevertheless, like them, she derived influence, power and authority from the importance to the Medici of her natal family's wealth, support and social status. Of equal significance for the Medici women were their positions as wives, mothers and sometimes widows in Florence's first family. The locus of their power was home and family, the definition of which was flexible enough to enable them to exercise significant power beyond the hearth from the 1460s onwards, as long as any actions in the public arena by the Medici women could be viewed as supporting the interests of their men folk. Therefore, they were able to act as their husbands' representatives in a quasi-diplomatic fashion, both inside and outside the home. Certainly, as we shall see, those wishing to ingratiate themselves with the Medici regime saw the Medici women as influential and powerful patrons whose favour and support were worth cultivating.

Notes

[1] F. Barbaro, 'De re uxoria', in. E. Garin (ed.) *Prosatori latini del quattrocento* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1952), pp. 102-137. For an English translation, see F. Barbaro, 'On Wifely Duties', in B. Kohl & R.G. Witt (eds) *The Earthly Republic* (Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), pp. 179-228. The treatise is briefly discussed in M.L. King, 'Caldiera and the Barbaros on Marriage and the Family: Humanist Reflections on Venetian Realities', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* **6** (1) (1976), pp. 19-50, at pp. 31-35.

[2] Barbaro (1952), pp. 110-111 (Latin and Italian texts respectively).

[3] Barbaro (1952), p. 135. 'giovane di virtù, di bellezza, di onestà e di grado e di richezze ornatissimma e singolare'. la fede, la continenza, lo ingegno, la modestia e la somma prudenza di lei...'. A brief biographical sketch of Ginevra Cavalcanti can be found in Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 p. 46.

[4] S. Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 146-147, discusses this practice of writing consolatory letters to a woman's family upon her death. The death of important statesmen, on the other hand, was marked by a public funeral oration.

[5] The Latin text is cited in Allodoli (1930/40), p. 438. On Piccarda Bueri see also Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 13-14, who also cites part of Marsuppini's eulogy.

[6] Strocchia (1992), p. 147.

[7] Cited in G. Griffiths, J. Hankins & D. Thompson (eds) *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts* (Binghamton NY: MRTS, 1987), pp. 337-339 with quotations at pp. 337-338.

[8] Additional texts to be consulted on this topic include: L.B. Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence* trans. R.N. Watkins (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1969); H. Gregory (trans.) *Selected Letters of Alessandra Strozzi: Bilingual Edition* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 28-37 (letter 1) and pp. 156-163 (letter 26); King (1991), ch. 1; Crabb (2000), ch. 8.

[9] For a discussion on the vices and virtues attributed to women during this period, see the references cited in the Introduction above at n. 6.

[10] See Brown (1992), ch.1 for an example of such a use of humanist rhetoric in relation to Cosimo de' Medici's character upon his death.

[11] On praiseworthy women sometimes being gendered male, see Schiesari (1987) pp. 68-69 and the discussion below in Chapter 6.

[12] For recent feminist approaches that emphasise the fluidity of the boundary between the private and public spheres, see J. Sharistanian (ed.) *Gender, Ideology and Action: Historical Perspectives on Women's Public Lives* (New York & Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1986), chs 1 & 9; D.O. Helly & S.M. Reverby, 'Introduction: Converging on History', in D.O. Helly & S.M. Reverby (eds) *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History* (Ithaca, N.Y. & London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 1-24, esp. pp. 1-17.

[13] On the *Palazzo della Signoria* as male-only space, see Tomas (2000), pp. 74-75; N. Tomas, 'Did Women have a Space?' (forthcoming).

[14] For a discussion on the characteristics of an Italian Renaissance court, see Lubkin (1994), pp. ix-xiii; R. Shepard, 'Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti, Ercole I d'Este and the Decoration of the Italian Renaissance Court', *Renaissance Studies* **9** (1) (1995), pp. 18-57.

[15] On the making of marriage alliances and the importance of dowries in Florence, see J. Kirshner, *'Pursuing Honor While Avoiding Sin': The Monte delle Doti of Florence* (Milan: Giuffre, 1978), pp. 2-15; Gregory (1987), pp. 215-237; A. Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); L. Fabbri, *Alleanza matrimoniale e patriziato nella Firenze dell'400: studio sulla famiglia Strozzi* (Florence: Olschki, 1991); L. Fabbri, 'Trattastica e practica dell'alleanza matrimoniale', in M. De Giorgio & C. Klapisch-Zuber (eds) *Storia del matrimonio* (Rome & Bari: Laterza, 1996), pp. 91-118.

[16] The position of women in patrilineal family structures has been discussed by F.W. Kent, in his review of recent literature on the issue, Kent (1991) pp. 70-91, esp. pp. 87-89. Cf. Strocchia in *ibid.* pp. 126-137. See the perceptive comments regarding the importance of women in the making of alliances in a southern Italian town of G. Delille, 'Marriage, Faction and Conflict in Sixteenth Century Italy: An Example and a Few Questions', in T. Dean & K.J.P. Lowe (eds) *Marriage in Italy 1300-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 155-173, esp. pp. 163ff.

[17] Cited in part in A. Strozzi, *Lettere di una gentildonna fiorentina del secolo XV ai figliuoli esuli* (ed.) C. Guasti (Florence: Sansoni 1877; repr. 1972), p. 596, and part in Gregory (1987), pp. 217-218n. '...prima ne comincerai a trarre frutto che del maschio, cioé ne farai um bello parentado che se fussi stato maschio....' I am using Heather Gregory's translation in *ibid.* at p. 217.

[18] On the average age at marriage of both men and women, see D. Herlihy, 'The Medieval Marriage Market', in his collected essays *The Social History of Italy and*

Western Europe, 700-1500 (London: Varorium, 1978), ch. 14, pp. 3-27 at p. 18; D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 103-111; Gregory, (1987), p. 219 n. 14; Molho (1994), pp. 137-143.

[19] See Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 13-14 for an approximate age of marriage. Piccarda Bueri's dowry was the largest one received by the Medici family in the fourteenth century. The amount and its size in comparison to the other recorded dowries received by the Medici at the time, is documented in Brucker (1957), p. 11. Its size could also be compared with the average Florentine dowry of only 1009 florins more than 40 years later for the period 1425-1449, the first span of years for which such data is available. See n. 29 below. For some comparative (non-Medicean) examples illustrating the average size of dowries in Piccarda's day, see G. Brucker (ed.) *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 29-37.

[20] A. D'Addario suggests this date as the most likely given that Piero was born in 1416. See his 'Bardi, Lotta, detta Contessina', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* v. 6 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1964), pp. 305-307, at p. 306.

[21] On the Florentine magnates, see C. Lansing, *The Florentine Magnates: Lineage and Faction in a Medieval Commune* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991). See Appendix 1, on p. 239, for a list of the families, including the Bardi, declared to be magnate in the 1290s and subsequently deprived of political rights.

[22] D'Addario (1964), contains a basic outline of Contessina's life, although it is inaccurate in some details, particularly her birth date which is more likely to have been around 1400 than 1392. See also Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 pp. 33-41; Felice (1905a).

[23] See O. Gori, 'Per un contributo al carteggio di Lorenzo il Magnifico: lettere inedite ai Bardi di Vernio', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **154** (568) (1996), pp. 253-378, esp. pp. 257-258, 305, where the vital importance of Contessina Bardi's familial connection for the Medici is briefly discussed.

[24] Kent (1978), pp. 56, 166.

[25] Kent (1978), p. 56.

[26] Kent (1978), pp. 147-148, 346.

[27] Gori (1996), p. 257 documents the 1444 tax concessions awarded to the Bardi.

[28] Gori (1996), p. 305ff.

[29] The amount of Lucrezia's dowry is documented in Kirshner (1978), p. 20. Molho (1994), p. 310 Table 7.3 indicates that the average dowry for the period 1425-1449 was 1009 florins.

[30] On the Tornabuoni, see G. Pampaloni, 'I Tornaquinci, poi Tornabuoni fino ai primi del Cinquecento', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **126** (2) (1968), pp. 331-362. On the strength of magnate family ties, see C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Nobles or Pariahs?: The Exclusion of Florentine Magnates from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* **39** (2) (1997), pp. 215-230.

[31] Kent (1978), pp. 56-57.

[32] Kent (1978), p. 57.

[33] Lucrezia's own younger brother, Giovanni Tornabuoni, became a close and influential Medici intimate and was the manager of the Medici bank in Rome. See Pampaloni (1968), pp. 352-355. Giovanni's commemoration of the Tornaquinci and Tornabuoni in fresco is discussed in P. Simons, 'Patronage in the Tornaquinci Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence', in Kent & Simons (1987), pp. 221-250.

[34] On this execution, see below chapter 4. One member of the Tornabuoni, however was exiled for life in October 1484, for having spoken out against Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici. See de' Medici, (1977- [2001]), v. 8 p. 29 n. 2.

[35] Some biographical information is available on Ginevra Alessandri in Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 87-88. Recent research has determined that the marriage actually took place on 14

May 1452 and not on January 20, 1453, as stated in *ibid.* p. 87. On the betrothal and wedding festivities, see N. Carew-Reid, *Les fêtes florentines au temps du Laurent le magnifique* (Florence: Olschki, 1995), p. 24. The author cites Giovanni Giusti d'Anghiari, 'Memorie, 1437-1482', at BNF [Fondo Principale] II II 127, 65^{v} and 67^{r}, which folios respectively deal with the betrothal and wedding festivities. It is possible that January 20, 1453 was the date upon which Ginevra's dowry was paid to Giovanni di Cosimo.

[36] G. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society 1343-1378* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton: University Press, 1962), p. 51.

[37] Kent (1978), pp. 35, 189. Other Alessandri were also pro-Medicean, see pp. 102, 188, 320. On the length of the Bardi and Tornabuoni associations with the Medici, see pp. 56-57.

[38] Brown (1992), pp. 109 n. 23, 184, 186.

[39] On the Pazzi, see Brucker, (1962), pp. 25, 34-35. On the origins of the Rucellai, see *ibid*, pp. 24, 26, 32 and F.W. Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 16.

[40] Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 146. Guglielmo was declared a rebel the following year, however, after breaking the terms of his exile. He was still in exile some six years later, as can be seen from a letter of Lorenzo de' Medici to his eldest son, Piero, in November 1484. The details are documented in de' Medici, (1977- [2001]) v. 8 pp. 77-78 & n. 28.

[41] On Giovanni Rucellai, see Kent (1977a); F.W. Kent *et al.*, *A Florentine Patrician and His Palace* (London: Warburg Institute, 1981), pp. 9-95. The marriage alliance is discussed in detail at pp. 66-69. Cosimo's letter of November 1461 to his nephew, Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici, in which Cosimo announces his intention to betroth Nannina to Bernardo Rucellai, is published in B. Preyer, 'The Rucellai Palace' in *ibid.* pp. 155-225, at p. 215. The lavish festivities and the costs for Nannina's wedding to his son Bernardo, is described by Giovanni Rucellai in A Perosa (ed.) *Il Zibaldone Quaresimale: Pagine Scelte* (London: Warburg Institute, 1960), pp. 28-34. Giovanni's comment of 1473 that this marriage benefited him politically can be found in *ibid.* at p. 121.

[42] Only two each of Bianca and Nannina's letters, all to Lucrezia Tornabuoni, have survived. See now for the dates of these letters Tornabuoni (1993), Appendix 1. Biographical information on the two women can be found in Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 146-148.

[43] Biographical information on Maria Rossi can be found in Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 pp. 145-146. There is no firm evidence to suggest that Maria was not Lucrezia's daughter, but neither can it proved that she was. She is not referred to in Lorenzo's diary of 1473, so she had probably died earlier. An English translation of Lorenzo's diary can be found in V. Branca (ed.) *Merchant Writers of the Italian Renaissance* trans. M. Baca (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1999), pp. 153-158.

[44] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 62-63, (letter 12, 28/3/1467); p. 64, (letter 13, 28/3/1467); pp. 64-65, (letter 14, 5/4/1467).

[45] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 62. '...alla romana ... la quale mi pareva ... molto bella, biancha e grande'.

[46] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 62. '...una dolce maniera, non però sì gentile chome le nostre [in Firenze], ma è di gran modesta e da ridulla presto a' nostri chostumi'.

[47] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 63 'non da comparalla alla Maria, Lucrezia e Biancha'.

[48] Tornabuoni (1993).

[49] Branca (1999) quotation at p. 156. For the quotation in Italian, see Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 106. 'ovvero fu mi data....'

[50] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 64. 'El nome suo è Crarice'. Cf. Crabb (2000) ch. 8 for a discussion of Alessandra Strozzi's evaluation of her sons' prospective brides. For

biographical information on Clarice Orsini, see Felice, (1906a) pp. 52-73; Pieraccini, (1986), v. 1 pp. 106, 115, 126-140, 143.

[51] On the Orsini family, see C. Shaw, 'Lorenzo de' Medici and Virginio Orsini', in Denley & Elam (1988), pp. 33-42; C. Shaw, 'Lorenzo de' Medici and Niccolò Orsini', in Garfagnini (1992), pp. 257-280.

[52] Gregory (1987), pp. 230-231.

[53] Cited in Brown (1992), p. 87. The translation is the author's. For a discussion about the rarity of alliances with non-Florentine nobility and the enactment of legislation in the 1300s to specifically forbid it after the magnate expulsions of 1293 and 1295, see C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Viaggi di nozze del Quatrocento', in D. Corsi (ed.) *Altrove: Viaggi di donne dall'antichità al Novecento* (Rome: Viella, 1999), pp. 365-376, at pp. 368-369.

[54] This general observation was confirmed in discussions with Carolyn James. It is worth noting that Nannina and Bernardo Rucellai where approximately the same age when they married in 1466.

[55] For a description of the festivities, see R.C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York; Academic Press, 1980), pp. 433-435; Carew-Reid (1995), p. 25 and most recently, in M. Parenti, *Lettere* ed. M. Marrese, (Florence: Olschki, 1996), pp. 247-250. Some comments on the wedding are cited in F.W. Kent, 'The Young Lorenzo, 1449-1469', in Mallett & Mann (1996), pp. 1-22, at p. 21.

[56] Rubinstein (1997), Part III, esp. pp. 226-231; M. M. Bullard, 'Adumbrations of Power and the Politics of Appearances in Medicean Florence', *Renaissance Studies* **12** (3) (1998), pp. 341-356.

[57] On the practice of two families contracting a marriage in order to make peace in the thirteenth century, see Lansing (1991), pp. 125-127. For a recent discussion of contemporary criticisms of Lorenzo's use and abuse of his authority, see A. Brown, 'Lorenzo and Public Opinion in Florence: The Problem of Opposition', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 61-85. Cf. F.W. Kent, 'Lorenzo... amico degli uomini da bene: Lorenzo de' Medici and Oligarchy', in the same volume, pp. 43-60.

[58] Molho (1994) p. 310, Table 7.3.

[59] The size of Alfonsina's dowry is mentioned several times in her marriage contract as '12,000 ducats carlini'. ASF MAP 89,93 n.d. (A ducat was roughly equivalent to a florin.) (All archival references are to the ASF unless otherwise indicated.) For information on Lorenzo's daughters' dowries, see Misc. Med 39, Inserto 9, 2^{r-v}.

[60] The practice of contracting multiple marriage alliances with the same family is discussed by Kent (1977a), pp. 96-97 and on the Medici's multiple marriage alliances with the same family see Kent (1978), pp. 49-61. On the importance to Lorenzo, and later to his eldest son, Piero, of the Orsini connection, see Shaw (1988).

[61] Reiss (2001), pp. 125, 142 n. 9. For a discussion of Lorenzo's rather rocky relationship with Naples after 1480, see H. Butters, 'Lorenzo and Naples', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 143-151.

[62] Shaw (1988). I would like to thank Dr. Shaw for informing me that there is no information available, to her knowledge, on either Alfonsina or Clarice in the Archivio Orsini in Rome (a personal communication, April 1995). For Bernardo's involvement, see his letters to Lorenzo describing Alfonsina's physical features and the marriage ceremony, published in A. Verde, *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473-1503: Richerche e documenti* v. 3 Part II (Pistoia: Olschki, 1977), pp. 802-804. Bernardo and Virginio are both mentioned as procurators in the marriage contract for the Orsini and Medici respectively. MAP 89, 93, n.d. Additional copies of the marriage contract can be found at MAP 148, 26-28, n.d.

[63] For Bernardo's description of Alfonsina, see Verde (1977), Part II pp. 802-803, quotation at p. 803. 'né in bene né in male. Solo mi offende qualche pocho la gola che mi pare uno poco grossetta dalla parte dinanzi'.

[64] Clarice's opinion of Alfonsina is in BNF, GC, 29 38^{bis}, f. 26, 18/12/1487. 'ho vista la mia Alphonsina, la quale m' à in modo satisfacto... .' Cf. *ibid.* f. 25, 25/11/1487.

[65] Verde (1977), Part II p. 804. 'con grandissima honore et festa et letitia di tutto huomo'.

[66] On the political importance of this marriage alliance to Lorenzo and Florence, see M.M. Bullard, 'Anxiety, Image Making and Political Reality in the Renaissance', in Garfagnini (1992), pp. 3-40, esp. pp. 20-25; M.M. Bullard, 'In Pursuit of Honore et Utile: Lorenzo de' Medici and Rome', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 123-142, esp. pp. 126-127. These two articles are both reprinted in Bullard (1994c), ch. 2 and ch. 5 respectively.

[67] Misc. Med. 39, Inserto 9, 2^{v}. '...tutta la Corte di Roma, se n'era rallegrata et che la figlia di Firenze l'haveva fatto figlia a Sua Santità'.

[68] F. Petrucci, 'Cibo, Francesco', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* v. 25 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1981), pp. 243-245 at p. 243.

[69] See the references cited in n.66 above. 'honore et utile'.

[70] P. Hurtubise, *Une famille témoin: les Salviati* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1985), p. 59 for the betrothal. Hurtubise gives the date of the marriage as 3/2/1487, citing Jacopo's brother's account book, forgetting that the Florentine new year did not begin until March 25, therefore they would have married in 1488 (modern style). Luca Landucci mentions the betrothal in his *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516 continuato da un anonimo fino al 1542* (ed.) I del Badia, (Florence: Sansoni, 1883; repr. 1983), p. 38. However, he announces their betrothal as a marriage.

[71] F. Nerli, *Commentari de' fatti civili occorsi dentro la città di Firenze dall'anno 1512 al 1537* (Augusta: Meertz & Majer, 1724), p. 56. Cf. Tosi (1913), p. 147 n. 6 for a similar explanation from another contemporary source.

[72] Verde (1977), Part II p. 804, citing a letter of 5 April 1487 from Bernardo Rucellai to Lorenzo.

[73] On Luisa, see Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 pp. 231-232.

[74] Verde (1977), p. 804.

[75] Lorenzo to Piero Alamanni, 11/3/1487/8, is cited in Bullard (1994b), p. 130 n. 25. 'Io penserò piglarne partito presto e maritarle qui [...Luisa and Contessina] perché havendo fatto questi parentadi [...Maddalena's and Piero's] fuori di Firenze, questi cittadini non credino però che io vogli dimenticargli o non gli degni.... '

[76] Bullard (1994b), p. 130 n. 25.

[77] Alberti (1969), pp. 208-211.

[78] An interesting discussion of this issue can be found in R. Crum, 'Controlling Women or Women Controlled? Suggestions for Gender Roles and Visual Culture in the Italian Renaissance Palace', in Reiss & Wilkins (2001), pp. 37-50 at pp. 38-39.

[79] MAP 11, 227, 4/3/1427/28. 'nove balle de n[o]xtri panni lini'.

[80] MAP 85, 6, 28/11/1457.

[81] Tornabuoni, (1993) p. 98 (letter 53, 25/10/1467). 'Della Gine[vra] non bisognia ti dia pensiero, perché ho previsto et provederò a ogni cosa opportuna per la brigata sua'.

[82] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 156 (letter 107, 2/6/1479).

[83] de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 8 p. 280. 'Delle cose dal Poggio rispondo alla Clarice'.

[84] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 195-196.

[85] MAP 7, 298, 3/8/1455 cited in full in A. Lillie, 'Giovanni di Cosimo and the Medici villa at Fiesole', in Beyer & Boucher (1993), pp.189-205 at p. 203, n. 52 and discussed on p. 195. Cf. MAP 7, 301, 8/7/1455 cited in full in *ibid.* p. 204, n. 59 and discussed on p.

196. 'Per Agniol Tani, t'aviso chome Piero a mandato parecchi maesstri a Fiesole per vedere se ciè rimedio niuno in quel muro...'.

[86] See chapter 3 below, for a discussion of 'magnificent building' with appropriate bibliography and cf. Alfonsina Orsini's management of the building project at Poggio a Caiano, and her building a palace in Rome in the mid 1510s.

[87] See the following letters to Ginevra from Francesco Fracassini, Medici steward at Cafaggiolo. MAP 9, 332 27/1/1458/9; 10, 4 7/11/1460; 85, 7, 25/11/1460; 7, 341, 27/n.m./n.y.; 7, 340, n.d.; and 7, 171, 12/n. m./n.y.

[88] On the reasons for, and background to, Cosimo's eventual success in September 1434, see Kent (1978).

[89] Felice (1905a), p. 634.

[90] On the whole theme of women and exile, see below, Chapter 4, with appropriate bibliography.

[91] Tornabuoni (1993) p. 51. (letter 1, 17/5/ 1446) 'Domine et maggiore mio'.

[92] Tornabuoni, (1993) p. 51. (letter 1, 17/5/1446) '...del marito lacerò pensare a te'.

[93] Tornabuoni, (1993) p. 52. (letter 1, 17/5/1446). '...ogni tuo chontentamento èe mio'.

[94] Kent (1997), p. 12. Cf. Lorenzo's difficult relationship with Clarice Orsini, above at pp. 24-25 and the even stormier contemporary relationship of the Duchess of Calabria with Alfonso of Naples. Welch (1995), pp. 123-136. On the contemporary notion that marriages should be companionate, see N. Tomas, 'Woman as Helpmeet: the Husband-Wife Relationship in Renaissance Florence', *Lilith: a Feminist History Journal* **3** (1986), pp. 61-78; King (1991), pp. 35-36.

[95] K.J.P. Lowe, 'A Matter of Piety or of Family Tradition and Custom?: The Religious Patronage of Piero de' Medici and Lucrezia Tornabuoni', in Beyer & Boucher (1993), pp. 55-69, at p. 59.

[96] L. Böninger, 'Diplomatie in Dienst Kontinuat Piero de'Medici Zwischen Rom und Mailand (1447-1454)', in Beyer & Boucher (1993), pp. 39-54 at p. 47. Cosimo and Contessina were granted a similar right by Pope Martin V in 1422, probably because of Cosimo's father, Giovanni de' Bicci de' Medici's, influence with the pope, but it is highly unlikely that Contessina would have been in Rome at the time. For the relevant documents, see H. Saalman and P. Mattox, 'The First Medici Palace', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* **44** (1985), pp. 329-345, Appendices VI and IX, at pp. 343-344. On Lucrezia's visit to the papal court in 1467, see below, p. . For the Medici women's presence there after the election of Giovanni de Medici as Pope Leo X in 1513, see below chapter 5.

[97] Cited in Kent (1996), p. 12. The Italian original is given at n. 62. The archival source is MAP 1, 267, (13/7/1469).

[98] See below chapter 2.

[99] Kent (1997), p. 19. Lorenzo's few letters to his wife are available in de' Medici, ([1977-[2001]) vols 1-8. See the indexes in each volume.

[100] Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 p. 136.

[101] T. de' Rossi, ' Ricordanze' in *Delizie degli' eruditi toscani* 24 vols (ed.) I. da San Luigi, (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1770-1789) v. 23 pp. 244-245. 'A dì 22 [sic] di Luglio 1488, morì Mona Clarice, donna di Lorenzo de' Medici ... e Lorenzo non ci era ala morta sua, era ito in quel dì a Lucha a parlare per chose d'inportanza al Signore Lodovico [Gonzaga] e parte era ito al Bagnio. E a dì primo d'Aghosto 1488 feciono l'onoranza di detta Mona Clarice ... e di già non era tornato Lorenzo...'.

[102] Cited in Felice (1906a), pp. 71-72. 'dolcissima e carissima consorte...'.

[103] G. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Strocchia (1992); A. McKane, 'Image, Myth and Remembrance: Letters of Consolation on the Death of Lorenzo de' Medici', (unpublished M.A. Thesis,

Monash University, 1996), pp. 34-38. I would like to thank Anne McKane for agreeing to let me cite her thesis. For some examples of other husbands' similar reactions to their wives' deaths, see Tomas (1986), pp. 68-69.

[104] A. Moorehead, 'Profiles: the Angel in May', *The New Yorker* **27** (February 24, 1951), pp. 34-65; J. Hook, *Lorenzo de' Medici: An Historical Biography* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), pp. 36, 177.

[105] Felice (1906a), pp. 64-65.

[106] MAP 35, 357, 2/4/1477. 'uno breve compendio di confessione che nuovamente ò composto e scripto per Mona Clarice e per Pierino vostro'.

[107] I del Lungo (ed.) *Prose volgari inedite di Angelo Ambrogini Poliziano* (Florence: Giunti Barbèra, 1867), p. 66, (letter 20, 18/10/1478). '... perchè così m'aveva imposto madonna Clarice'.

[108] Poliziano (1867), p. 70. 'Io sono qui a Careggi, partito di Cafaggiuolo per comandamento di madonna Clarice.'

[109] de' Medici (1977-[2002]) , v. 4 p. 80 (letter 395, after 6/5/1479); pp. 94-95 (letter 399, 5/6/1479).

[110] MAP 37, 379, 28/5/1479. 'in casa vostra a mi è dispecto'.

[111] On mothers being viewed as responsible for their children's religious education, see G. Dominici, *Regola del Governo della cura familiare: Part 4: On the Education of Children* trans. A.B. Coté (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1927), esp. pp. 33-34.

[112] On Martino della Commedia as Piero' s tutor, see Verde (1977), part I, p. 474; On his being Giovanni's tutor, see B. Picotti, *La giovinezza di Leone X* (Milan & Rome: Hoepli, 1928; repr. 1981), pp. 11-12. On Bernardo Michelozzi as Piero's tutor, see de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 4 p. 94 (letter 399, 5/6/1479).

[113] Cf. S. Vecchio, 'The Good Wife' in Klapisch-Zuber (1992), pp. 105-135, at p. 133.

[114] MAP 80, 69 12/7/1479. 'O pure non si vole nascere femina chi vuole fare a suo modo'. See above, p. 1 for further discussion of Nannina's complaint.

[115] ASMa, AG, 1100, 276^{r}, Antonio Ricavo to Lodovico Gonzaga, 8/6/1466. 'molto delicato'. 'gagliardissima et viva'. Cf. fol. 6^{r} 27 /11/ 1461, written at the time of the couple's engagement, for a kinder assessment of Bernardo.

[116] Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 p. 34. 'Egli è stato a me Antonio degli Strozzi, e àmi molto molestata della faccenda: egli debe venire costà [Ferrara] in queste feste, diràli quello ti pare, e se ti dicesse ch'io gli avessi promessi nulla, no-lli credere, chè da me non ha potuto avere cosa alcuna d'intenzione: Sì chè sia cauto come co' lui ti n'abi a governare'.

[117] Cited in Brown (1992), p. 83. The translation is the author's. '...attendete pure a voi'.

[118] For a brief discussion of Contessina that agrees with my view of her as a respected figure in the Medici family, see now, D. Kent, 'Women in Renaissance Florence', in D.A. Brown (ed.) *Virtue and Beauty: Leonardo's Ginevra de' Benci and Renaissance Portraits of Women* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 26-47, at pp. 37-38.

[119] Parenti (1996), pp. 130-134, quotation at p. 131. The editor provides details of the names of those involved in the alliance at p. 134 n. 9.

[120] This marriage is discussed in Crabb (2000), ch. 8.

[121] Parenti (1996), p. 78.

[122] de' Medici (1977–[2002]) v. 6 pp. 285-286 (letter 566, 25/3/1482), quotation at p. 285. 'io resto tanto sconsolato ... havendo perduto non solamente la madre, ma uno unico refugio di molti mia fastidii'.

[123] de' Medici, (1977–[2001]) v. 6 p. 287 (letter 567, 25/3/1482). 'ho perduto uno instrumento che mi levava di molte fatiche'.

[124] Lorenzo's and Lucrezia's relationship is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

[125] On widowhood in general, see L. Mirrer, (ed.) *Upon My Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1992), esp. pp. 1-17; M. Buitelaar, '"Widows Worlds": Representations and Realities', in *Between Poverty and the Pyre: Moments in the History of Widowhood* ed. J. Bremmer & L. Van den Bosch (London & New York: Routledge 1995), pp. 1-18, and most recently Cavallo & Warner (1999), which covers a number of areas of Europe and contains extensive bibliographies. The classic statement on widows in Renaissance Florence is C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The "Cruel Mother": Maternity, Widowhood and Dowry in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', in Klapisch-Zuber (1985), pp. 117-131. Rosenthal (1988) takes a contrary position. But see now for a far more nuanced view, Chabot (1988; 1994; 1999). Cf. for Venice and the Veneto, S. Chojnacki, '"The Most Serious Duty": Motherhood, Gender and Patrician Culture in Renaissance Venice', in Migiel & Schiesari, (1991), pp. 133-154 reprinted in Chojnacki (2000), ch. 8; A.A. Smith, 'Locating Power and Influence Within the Provincial Elite of Verona: Aristocratic Wives and Widows', *Renaissance Studies* **8** (4) (1994), pp. 439-448.

[126] Klapisch-Zuber (1985), pp. 117-131, at p. 120.

[127] Klapisch-Zuber (1985), pp. 171-131. Alessandra Macingi Strozzi is an example of one Florentine widow who did not 'abandon' her children. See Tomas (1992), ch. 3 and Crabb (2000), esp. ch. 2. For her letters see Strozzi (1972) and Gregory (1997). Critiques of Klapisch-Zuber can be found in Rosenthal (1988); Kuehn (1991), pp. 5-6 and chs 8-9 relating to women's legal position. The most recent discussion of Klapisch-Zuber's work is Cohn (1996), pp. 12-15.

[128] Cited in A. Molho et al., 'Genealogy and Marriage Alliance: Memories of Power in Late Medieval Florence', in *Portraits of Medieval and Renaissance Living: Essays in Memory of David Herlihy* ed. S.K. Cohn & S.A. Epstein (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 39-70, at p. 43.

[129] This also applies to the other widows in the Medici family, especially Alfonsina Orsini, see below, chapter 6.

[130] On the financial difficulties and legal problems many widows experienced, see Chabot (1988; 1999); G. Calvi, 'Maddalena Nerli and Cosimo Tornabuoni: A Couple's Narrative of Family History in Early Modern Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly* **45** (2) (1992), pp. 312-339.

[131] For details of Lucrezia's shops and farms, see Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 24-26, and the references cited there. See also, N.A. 10200, 8^{r-v} and A. Lillie, 'Lorenzo de' Medici's Rural Investments and Territorial Expansion', *Rinascimento* n.s. **33** (1993), pp. 53-67, at pp. 61-62.

[132] Lillee (1993b), p. 61.

[133] MAP 85,160, 19/10/1475. 'più tosto ne compiaccino a voi che ad altre'.

[134] Tornabuoni, (1993), pp. 151-152 (letter 103, 12/6/1478), quotation at p. 152. 'Qui [at Bagno a Morbo] per la muragla non si seguirà altro se nnone quanto avviserete'. For other examples of Lucrezia's involvement of the management of her farms, see *ibid.* pp. 79-80 (letter 34, 24/11/1475); MAP 85, 78, 28/2/1473/4; MAP 106, 2 25/6/1479.

[135] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 25; MAP 99, 7, 28^{r}-29^{v}, includes details of rents from shops.

[136] MAP 27, 57, 27/1/1471/2. 'dice de non fare alcuna cosa senza vostra special licentia'.

[137] For money sent to Andrea, see MAP 99, 7, 28^{r}. For her attempts to assist him in disputes, see MAP 85, 43, 4/11/1471, MAP 21, 477, 6/1/1474. On Lucrezia's efforts to remove competition, see MAP 80, 30 14/4/1474.

[138] B. Wilson, *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 166; P. Macey, 'In fiamma il mio cor: Savonarolan Laude by and for Dominican Nuns in Tuscany, in *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe* ed. C. Monson (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of

Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 161-189, at p. 169. Table 1 documents the setting of Lucrezia's *laude*, 'Ecco 'i Messia' to music by the Savonarolans in the sixteenth century.

[139] Orvieto (1992), p. 22. The titles of the popular songs to which the *laude* were sung are listed at the end of each respective *laude* in L. Tornabuoni, *Le Laudi* (ed.) G. Volpi (Pistoia: Flori, 1900). On Piazza San Martino as a venue for singers of popular music, see Wilson (1992); Kent (2000), pp. 43-46.

[140] Pezzarossa (1978), p. 39. See for a more detailed comparison of Antonia Pulci's and Lucrezia Tornabuoni's biographies and literary works, J. Bryce, 'Adjusting the Canon for Later Fifteenth-Century Florence: The Case of Antonia Pulci', in C. Cairns (ed.) *Renaissance Theatre: Texts, Performance, Design*: v. 1 *English and Italian Theatre* (Aldershot & Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1999), pp. 133-145; J. Bryce, 'Vernacular Poetry and Mystery Plays', in L. Panizza & S. Wood (eds) *A History of Women's Writing in Italy* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 31-36. Antonia Pulci's plays have been recently translated as A. Pulci, *Florentine Drama for Convent and Festival*, (eds & trans) by J.W. Cook & B.C. Cook (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[141] P.F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 87-88; Bruni (1987), pp. 240-251. Alessandra Scala (1475-1506) was an exception, but she was active after Lucrezia's death. Other Italian women humanists were also viewed as exceptional and were non-Florentine. See L. Jardine, 'Women humanists – education for what?,' in A. Grafton & L. Jardine (eds) *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (London: Duckworth 1986), pp. 29-57; M.L. King, 'Book Lined Cells: Women and Humanism in the Early Italian Renaissance', in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy*, ed. A. Rabil, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp. 435-453.

[142] Lucrezia's devotion to St. John the Baptist is discussed in chapters 2 and 3 below.For a list of Lucrezia's poetic works and their manuscript sources, see Levantini-Pieroni (1883), pp. 71-77; Pezzarossa (1978), pp. 251-255 and Tornabuoni (2001), p. 52. For the texts, see Tornabuoni (1900); Pezzarossa (1978), pp. 151-200 and pp. 241-248. 'La vita di Sancto Giovanni Baptista', and 'Storia di Iudith', respectively. For an accurate text of the story of the chaste Susanna, see Orvieto (1992), pp. 39-53. Long extracts from Lucrezia's sacred stories about Queen Esther and Tobias, are in Martelli (1994). For a complete edition of all of Lucrezia Tornabuoni's extant works in English translation see Tornabuoni (2001), pp. 54ff. Luigi Pulci mentions a life of the Virgin Mary, in his epic poem *Morgante*, Canto 28, stanza 133, in L. Pulci, *Morgante e lettere* ed. D. de Robertis (Florence: Sansoni, 1962), p. 914.

[143] Pezzarossa (1978), p. 39 n. 7.

[144] For a more extensive discussion of this point, see the introductory essay by J. Tylus entitled: 'Gender and Religion in Renaissance Florence', in Tornabuoni (2001), pp. 21-53 at pp. 45ff. On the (often contradictory) images of Queen Esther in the Italian Renaissance, see C.L. Baskins, 'Typology, Sexuality and the Renaissance Esther', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (ed.) J.G. Turner (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 31-54. On Esther as a role model for medieval and Renaissance queens, see Huneycutt (1995); Parsons (1995); Ephraim (2001). On Judith, see E. Ciletti, 'Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith', in Migiel & Schiesari (1991), pp. 35-70. Ciletti argues that while the fifteenth century iconography of Judith was positive, from the sixteenth century she was often portrayed as a witch.

[145] Tornabuoni (1900), p. viii.

[146] On the issue of the non-performance of Lucrezia's plays and her influence on Lorenzo's poetic output, see Tornabuoni (2001), pp. 26-28, 43 and the literature cited there.
[147] Orvieto (1992), p. 18. On Lucrezia's literary circle, see chapter 3 below.
[148] N. Valori, *Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici: scritta in lingua latina da Niccolò Valori; reso in volgari dal figlio Filippo Valori* ed. E. Niccolini (Vicenza: Olimpica, 1991), p. 95.
[149] H. Callan, 'Introduction', in H. Callan & S. Ardener, (eds) *The Incorporated Wife* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 1-26. For another example of a Florentine 'incorporated wife', see Tomas (1992), ch. 2.
[150] Cited in R. Hatfield, 'Cosimo de' Medici and the Chapel of his Palace,' in F. Ames-Lewis (1992), pp. 221-244, at p. 223. 'Poi ... Chosimo et la donna vi trovò/cho' loro figliuoli et le nuore e' i nipote ....' 'da le done'.
[151] Callan (1984), p. 9.
[152] On one of Cosimo's granddaughters playing the pipe organ, see J. Bryce, 'Performing for Strangers: Women, Dance and Music in Quattrocento Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly* **54** (4.1) (2001), pp. 1074-1107, at p. 1095. The cited text does not specify if it was Bianca or Nannina who played.
[153] On the Medici women's entertainment of the duke at Careggi, see Bryce (2001) at pp. 1080-1081, quotation at p. 1080.
[154] Cited in W. Prizer, 'Games of Venus: Secular Vocal Music in the Late Quattrocento and Early Cinquecento' *Journal of Musicology* **9** (1) (1991), pp. 3-56 at p. 3. The entire letter in Italian is printed at pp. 53-54.
[155] Prizer (1991), p. 4. See now the analysis of Bryce (2001), pp. 1081-1083 and 1096-1097.
[156] On young women dancing in public and entertaining visiting dignitaries, see B. Del Corazza, *Diario Fiorentino (1405-1439)* ed. R. Gentile (Rome: De Rubeis, 1991), pp. 30, 33-34, 36, 66-67; V. da Bisticci, 'The Life of Alessandra de' Bardi', in W.G. & E. Waters (eds & trans) *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963; repr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press & Renaissance Society of America, 1997), pp. 432-462 at pp. 449, 451-452. Public celebrations, including dancing involving young men and young women, were also held at the time of Sforza's visit, see S.U. Baldassari & A. Saiber (eds) *Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History and Art* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 80-81. See now the perceptive comments on this issue by Bryce (2001).
[157] Cited in R. Fubini, 'In margine all'edizione delle "Lettere" di Lorenzo de' Medici', in Garfagnini (1992), pp. 167-232, quotation at p. 193. '... ad la casa de Lorenzo, dove era de molte done per accogliere Madonna'. The letter's context is analysed at pp. 171-172. See now, Bryce (2001), pp. 1074-1075.
[158] Klapisch-Zuber (1999) makes this point in relation to the wedding journeys of women from the Northern Courts. Some examples of such women passing through Florence can be found in Del Corazza (1991), pp. 32-33, 61.
[159] Cited in A. Municchi, *La fazione antimedicea detta del Poggio* (Florence: Tipografia Galileiana, 1911), p. 145. '... Falla alla signorile e va lisciata come se fussi di 15 anni. Ecci chi si ride di lei ma più di Piero [... who by his actions] fa ... ridutta [... Florence] a vile extimatione'.
[160] Municchi (1911), p. 145. 'ambasciadrice'.
[161] Florentine sumptuary law dictated that a wife could wear luxurious and expensive clothing only when a young wife. Older, mature women, such as Lucrezia was in 1467, were expected to dress far more demurely. An inventory completed in 1456 of Medici possessions indicated that, when a young wife, Lucrezia possessed clothes made of

luxurious materials such as damask, velvet and ermine and that they were often brocaded with gold thread. See M. Spallanzani (ed.) *Inventari Medicei, 1417-1465: Giovanni di Bicci, Cosimo e Lorenzo di Giovanni, Piero di Cosimo* (Florence Associazione Amici del Bargello, 1996), pp. 105-106.

[162] Cited in Felice (1906a), pp. 60-61. The letter is MAP 24, 212, (24/4/1472). 'dal quale fumo con grande honore acceptati ... in compagnia di tutte sue donne [della Casa] e con alcune cognate'. On Giovanni Serristori, see Kent (1993), p. 298.

[163] Felice (1906a), p. 61.

[164] Both incidents can be found in Felice (1906a), p. 61. 'dove etiam fumo dalla Comunità visitati'.

[165] M. Franco, *Lettere* ed. G. Frosini (Florence: Accademia della Crusca, 1990), pp. 79-85 (letter 5, 12/5/1485).

[166] Franco (1990), p. 81. 'che a llei le presentavano a uno altro lui, [Lorenzo], ... e che ella ... volessi racomandare a lLorenzo e loro e quella terra'.

[167] Franco (1990), p. 82.

[168] Franco (1990), pp. 80-81.

CHAPTER TWO

The Exercise of Power

Luigi Pulci stated in his chivalric epic poem called *Morgante,* commissioned by Lucrezia Tornabuoni, that his patron was 'a famous lady in our century'.[1] We have already noted Lucrezia's fame as a writer of religious songs and plays, but contemporaries and near-contemporaries also knew her as a significant political, cultural and religious patron as well as an arbiter of influence. But although she was the most noteworthy, to greater and lesser degrees other women in the Medici family were also able to have a major impact as powerful patrons between 1434 and 1494.

Each succeeding generation of women in the Medici family was able to act as patrons at an earlier stage of their lives than the previous one. Contessina Bardi engaged in patronal activity only after her husband's death in 1464, while Ginevra Alessandri and Lucrezia Tornabuoni, after several years of marriage, were called upon by Medici friends and clients once their husbands began to take on more political authority in the later years of Cosimo's rule. This especially applied to Lucrezia, who was a major arbiter of influence with Piero while he was *de facto* ruler and even more so with her elder son, Lorenzo. For Clarice Orsini, her duties and responsibilities as an intercessor with and conduit to Lorenzo began immediately upon marriage. She acted on behalf of her many Orsini relatives in Rome and also on behalf of Medici clients, friends and employees in Florence and its environs. As very young wives, both Maddalena Cibo, whose domestic environment included the papal court, as well as her sister in law, Alfonsina Orsini, who was educated in the tradition of powerful women at the Neapolitan court, were able to engage in patronal activities that signalled the increasingly seigneurial character of the Medici regime after 1480.

Patronage by Intercession

Not surprisingly, the Medici were the chief source of patronage for most Florentines. Even though the women in the Medici family could not act in their own right as *de facto* rulers or heads of state, they were nevertheless sought after as patrons and benefactors because of their ability to influence and to intercede with the men of the family who could exercise that power. Their capacity to act as powerful intercessors and arbiters of influence was of crucial importance because in Renaissance Florence the ability of patrons to get things done for their clients was fundamental to the way the political process worked, allowing the majority of Florentines not involved in government (including women) some opportunity to participate in an important alternative undergovernment or *sottogoverno.*[2] In fact,

historians of this famous city (and other early modern European societies) have long known that men and women of all classes participated in the patronage process as patrons and/or clients usually linked together by ties of kinship (including godparenthood), friendship and/or neighbourhood.[3] To the modern reader, the existence of such an extra-legal undergovernment might seem corrupt. But these networks of social and political association were crucial because among other things they helped to ease class-based tensions, reducing the possibility of violent conflict between those in Florence's elite and those who were not. Such networks as well often facilitated the formation of strong personal affective bonds between rich and poor.[4]

The patronage process assumed that the relationship between patron and client was hierarchical, but that it was also based on mutual loyalty, fidelity and obligation. Patrons were dispensers of largesse; however a faithful client deserved such munificence and indeed expected it. If the patronage process was to work well as a source of power and prestige for the Medici women, then they had to operate successfully within its rules. A close look at their activities as patrons suggests that they knew how best to play the patronage game to benefit themselves, their family, friends and clients.

For their involvement outside the domestic arena to be considered acceptable, the Medici women (both consciously and unconsciously) represented themselves and were generally portrayed by others (with rare exception) as compassionate mothers of mercy, pious matrons and powerful intercessors with their male relatives and/or government or church officials for those who had requested or required their assistance. This tied in with women's traditional domestic role and utilised the only acceptable model of female power available to women at the time — one which drew on both the Classical Roman Republic and Catholic theology for its genesis and inspiration — that of a woman interceding with a husband, son, father or brother on behalf of others.[5] Men could also be asked to intercede with powerful people on behalf of others, but this was not the only way they could exert power and influence. A woman's membership of a particular family meant that its male members were more likely to lend credence to her pleas on behalf of others than to those from an outsider. The authority of a mother over her child gave extra weight to the intercessory model, legitimating a woman's intervention into an otherwise all-male sphere. A woman had the right to ask her son, grandson, father or brother to do what she asked of him, simply because she was his mother, grandmother, daughter or sister and, in the case of a spouse, because she was the mother of his children and heirs.

The importance of maternal authority as the basis for their exercise of power beyond the household made the emulation of the Virgin Mary's intercessory role a particularly apposite one for the Medici women to cultivate. This was because the cults of the Virgin Mary and other female saints such as St Monica, the mother of St Augustine, were extremely popular from the twelfth century onwards, in Italy and elsewhere, as human, compassionate mothers who would intercede with their sons on behalf of repentant sinners.[6] Florentines were particularly devoted to the Virgin. Four major churches were dedicated to her: the city's cathedral bore her name, as did the Servite church of SS. Annunziata (the Annunciation), the

Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella and the Carmelite church of Santa Maria del Carmine. In addition, Florence's hospital, a number of Mendicant churches and lay confraternities were dedicated to the Virgin Mary.[7] Hymns of praise (*laude*), such as those written by Lucrezia Tornabuoni, which emphasised Mary's role as a maternal intercessor, were frequently sung as part of church liturgical practice and in confraternities specifically dedicated to the singing of *laude*.[8] Lucrezia had a particular devotion to the Virgin Mary but all the Medici women who received requests were usually addressed in Marian-like terms that at once reflected the gendered character of the patronage process and the boundaries of the Medici women's exercise of power.

The language of patronage and clientage was also gendered. Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici was characterised by contemporaries as a 'big shot' or as 'boss of the shop', while Lucrezia and other women in the Medici family were usually referred to figuratively as mothers or sisters, employing what can be described as fictive kinship, common in a society where the language of family and paternalistic ideals was very much part of political discourse.[9] In Lorenzo's case, his political and mercantile skills were emphasised, while in the case of the Medici women, it was their 'natural' ability as mothers that was used to elicit favour.

Paternal imagery was also used of men in the Medici family. Lorenzo's grandfather, Cosimo de' Medici, was posthumously declared by the Florentine Government to be 'Pater Patriae', or 'Father of His Country', and Lorenzo was known as a 'common father' to Medici clients.[10] But this was one among many images used of these men, whose authority and capacity to rule and to dispense patronage was taken for granted, because as fathers they were 'naturally' entitled to exercise that power to govern.

The importance of a mother's intercessory role as a source of power for the Medici women is certainly evident in the case of Contessina Bardi. Her relationship with her grandsons, Lorenzo and Giuliano, was a close one. She wrote to Piero and Lucrezia at the baths at Corsina in 1461: 'Lorenzo is a good lad and they [the two boys] willingly spend time with me quite often'.[11] It was an awareness of this close relationship — and its advantage for those supplicants to Lorenzo who utilised it — which prompted her relative, Alessandro Bardi, to send his son with a letter to Contessina in September 1471, asking her to speak to Lorenzo about taking the letter bearer with him on his forthcoming trip to Rome as a recently elected 'ambassador ... to His Holiness'. Alessandro explained that he was writing to her 'because beside the son there is no better intermediary than the mother, I send him to you...'.[12] Similar reasoning was probably behind Gismondo da Pistoia's letter to Contessina. 'I have written a letter to the Magnificent Lorenzo', he informed her, and after telling Contessina about his concern, Gismondo added: 'I recommend myself to you, and ask you to have a few words with the Magnificent Lorenzo'.[13] Her position as his grandmother gave Contessina the opportunity to influence Lorenzo on matters nominally outside her ken, and required him to respect her authority to do so.

As we have already noted, Contessina Bardi was also an important figure of authority as Cosimo's widow, who, from the mid 1460s onwards, acted as a marriage broker and peacemaker. There is also some evidence of her ability to

obtain political favours for clients. For example, in 1465 Contessina wrote to her kinsman Gualterotto de' Bardi regarding a disputed ecclesiastical appointment, asking him to resolve the matter in favour of her client, after which she informed him that: '...the tax officials have told me that with their surety you can come and make an agreement regarding your taxes and from them you shall have every assistance'.[14] The very fact that Contessina was able to influence tax officials to assist her relative as well as being a source of patronage for those seeking ecclesiastical preferment is evidence of her authority as Cosimo's widow beyond the domestic sphere.

Ginevra Alessandri's correspondence reveals a network of clients and friends, especially women, with whom she associated and assisted. She was a source of patronage for some of these women, who valued her capacity to intercede with the Medici on their behalf. Most of those who wrote to Ginevra probably knew her because of her frequent visits to various thermal baths. In August 1456 Ginevra received a letter from Ginevra de' Campofregoso, a woman whom she had met during one of these visits, who noted that she had not received a letter from Ginevra since she had left the baths.[15] Her friend addressed Ginevra as 'Magnificence, like my most beloved sister'.[16] Campofregoso ended her letter by mentioning certain other women, known to Ginevra, who had also been at the baths.[17] Ginevra's additional association with some noble women from outside Florence may have begun on a visit to these baths. Penelope Orsini wrote, in June 1461, on behalf of a 'Countess Marsibalia', who, along with the letter writer, wished to know if she was pregnant.[18] Ginevra may have also made her acquaintance with Barbara of Brandenburg, Marchioness of Mantua, in a similar manner.[19] Ginevra's acquaintance with this group of women is not surprising since these spa bath resorts provided opportunities for cultural, political, and social contacts between visitors to them from across Italy, as well as with local inhabitants.[20]

One regular correspondent of Ginevra's was Petra d'Aghostino Berti from Siena, whose five surviving letters to her were written between 1455 and 1461. She would send items to Ginevra as well as do things for her as requested.[21] Petra described herself in one letter as 'yours, like a little sister', thereby emphasising both the intimacy of their relationship and her subordinate role in it as Ginevra's client.[22] Paolo Trenta was quick to acknowledge the success of Ginevra's efforts at intercession with Piero di Cosimo de' Medici and thus the reciprocal obligation that he owed Ginevra: '[A]nd when you need something done here [Lucca], command your well wishers as if their mother', signing the letter, 'your son'.[23] Another requesting a favour for the letter bearer began by greeting her 'like a dearest mother'.[24] This familial language would have been particularly significant for women, as it could only have helped to legitimate further their participation in the patronage process.

Clients expected favours in return for good service and Petra d'Aghostino Berti was no exception.[25] She wrote to Ginevra in September 1461, on behalf of a certain 'Lorenzo Pandol[f]i whom I spoke to you about personally on another occasion', wanting Ginevra to speak to 'your Giovanni', about this man's need for assistance for his sick wife 'as she is a very good woman'.[26] Ginevra received several

additional requests to intercede with Cosimo, Piero and Giovanni de' Medici on behalf of letter writers or their clients, friends or relatives. Ginevra de' Campofregoso wished her to recommend the bearer of her letter 'to my magnificent godfather, Cosimo', adding weight to her request by including two shirts for Ginevra's young son, Cosimino. '... I beg you to recommend [... the bearer of this letter] to him earnestly and arrange it in such a way as I understand my [requests for] intercession have been dealt with by Your Magnificence'.[27] The abbess of the Pisan convent of San Matteo wrote to Ginevra, repeating a request for assistance she had earlier made to Cosimo, to which she had received no reply. The abbess asked her, therefore, to approach Piero on behalf of the convent.[28] Ser Lorenzo, a priest in San Piero Maggiore, did not hesitate to ask Ginevra:

> Most humbly I beg you to arrange with your Giovanni that he be pleased to write a few words to Andrea della Stufa, the magistrate of Prato, that Ser Lorenzo, a priest in San Piero Maggiore of Florence, be recommended to him and that he be pleased to lend me such favour through his court that I [Ser Lorenzo] be paid sixty gold florins that I am owed from the charitable foundation for the poor of Francesco di Marco [Datini] in Prato.[29]

One letter writer pointed to a blood relationship between Contessina Bardi and the ill nun for whom he was advocating. Ginevra would be obligated to assist her because this woman was a 'cousin of Piero and Giovanni and repeatedly asked me to recommend her to Piero and Giovanni...'.[30]

Ginevra demonstrated her knowledge of how the patronage game was played in a letter to Barbara of Brandenburg, Marchioness of Mantua. She was acutely aware of the need to show appropriate humility when writing to a woman of Barbara's imperial blood on behalf of a friend in January 1466: 'I write badly and dictate worse, and as a woman I write to your ladyship ...'[31] and, after appropriate protestations of loyalty and a subtle reminder that Barbara's husband, Lodovico Gonzaga, was 'our godfather',[32] Ginevra asked Barbara and Lodovico to ensure that 'you arrange for Count Vanni to come over there...'.[33] She then offered, as a dutiful client should: 'If over here I can do anything that you would like ...' she would do so gladly.[34] Ginevra followed the rules of the patronage game and played it successfully, both as an obsequious client to an influential noblewoman and ruler and, more often, as a munificent patron to her own clients.

From the 1460s, and especially after August 1464 when he succeeded his late father as the *de facto* head of the Florentine government, Piero skilfully manipulated the infirmity he experienced because of gout, which often required him to remain in bed, so as to shift much of the focus of government business away from the *Palazzo della Signoria* to the Medici palace.[35] Piero's bedroom, was not, in fact, a 'private' space, it was where he would hold political meetings.[36] This change was extremely important as the strict division between the 'public', 'male' world of politics and business and the 'private' 'female' sphere of the domestic had been further weakened, as the public palace had, in effect, merged with the Medici household. The shift of the locus of government to the Medici palace because of Piero's illness made it easier for his own wife, and all the other women of the

family from then on, to exercise power through their involvement in the Florentine *sottogoverno* because it was now properly in their domain.

The first evidence of Lucrezia's patronal activity dates from the 1460s, but unlike her mother in law, hers began when Piero assumed political power as from then on she was asked by supplicants to intercede with him on their behalf. In March 1465, the exiled merchant banker Filippo di Matteo Strozzi sent Lucrezia a gift of linen cloth that she acknowledged gratefully.[37] A month later after receiving his reply, she wrote to him regarding the possibility of his exile being revoked: 'I have spoken with Piero, as you requested ... He listened to everything most willingly...'.[38] Lucrezia acknowledged the nature of Filippo's relationship with the Medici by referring to herself as 'your little sister'.[39] The political importance of Filippo's connections with the Neapolitan Court necessitated it.[40]

However other clients of Lucrezia would not have expected to be addressed in such terms. 'Most Illustrious Mother', wrote a Pisan nun from the convent of San Domenico in November 1467, begging her, now addressed as 'most kind mother', to ask Piero to stop the soldiers who were forcibly entering the houses of the convent's tenant farmers and stealing their produce. Consequently, the nuns had no grain or wine and so she requested Lucrezia 'for mercy's sake' to send some from Florence. This nun ends her plea by emphasising that Piero and Lucrezia are their only hope: 'Only the father Piero and you are able to help us...'.[41] Here a gendered partnership existed. Lucrezia was asked both to act as an intercessor between these nuns and Piero (the father), who had the authority to stop the sack of their farms, and, appropriately as a woman and as a mother, to provide food to those in need.

Such invocations to Lucrezia as mother continued on into widowhood. She was, as one woman reminded Lucrezia in October 1472, 'as my honoured mother' [... and] my benefactor'.[42] Addressed as a 'most honoured mother', she could also be asked by the chief judicial official or *podestà* of Fucecchio to reward loyalty and friendship towards her family, by having regard 'to my honour and profit', which the official deserved being a 'good and most affectionate friend of your house', yet another key reason for Lucrezia as a patron to assist him.[43] The Captain of Pisa, Giovanni Aldrobandini, wrote to Lucrezia, whom he addressed as: 'Magnificence and generous honoured as a mother etcetera'. He stated that he had received three of her letters and had dealt with each individually, and he included details of how he had resolved or would resolve each person's specific legal problem. In each instance, Aldobrandini stressed that these people would receive 'every assistance and favour' from him. Aldrobandini emphasised that he would be most distressed if she did not see fit to ask for his assistance in the future, if needed, which further testifies to Lucrezia's value as a Medici patron.[44] Some writers chose to underline the importance of the patronal relationship by sending a gift as an act of homage, as gifts were sent to Lorenzo.[45] Again Lucrezia's pseudo-maternal relationship to the client was given emphasis, but so too was her human kindness, a trait also attributed to the Virgin Mary. 'Most reverend as a mother etc. Because [of] your great human kindness ... I am sending you several trout', wrote Lotto Mancini from Pistoia in early January 1472.[46] Antonio de' Nobili, addressed Lucrezia, in her capacity as godmother to his child, as 'magnificent and generous lady and honoured godmother', telling her that 'in your name I went bird catching, and what

little I caught ... I send to Your Magnificence'.[47] One man took the opportunity to write to Lucrezia when she was at Bagno a Morbo in May 1477, sending her greetings and, as an apology for being unable to visit her in person, he included 'certain items as you will see. I beg you to accept my intent as greater than this small gift ... as was and is my duty'.[48] In these instances, the writers' proffering of gifts acknowledged her importance as a patron, and also implied their hopes for future benefit.

Lucrezia was addressed by supplicants in terms that were designed to elicit mercy and compassion and mirrored the qualities of charity, humanity, peacemaking and refuge often ascribed to the Virgin Mary. She was therefore asked to intervene in disputes on behalf of aggrieved letter writers. Two brothers from the town of Marradi wrote to her in February 1472, describing how they had been unjustly prosecuted after they defended their property from attack. They began their letter in the following way. 'The reason for this [letter] is because many times from many people, we have heard that in you reigns mercy towards the poor, therefore we are secure in Your Magnificence, asking you to do similarly towards us, your slaves and good servants'.[49] As a further appeal, these men continued that the proposed outlawing of them would spell ruin for their children including three daughters about to marry.[50]

In a similar vein, one man asked Lucrezia to intervene in a dispute in the confraternity of San Michele where a group of members wished to get rid of the new chaplain. 'Therefore I and my companions recommend ourselves to you and ask you in charity and for the love of God that you perform a charitable act'.[51] This act of charity entailed her writing to the said company and to the Bishop of Lucca, asking that the priest remain where he was.[52] A chaplain wrote regarding a similar dispute in another confraternity, in the same town, which originally had been resolved with Lorenzo's assistance, but on which the confraternity now reneged.[53] Guglielmo de' Pazzi, Lucrezia's son in law, explicitly referred to his mother in law's position as a mediator in a letter of September 1477, in which he discussed the needs of one man who requested help with his problem 'via your mediation'.[54] Her role as a peacemaker must have been known outside Florence because in Colle, a town in the Florentine dominion, Lucrezia was called in to restore peace between two local families who had been feuding for 20 years.[55] She could also assist in resolving a dispute by asking a third party to act as mediator. At her request, the celebrated neo-platonic philosopher and long-time Medici favourite, Marsilio Ficino, acted to bring peace between two families. A Medici secretary, Niccolò Michelozzi, notarised the agreement overseen by Ficino.[56]

Lucrezia did actually follow up requests herself to resolve disputes and her intervention was often enough to bring an end to conflict. Paolo Machiavelli informed her that the bearer of his letter, upon hearing of her desire to have a war of words between himself and another man brought to an end, had made peace: '[T]oday an agreement was concluded by the grace of God and the assistance of Your Magnficence...'.[57] Machiavelli's attribution of responsibility for this successful outcome to both God and Lucrezia serves to further highlight the contemporary representations of her in Marian terms, effectively acting as a mediator between heaven and earth.

Again using Marian terminology, she was appealed to as a mother and as a refuge in times of trouble. Andrea di Francesco, who rented one of her shops in Pisa, told her: 'I have no refuge or support other than Your Magnificence and to you I have recourse as a mother and lady...'.[58] Filippo Christofori, an ex-secretary of Piero de' Medici, twice wrote regarding the possibility of his returning from exile. In September 1473, he told Lucrezia that after several attempts to have his exile decree rescinded, he had decided to write to her to ask for assistance.[59] Some 18 months later, he appealed to Lucrezia as his saviour upon whom his very life depended.

> My magnificent madam, the humane and beloved letters that Your Magnificence has written to me in the last few days, have almost brought me back from the dead to life ... I am in the seventh year of my exile, I beg Your Magnificence to keep me in mind, and lend your helping hand to my fragile little boat and lead it into port safely.[60]

When speaking to Clarice Orsini, supplicants also addressed her in Marian terms that emphasised her humanity as well as her status as a benefactor, mediator and sole refuge for the poor. One man reminded Clarice of 'the humanity that reigns in Your perfect Magnificence'.[61] Matteo Bonaccorsi called Clarice his 'sole benefactor' in a letter thanking her for her intercession, also stressing that 'I have no other refuge than this Magnificent [Medici] House, through your Magnificence'.[62] A poor widow combined all these elements in a letter thanking Clarice for her 'humanity' in helping 'my poor girls', and now wanting 'to have recourse to your kind self', because of taxes imposed upon her by the Florentine Commune.[63] She then asked Clarice to recommend her to Lorenzo and in reference to her taxation burden, she concludes by saying: '... think about where I find myself, for I have no other refuge besides Your Magnificence'.[64]

As had occurred with Lucrezia, such language was also appropriate in situations where clients were poor, exiled, imprisoned, widowed, or orphaned, and required acts of charity, mercy, or forgiveness. One widow, for example, requested Clarice's intercession with Lorenzo to ensure that her brother and nephews were recalled from exile.[65] She also received a letter from a prisoner requesting release after two years of incarceration.

> I beg you sincerely for the love of God when it suits you to recommend me to your Magnificent Lorenzo.... I know well that I do not deserve to receive grace for the error I have committed ... for the love of God and for the sake of the four children I have and who are without a mother, you must think about their position; you would not be able to perform a greater act of charity than to reunite these poor innocent daughters with their poor father....[66]

The female religious who wrote to Lucrezia and Clarice appealed to both of them not only as mothers but also as protectors of religious institutions, which not only made the nuns themselves more worthy of assistance, it also made it more spiritually advantageous for Lucrezia and her daughter in law to assist them. Lucrezia's support for various convents in and around Florence and Pisa was well known. According to the Prioress of the convent of Sant'Agostino in Pisa, she was

a 'compassionate lady towards the poor and especially towards religious women'.[67] In a letter of January 1480 the abbess of the convent of the Paradiso in Florence, reminded her that the nuns knew that Lucrezia was not only 'our mother', but also was a 'mother of the poor and compassionate towards all the destitute'. Consequently, she was asked by the nun writing to her to be a 'mediator with Lorenzo', on behalf of a certain poor woman and her husband.[68] And finally, a nun from a poor Pisan convent described Clarice as 'mother and protector of pious places' when she asked her to provide her convent with salt and to pay the accompanying salt tax.[69]

Of course, both women played a similar role as intercessors with Lorenzo; but the type of influence each carried with him was very different, reflecting the distinct character of the relationship each had with Lorenzo de' Medici. This difference is reflected in the language used by the nuns of the Franciscan convent of Santa Chiara Novella who wrote simultaneously to Clarice, Lorenzo and Lucrezia on May 1st 1473, asking each of them to assist in finding the convent a new spiritual director from amongst the friars of the Observant Franciscans who ministered to other convents in the city from the same order.[70] The language used by the nuns is indicative of the particular role each person was expected to play in the process. Lorenzo was addressed directly and appealed to 'with security and as a father'.[71] On the other hand, the nuns said to Lucrezia that: 'with security we beg you, for the honour of God, that you would want to discuss [this with] your Lorenzo'. However, after emphasising their belief in her charity, Clarice was asked: 'Let it not be troublesome to you to persuade your husband Lorenzo'.[72] Lucrezia was invited to discuss the issue with her son as one would with an equal, while Clarice had to act more artfully in order to persuade her husband to agree to assist the nuns, which suggests that while his wife was able to influence her husband she was not considered as his equal as Lucrezia obviously was.

This is not to deny Clarice's influence with her husband, of which she was well aware. His wife wrote to him in December 1478 about a certain Andrea, who wanted her to intercede with Lorenzo so that he could be provided with some food. He must have displeased Lorenzo earlier, because Andrea's mother had both written to and visited Clarice, asking for forgiveness for her son.[73] Clarice concluded her plea: 'Therefore I beg you that either for his proven fidelity, or because of compassion for the mother, or because of his character, or *because of my intercession*, you should treat him as recommended' [my emphasis].[74] This example fits the Marian model perfectly. Clarice was pleading on behalf of a man who could be likened to a repentant sinner, and Lorenzo — who was referred to by contemporaries as Christ-like and as an 'a true and living god'[75] — was here the vengeful god to be convinced of the need for mercy and forgiveness. She also recommended to Lorenzo a Medicean notary, Ser Benedetto da Ceparello, who was in trouble with the Office for Rebels, and was, Clarice noted, 'also yet of the [Medici] House'.[76] She wrote to her husband on two occasions in April 1479 on behalf of two different people wanting to fill vacancies as canons in the Medicean parish church of San Lorenzo. In the first letter of April 18, Clarice wrote '[t]he nephew of the parish priest of San Giovanni ... asked me to intercede with you', and in the second, dated April 24, she recommended Martino della Commedia,

who 'is a good young man' and was to become tutor to Clarice's sons later that year as we noted earlier.[77] Her relationship to Lorenzo could also be used to add weight to a request of others. She informed Francesco Cardini that the Castellan of Feletto was 'ours' and that her spouse desired that the said man should be paid money owed to him, adding that she hoped he would do what was requested 'for my love'.[78]

Alfonsina Orsini arrived in Florence from Rome in May 1488 accompanied by her new husband, Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, her mother in law, Clarice Orsini, and her mother, Caterina di Sanseverino.[79] Similarly to the Medici women of the previous generation, Alfonsina and her mother were solicited for support by nuns and poor women who appealed to their mercy and humanity, seeing them as mediators between themselves and Piero de' Medici and/or Tuscan officialdom. Caterina received a letter from the abbess of one convent, who emphasising her compassionate and mediating role with Piero, requested that she help a needy, worthy relative find an appropriate job: 'I appeal to your humanity with confidence and security about this [matter], because I have no more sure and trusted intermediary than you. Commend me to the Magnificent Pier [sic] de' Medici, your son in law'.[80] A poor woman whose sheep had been impounded by the *podestà* of Prato appealed to Alfonsina to have them released.[81] A nun was forthright in her demands of her, whom she called 'dearest daughter' and 'my sweetest Alfonsina', most probably because of her youth and their previous acquaintance. She demanded that Piero's wife take action on liberating her convent from a tax that had been imposed upon it and was annoyed that letters she had written earlier (which have not survived) had not produced any effective action.[82] However despite the similarity in the language used towards Alfonsina and that used towards the previous generation of Medici women, the salutations used by this letter writer reflected an awareness of the significantly greater power that Alfonsina Orsini was able to exercise. Despite the stern tones of a disaffected client, this abbess was aware of the immense power Alfonsina wielded as Piero's wife. She began the letter: 'Magnificent and first lady of Tuscany',[83] a most unusual greeting, with the addressee being referred to as: 'Illustrious, Magnificent, powerful and noble lady, Madonna Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici...'. [84] This form of address went far beyond any used of Medici women in the proceeding generation and signalled, even at this comparatively early stage, the increasingly seigneurial character of the Medici rule as well as acknowledging Alfonsina's noble Neapolitan parentage.

The Process of Intercession

Widowed and with the added advantage of maternal authority with which to influence Lorenzo, Lucrezia received a greater number of requests than either Clarice or any other women from the Medici family of her day. These requests were from clients throughout Florence and its territories who knew that she was the most powerful and authoritative of intercessors.[85] The expectation on the part of clients was that men in positions of authority would listen to Lucrezia with immense respect. For example, a Medicean notary, Bernardo da Cepparello, wrote to her regarding the excommunication of a priest from Pratovecchio, saying that

the Archbishop's Vicar had agreed reluctantly to rescind it, 'for love of you'.[86] Lucrezia's intervention was often effective enough to secure a prisoner's release from incarceration. The Vicar of Cortona told her that 'I received your letter, and immediately released Fantino from prison ... and I am very happy to have done your will'.[87] And the abbess of a Florentine convent thought that 'a few words to the Consuls of the Wool Guild' from Lucrezia would result in her preferred candidate obtaining a vacant chaplainship in the Florentine cathedral.[88]

In this intercessory role, Lucrezia was also asked to intervene in a variety of other disputes, which included various nuns' battles with members of the church hierarchy over such issues as one convent's priest being victimised by the Archbishop's vicar, the return of lands taken from the convent of San Baldassare and the right of a convent to choose to which church it wanted to be attached.[89] Obviously, her supplicants saw Lucrezia as being able to influence governmental and church officials.

The requests by male clergy for assistance used similar language in addressing Lucrezia to that of the nuns, but their letters covered a more varied range of issues, reflecting their different and wider role within the church. Although she received requests for tax relief from some friars, most of the letters from these men related to the procurement of benefices and other church offices.[90]

The competition for vacant parishes and benefices was so fierce that one priest from Fucecchio wrote to Lucrezia informing her that he had been elected as the new parish priest, and pointedly repeated: 'that this is now my business and I am elected', so that she would be aware of this fact if others approached her regarding this vacancy.[91]Another begged her to let him have the position of priest in a certain parish when the incumbent, who was gravely ill, finally died.[92] Gino d'Antonio, a priest from the Medicean ancestral district of the Mugello, addressing Lucrezia as 'dearest as a mother' slavishly promised her that he would do his best to resolve a dispute in which he was involved. He begged her not to abandon him and asked Lucrezia to help him retain a benefice close by his parish worth 25 florins a year.[93]

Both Lucrezia and Lorenzo were often mentioned in letters requesting assistance or agreeing to a request, evidence in itself of how contemporaries saw them as partners in the patronage process. A canon of Prato wanted a tax levied on his benefice to be removed, since 'not having protectors other than you and your son', he would have to sell possessions to meet the tax payments if they would not help him.[94] The Archbishop of Florence, Giovanni Neroni, was more than willing to revoke the appointment of a chaplain at a church at Ponte a Sieve and give it to Lucrezia's candidate, adding that she could ask him anything in the future as 'you will always find us freely disposed in all matters concerning you and your sons'.[95] Mother and son could be asked to interfere in the same clerical appointments at different times. When the novices at Santa Croce wrote to Lorenzo asking him to intervene in the selection of a new master, they specifically referred to the fact that his mother had earlier been involved in the selection of the master, and that her choice suited their needs and so 'we do not want to change to another governor....'.[96] Competition could occur between the Medici over favours for their various clients, which required some astute diplomacy on behalf of any official who might be chosen to adjudicate the matter. When faced with competing claims by

Lucrezia and Lorenzo in 1466 over a dispute between their respective clients, on which he was to adjudicate, the Captain of Pisa told Lorenzo: 'all has been done on your house's advice and I cannot err'.[97]

The Medici and Lorenzo in particular, were heavily involved in various lay confraternities.[98] Despite the fact that the women who were members of lay confraternities could not hold office, Lucrezia may have supported some confraternities dedicated to St John the Baptist, to whom it is well known she had a particular devotion.[99] In 1476, the confraternity of San Giovanni fra L'Arcora outside the Florentine gate to Faenza, decided that it would pray for 'Mona Lucretia, widow of the Magnificent Piero di Cosimo de' Medici and her children and grandchildren and for her [late] husband and generally for all of her house'.[100] The fact that her name is mentioned first suggests that Lucrezia may have supported the confraternity in some way, although the record for that year is missing.[101] The prior of San Friano gave Lucrezia a detailed account of the secret electoral process for those deputised to revise the statutes of 'your confraternity of San Giovanni Baptista'.[102] The exact meaning of the term 'your confraternity' is open to interpretation, but at the very least this letter's content suggests that she was vitally interested in this confraternity's electoral and other affairs and wished to be kept informed. (This may be the company near the Medici palace of San Giovanni Battista detto Scalzo, opposite to which, its sixteenth century chronicle recorded, Lucrezia owned a small garden.[103]) A certain Messer Domenico heaped praise on her and the whole Medici family in a letter telling her that he had accepted an office in a confraternity of San Giovanni, which may well have been the confraternity under discussion.[104] Lucrezia obviously had the ability to influence the electoral processes of these confraternities.

So despite her formal exclusion because of gender from the holding of public office or jobs, Lucrezia was expected to assist men to obtain such positions. An official at the court of the Duke of Milan wrote requesting that a faithful client of his be reinstated to the position of foreign notary to the *podestà* of Florence.[105] In a long letter of June 1472, Bernardo Boverelli, Captain of Marradi, told Lucrezia that after having received her letter recommending 'Massa di Piero... your great friend' he had released him from prison as a favour to her. Bernardo then asked that Lucrezia arrange for his client to be elected to office in the town of Peccioli the following Wednesday.[106] Roberto Cortesi asked Lucrezia to withdraw her nominee for an office in Prato and instead support him.[107] Francesco Dovizi was blunt in his request of July 1471 that 'by your mediation and Lorenzo's' he would like to be appointed to a position with the Vicar of San Giovanni that would be available at the beginning of August.[108] Finally, Bartolomeo Scala the Florentine Chancellor and Lorenzo's close associate, recommended Girolamo Barbiere for a position at the Merchant's Court (*Mercanzia*), 'because he says that you want to give it to someone who takes a young wife in order to perform an act of charity for that young woman'.[109] Scala's emphasis on the charitable benefit to Lucrezia of acceding to his request was certainly shrewd, designed to maximise the chances of his winning agreement from her. This was because Lucrezia's active involvement in obtaining offices and benefits for Medici clients in both the religious and the

governmental spheres was considered appropriate precisely because it was an act of charity.

Indeed, her reputation for charitable work was well known. Lorenzo reported in his tax declaration (*Catasto*) of 1480 that:

> Mona Lucrezia, my mother, herself has distributed a good sum of money for love of God, and especially all the returns [of the farm] of Fiesole, since my father verbally willed that the returns of Fiesole should be distributed for God, as it seemed [appropriate] to the said Mona Lucrezia while she was alive.[110]

This was certainly in accordance with Florence's Archbishop Antoninus's injunction to women on dispensing charity that it was a highly appropriate activity for widows to undertake as it mirrored the merciful and charitable qualities of the Virgin Mary and pious widows of the early Church.[111] It was particularly appropriate for these widows to provide charitable benefaction to poor women, especially widows and girls without dowries, as these were clearly the most visible of the 'deserving poor', and were the ones most at risk of dishonour and destitution without it.[112]

However, Lucrezia's charitable reputation was the object of some criticism. She was the maligned subject of a story in the collection of ribald tales concerning the life of the country priest, Arlotto de' Mainardi, known as the 'Piovano Arlotto'. Recent research has established that much of the detail described in these stories stands up to historical verification.[113] This tale, entitled 'A Witty Remark on Holy Charity', described a visit by the Piovano Arlotto to Lucrezia, during which a poor shoemaker who required a dowry for his daughter interrupted them. Lucrezia instructed a Medici employee to give the man 16 lire. She then told the Piovano about other charitable donations, 'for the love of God', she had made recently towards poor girls' dowries, and that she had encouraged two other women to do the same. Lucrezia added that she could think of no better form of alms giving than to provide dowries for poor girls and liberating prisoners, especially those incarcerated for debt. The Piovano Arlotto agreed, but told Lucrezia that there was a better method of charity. After rebuking her for then laughing at him, the Piovano described this superior form of alms giving: 'not to take the property of others, nor the toil or the sweat of anyone [for granted], particularly of poor people'.[114] This oblique but unambiguous criticism of Lucrezia's lack of appropriate humility was also a critique of the Medici's supposed greed and exploitation of the poor through their money-lending practices.

This story raises the interesting question of whether, and to what extent, Lucrezia self-consciously constructed an image of herself as a pious and charitable matron in order both to further Medici interests and to negotiate a socially acceptable space for herself within the public arena. There is no definitive answer, but her engagement in charitable activity, self-conscious piety and devotion to the Virgin Mary would suggest that Lucrezia, like Lorenzo, was not unaware of the crucial importance of carefully fashioning one's public persona.[115]

Her provision of dowries to poor girls gave Lucrezia a rare opportunity formally to participate in a public committee. She was involved together with 15

other men and women, in a committee of the Florentine dowry fund (the *Monte delle doti*) which oversaw a 2000 florin bequest by Giovanni Borromei for the dowering of poor girls. Each member recommended suitable candidates. The one surviving register, from April 1477 to February 1478, indicates that Lucrezia sat on this committee with Giovanni's widow, Monna Antonia, a certain Monna Beatrice, two abbesses from the Benedictine convent of Le Murate and the Franciscan convent of Foligno respectively, and certain officials from the *Monte delle doti*, including such eminent Florentines as Niccolò Capponi and Averardo Salviati.[116] She put forward the names of two girls and the other women nominated a similar number, but were outnumbered by the bequests of the men, who made up the majority of the committee.[117] It was extremely unusual for women to be involved in public committees, a quintessential element of Florence's system of government. It must be admitted that we do not know if the people involved ever physically met together as a group, since societal convention would have severely limited the opportunities for the men and women (particularly nuns) to mix together without censure. Nonetheless, the Committee's charter to dispense dowries to poor girls provided exceptional circumstances which enabled the women concerned, together with certain other men, to be involved in this otherwise exclusively male domain.[118]

More usually, Lucrezia received requests for dowry assistance. Francesco Fracassini, her factor at the Medici country estate of Cafaggiolo, wrote several times concerning the dowries of poor girls.[119] Fracassini emphasised the reliance of the poor on Lucrezia's merciful and charitable nature to dower their female relatives, describing one supplicant asking for such assistance as someone who 'comes for grace and mercy to the fountain, to the universal hope of poor peasant men and women...'.[120] The Bishop of Cortona appealed to Lucrezia to recommend one Giovanni Amidei to the *podestà* of his city. He emphasised that Giovanni was '... poor with six grown daughters and without a dowry', and did not deserve to be wronged.[121] And in October 1476, Ginevra Alessandri told Lorenzo that she wanted the proceeds of a farm that his mother was to purchase from a certain widow to be used 'in alms or to marry girls off'.[122]

Poor women, especially widows, requiring assistance and recommendation appealed to Lucrezia. Her role as an intercessor with Lorenzo was useful here. Antonia Malaspina de' Torelli pleaded with Lucrezia 'for love of God and out of compassion for my poverty' to intercede with Lorenzo, to whom she had also spoken, to ensure that her dowry of 2000 ducats was returned.[123] Others also appealed to her piety and charitable nature. One poor widow, for example, begged Lucrezia 'for the love of God' to recommend her to the Archbishop, who had demanded she return some land she had previously rented in perpetuity from the hospital of San Giovanni Battista. This Antonia told her that if forced to leave, she would have to seek shelter in that hospital.[124] Sandra Fantone also used this language when she recommended herself to Lucrezia, 'for the love of God', asking to borrow some money and linen so that she could go to Pisa with her five starving children and find work.[125] Ghostanza di Bernardo de' Medici summed up the attitude of many when she wrote to thank Lucrezia for helping her and her children and specifically referred to 'your humanity'.[126]

The release of prisoners was a significant charitable act. Lucrezia did in fact receive a number of letters from male prisoners in the communal prison (the *Stinche*).[127] One man, for example, explained that he had not been to see her 'because I am in prison [... and my children] are abandoned'.[128] Two men from Milan wrote from the *Stinche* saying that they had no money.[129] Lucrezia also received letters from men imprisoned for more serious offences. Bartolomeo Rivano had been incarcerated in the fort of Certaldo for 244 days and was desperate for Lucrezia to seek his release.[130] In December 1474, the Sienese authorities held Piero di Matteo, called Saccho, for the murder of a Florentine exile. Lorenzo wrote on Piero's behalf recommending him as 'our very poor Florentine'.[131] A week later, Piero was still in prison, and wrote to both Lorenzo and Lucrezia on the same day, asking her to persuade Lorenzo to write again, which he did but without any apparent success.[132] Neri Fiorvanti emphasised that providing for his release from the *Stinche* would be an act 'for the love of God and of the glorious Virgin Mary', a motive that Lucrezia would have found highly appealing and appropriate.[133]

Charitable benefaction and support for the Church and its various hospitals, convents and monasteries was a major theme of Lucrezia's correspondence. Florence and its territories had several hospitals for the poor, orphaned, abandoned, sick, and indigent.[134] Lucrezia was reputed to have visited the major Florentine hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, which was appropriately dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to feed the sick.[135] She was also involved in 'discussions' regarding two women in the foundling hospital of the *Innocenti*, although the reasons for these discussions are not given.[136] Lucrezia received letters regarding the administrative and economic problems of the hospitals. Fra Paolo Lucensi from Pistoia, wrote with concerns regarding the management of the *Ceppo*, a charitable foundation for the poor, and, after referring to Lucrezia's reputation for alms-giving, he asked her 'to arrange that this hospital be run in the same way as the Foundation of S. Jacopo in Pistoia is managed'.[137] Lucrezia was advised by the abbot of San Michele, who was responsible for Pisa's largest hospital, which he referred to as 'the hospital of Your Magnificence', that its doctor had been excommunicated and that the hospital was experiencing financial troubles.[138] This wording clearly linked Lucrezia to the hospital, implying a responsibility on her part to perform acts of charity on its behalf.

Lucrezia's reputation for caring for the sick was exemplified by her frequent donations to the Florentine convalescent hospital of San Paolo, for which an account book documenting her donations between late 1477 and 1480 has survived.[139] She gave 200 lire to the hospital on the 5th of December 1477, for example, via an agent.[140] Lucrezia had donated several smaller amounts of money to San Paolo over the previous three weeks, the largest of which was 23 lire.[141] On several occasions in 1478 and 1480, she passed on amounts of money to the hospital via her Pisan factor, Giovanni di Pace.[142] Finally, in the spring of 1480, while at Bagno a Morbo, she sent clothes, linen, and grain to San Paolo.[143] Here, Lucrezia was not only acting as a charitable benefactor but also, through the provision of linens, clothes, and foodstuffs, as a mother of those in need.

It was in her role as a charitable benefactor and pious matron that the nuns most frequently called upon her. They emphasised their poverty and their reliance on Lucrezia's mercy, humanity, kindness, and charity. 'We have recourse to Your Magnificence, font of mercy ... we are in great need, ... we do not have any other hope left other than your humanity', wrote a group of nuns appealing for grain.[144] In October 1474, the nuns of St Agostino in Pisa referred to 'your kindness and charity' when they acknowledged her visit to ascertain their needs and then asked Lucrezia to provide them with a certain type of cloth.[145] A fortnight after this letter one of her factors in Pisa, Antonio Spina, wrote and told Lucrezia that he had visited the convent and would obtain the cloth the next day and have one garment made up for each of the 26 women, assuring her that she could be sure that it would be an act of 'perfect charity'.[146] He added that he was going also to the convent of San Domenico the next day to ascertain their needs.[147] Lucrezia also paid the tax on this cloth for the nuns of St Agostino.[148] In addition, she donated alms regularly to various convents for the feasts of Easter, All Souls Day, and Christmas.[149] Certain that Lucrezia would accede to any request in the name of charity, nuns were not slow to remind their benefactor of her previous charitable offerings to pay for wax or a customs duty or to make a donation for a convent's feast day.[150] Perfect charity required continuous repetition.

Clarice Orsini's Roman relatives expected to benefit from their marriage alliance or *parentado* with the Medici through the receipt of offices, financial assistance and other benefits. Maddalena Orsini wrote to Lorenzo in February 1469, addressing him as: 'Magnificent Sir and like a son to me ...', and recommending the son of a friend.[151] On another occasion, she wrote asking Lorenzo if he, or his father, who had recently returned from Milan, had any information about 'Johnanes Lodovico and all his brothers', who had been taken hostage.[152] Lorenzo obtained the archbishopric of Florence for Clarice's brother, Rinaldo, and tried without cease to obtain a cardinal's hat for him until ambitions for his own son, Giovanni, took precedence during the 1480s.[153] Lorenzo also assisted Clarice's numerous relatives on several other occasions. In 1470, he wrote to the Duke of Milan, requesting that he employ Organtino Orsini as a mercenary soldier, as he felt it would be too difficult to get the Florentine Government to agree to employ him. Lorenzo was very happy with the duke's affirmative reply.[154] Four years later, he arranged for the marriage of one of the daughters of Clarice's sister, Aurante.[155] Finally, in late 1481, Lorenzo told the Florentine ambassador to Naples, Pier Filippo Pandolfini, that he wanted to obtain a Neapolitan benefice for Aurante's son Latino, who already had several Tuscan benefices and was a canon in the Florentine cathedral.[156] A month later, Lorenzo told Pandolfini that 'Clarice thanks you for your diligence in this matter'.[157]

The Orsini also wrote letters to Clarice requesting that she use her position in Florence to assist her natal family. Her brother Rinaldo wrote a few weeks after her marriage offering to help Lorenzo, Clarice and 'all your house' if they needed anything.[158] And in return for his offer of service, he wished Clarice to ensure that a client of his who was coming to Florence would be well received by Piero and Lorenzo: 'because for love of us do him every favour'.[159] Rinaldo made several other requests of Clarice and Lorenzo. In August 1472, he complained about taxes

that had been imposed upon the clergy. He had written a letter about it to Lorenzo, who, according to Rinaldo, did not seem to think it a very important issue, and so he asked his sister to stress the urgency of the situation to her husband.[160] On other occasions Rinaldo was more explicit. He noted in a letter to Clarice in January 1477 that Lorenzo had enabled a notary, whom she recommended, to be made eligible for, and subsequently elected as, a 'notary for the Magnificent Florentine Signoria...'.[161] Consequently, Rinaldo now wished a favour for a certain 'Ser Michele, our captain, who wishes to enter the company of priests...'.[162] He told Clarice a month later that: 'Messer Bartolomeo Calvo, a Spaniard, will come to see you. He requires his need to be recommended to the Magnificent Lorenzo'.[163]

Other family members also frequently requested Clarice to put their various cases for favours before her husband. In 1472, Maddalena wrote:

> Recently, we have written to Lorenzo a letter in support and in favour of Girolamo di Zarzana concerning a benefice which the lord Chamberlain has conferred upon him; it seems another person has raised a great controversy with the said Girolamo. Therefore, I beg you urgently, out of respect for us, that you keep frequently recommending the said Girolamo to Lorenzo, for which we would be most grateful.[164]

Here again, her Orsini relatives are using Clarice as an additional means of influencing Lorenzo to accede to their requests. Sometimes it appears that Clarice was the first port of call for the Orsini anxious to benefit themselves, their relatives or clients by their *parentado* with the Medici. Virginio Orsini asked her to recommend to Lorenzo that he be paid 30 ducats, adding that it would be a small expense for the Florentine *Signoria*.[165] Petroangelo Orsini opened his letter to Clarice of September 1474, by telling her about his promise to provide his daughter with a dowry of 2,000 ducats and the problems he was having fulfilling that promise. '[A]nd in order to regain my lost honour, I want the Magnificent Lorenzo to lend me two hundred and fifty ducats, which I promise to return within a year etc.'[166] A female relative of Clarice's wrote from a more altruistic viewpoint. She wanted an Augustinian friar, who was her spiritual director, currently preaching in the afternoon in the Florentine cathedral during Lent, to be allowed also to preach in the morning and for Lorenzo to arrange it.[167] Cosimo Orsini wrote to Clarice on behalf of his client, Messer Cherubino, who had been given patronage rights over the parish church of San Martino at Palaia in the Pisan countryside (the *contado*) by the pope. In turn, this gave him overlordship of the men of the Palaia fort. These men, however, would not accept the situation. Therefore the letter writer wanted to resolve the matter, 'with your favour', by her arranging with Lorenzo that 'he should be pleased to write to these men', telling them to consent.[168]

Orsini relatives and clients sent Clarice several requests relating to the position of the magistrate and chief judicial official of Florence (*podestà*).[169] This position was a highly influential one that was annually filled by someone from outside the city. For example, among the many Orsini who wrote regarding the office of the *podestà*, we find Petroangelo Orsini who wrote to Clarice twice in July and August 1469, saying that Napoleone Orsini had written to Piero on behalf of a Messer Stefani who wanted to be *podestà* of Florence.[170] Petroangelo was so determined

for this Orsini client to get the vacant position of *podestà* that he told Clarice: 'I am writing to Piero, Pierfrancesco [de' Medici], Guglielmo de' Pazzi [Clarice's brother in law], Giovanni Tornabuoni [Lucrezia's brother], Bernardo Rucellai [Clarice's brother in law] and to many others'.[171] The Orsini-Medici alliance thus provided the members of the Orsini family, their clients and friends access not only to Piero and Lorenzo de' Medici, but also to other male Medici relatives. This was particularly useful for a Roman family wanting access to people or positions of influence within Florence. As Lorenzo's wife, Clarice was able to provide this link both directly and indirectly.

All of these letters from the Orsini provide an excellent example of how a patronage chain involving Clarice should work. The first link is the client or friend of an Orsini relative, who speaks to or writes to that person with a request for assistance. The Orsini in question writes to Clarice, who then speaks to Lorenzo, who, in turn, it is expected, takes action to resolve the issue. Clearly, Clarice's link in this patronage chain as an intercessor with her husband is a pivotal one. Often we do not know the outcome of these requests, but this is not a crucial factor in understanding Clarice's position in the patronage process. The expectation of Orsini relatives and of their clients of Clarice's ability to intercede successfully for them is the most useful indicator of her position of influence with Lorenzo. It can be assumed that Clarice did have a fair rate of success, otherwise her relatives would have appealed either exclusively to Lorenzo or, possibly, to the other members of the Medici family for assistance.

The surviving *Protocolli del carteggio,* or registers of letters sent out by Lorenzo's secretaries, reveal some written at Clarice Orsini's request. Lorenzo, for example, asked Giovanni Tornabuoni to pay the archbishop, Rinaldo Orsini, 200 ducats 'by order of Madonna Clarice'.[172] One letter was sent '[t]o the Vicar of Poppi, for a friend of Clarice'.[173] Another went '[t]o the Bargello, concerning the safety of a friend of Madonna Clarice'.[174]

To be an effective patron, Clarice required accurate information on events and happenings that could affect Florence and/or the Medici. Clarice's lack of relatives in Florence meant that she particularly relied on information and assistance from Medici employees and friends. For example, Clarice was friendly with Luigi Pulci. He escorted her to Rome in 1472, and occasionally conferred with her when Lorenzo was not about.[175] Despite their quarrel in 1479, Clarice's relationship with Angelo Poliziano was not always so bitter. He was one of a number of Medici employees who kept her informed of what Lorenzo was doing and of major events that could affect him. Poliziano described to Clarice both Lorenzo's hunting expedition in 1475 and his trip to San Miniato during Lent in 1476.[176] Lorenzo's secretaries also performed this role for her as part of their duties and they did not merely report on his comings and goings but also about news and events of wider political and military import that could affect Florence and the Medici.[177] In July 1484, Bernardo Dovizi told Clarice about troop movements, meetings of leading citizens to discuss the military campaign in Lombardy [*Consulte e Pratiche*], and the appearance of a comet.[178] Niccolò Michelozzi, another Medici secretary and a Laurentian intimate, was also a friend of Clarice's, and she continually asked him for news of Lorenzo, her family and events in Florence.[179] She wrote in May 1472:

'And your letter pleased me a lot ... especially the prudence you used in advising me of the news from over there [Florence]'.[180] Clarice also wanted news from him about the progress of the Pazzi war and of the plague.[181] She did not necessarily accept information she received uncritically. For example, Clarice did not hesitate to advise Niccolò, in August 1478, of her scepticism about the news she had recently received concerning his agreement to appoint a certain ser Roberto as a Captain as well as news concerning Genoa's accord with Milan.[182] Other informants had more specific duties. Filippo Redditi, writing in July 1484 to Clarice, assured her that 'Whatever happens in Rome, I will advise Your Magnificence, to whom I recommend myself'.[183] He included discussion of a battle between rival families and items of a political or military nature in the letter.[184] This was an opportunity to return the favour to Clarice and Lorenzo, whom, in an earlier letter, he had named as his protectors.[185]

Clarice called Niccolò Michelozzi her '[d]earest friend'.[186] To their friendship, and his general role as informant and secretary to the Medici, one could add Michelozzi's duty, during the 1480s, of carrying out Clarice's requests to assist Medici clients. 'And recommend me often to Lorenzo to whom you should also recommend the business of Marchese Lionardo del Soldo', she wrote on the 13th of July 1480.[187] A month later, Clarice insisted that Niccolò aid the bearer of her letter and speak to the Gonfaloniere (head of the Florentine republic) about this man's problem, which she would like to expedite. Clarice told him that: 'It will also be your job to recommend him to whoever can help him in a similar way'.[188] These letters, which were usually sent from one of the Medici estates or from the baths at Volterra, mainly concerned poor locals, including clerics and those who were Medici servants or partisans.[189] Clarice, for example, recommended the parish priest from Cornachiaio, who needed several favours from the new officials of the *Otto di Guardia* or Committee on Security, because soldiers who had billeted themselves with him were apparently over-staying their welcome. 'I ask you be content to speak of it to them, [the *Otto di Guardia*], on his behalf, I recommend him...'.[190] She recommended the Prior of the Servites to Michelozzi because he needed help with the tax officials responsible for a forced loan, Clarice also noting that the Servites were 'ours'.[191] Finally, she recommended a worker at the Baths near Volterra as most needy, 'because he is a peasant and has no one on his side.... Treat this as if it were our affair...'.[192] Clarice Orsini may often have been far from Florence, but she was well informed about current events and dispensed patronage to local Medici clients, understanding fully what was required of her as a patron.

Maddalena Cibo's patronage activities in Rome after her marriage in 1488 mirrored those of both her mother and grandmother, but her familial connection to Pope Innocent VIII gave Maddalena increased scope for action. The surviving correspondence between 1490 and 1494, with her father and elder brother, Piero, illustrates the importance of Maddelena's role as an intermediary for those in Rome wishing to access the benefits of Medici patronage. In traditional fashion, her clients were often poor women whom Maddalena knew well as neighbours, friends or employees. 'Agnoletta, wife of Ser Giovanni da Pescia is my neighbour and familiar here ... a girl so worthy and much loved by me ... as a sister', she explained to Lorenzo, recommending this woman's widowed mother to him,

because she was about to be unjustifiably evicted from her home.[193] Two peasants who were 'close relatives of my wet nurse' were about to lose the farm that they rented from the Friars of Santo Spirito and Maddalena asked her brother to see that it did not happen.[194] On another occasion, she recommended to Piero a priest who was 'a very great friend of mine', and in dispute with certain officials.[195] She recommended to Lorenzo a young man who had stayed in her house for a benefice. In this instance, Maddalena had been specifically asked by her husband to recommend him to her father.[196] She was a conduit for people such as her husband, Francesco Cibo, who could write directly to Lorenzo himself if he wished, but knew that pleas from his beloved daughter had the most chance of success.

Maddalena's access to Pope Innocent could benefit loyal Medici employees. Matteo Franco, who acted as both Clarice's and Maddalena's chamberlain in Rome, informed Lorenzo's secretary, Piero Dovizi:

> In sum, I ask that you arrange that Lorenzo write to Rome to the ambassador in my favour, because *so Madonna [Maddalena] writes to the pope*; that is, that you organise that the ambassador arranges with the pope that the parish church of San Donato in Poggio which is about to be vacated is reserved for M. Matteo Franco etc' [my emphasis].[197]

After Lorenzo's death in April 1492, Maddelena continued to seek assistance for clients from Piero. His own letter book indicates that he received and acted upon such requests.[198] They were also chiefly concerned with the poor and the need to be charitable towards them.

> My Piero, I recommended to you, several days ago, one of my poor people, to whom I had wished to provide alms because of her poverty. I had arranged that she should have, for one of her sons, a position as a soldier.... Again, I ask you please organise [it] for me... I beg you earnestly so to console me because it is the greatest charity.[199]

As another act of charity, Maddalena recommended a woman whose husband had deserted her.[200]

Maddelena, like other members of the Medici family, understood that requests from friends for assistance should be met if they were to maintain support for their rule. A certain Michelangelo needed no introduction other than that he was 'as you know, a man of good family and both he and his [family] are very old friends of our House...'.[201] Promises made by her father must also be honoured.[202] And, of course, assisting an employee of the Medici bank would bring Piero 'profit and honour'.[203]

Competing demands on the Medici for offices, and indeed the priority given to the various requests by members of the Medici family themselves for favours, meant that Maddalena was sometimes prevented from benefiting loyal friends and employees. Even Matteo Franco found it difficult to obtain the vacant canonry in the Florentine Cathedral upon Carlo de' Medici's death in May 1492, despite his own and Maddalena's best efforts, because Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici wanted it.[204] She wrote exasperatedly in February 1494 concerning another Matteo about

whom Maddelena had written to Piero three times previously. Her client had not received command of a new citadel at Poggio Imperiale as requested. This was embarrassing for Maddalena because it damaged her reputation with the citizens of Siena, who would assume that she had 'little authority with you'.[205] This was no small problem in a society in which honour and reputation were literally considered dearer than life itself, as one contemporary put it: 'life without honor is a living death'.[206] So patrons who could not successfully meet the needs of their clients had little influence or importance. In a letter to Piero about the obtaining of a safe conduct for her husband, Maddalena, in a postscript, underscored the importance for her reputation that clients were happy with the service they received.

> If I weary your head too much with letters of recommendation, for this one and that one, I ask you to please excuse me, because I am not able to rid myself of them, and I beg you to speak nicely to those you do not wish to serve, so that I do not lose my small reputation.[207]

Honour and reputation were vital and Maddelena was aware that patrons' influence with clients and others depended on their being willing and able successfully to recommend supplicants.[208] Indeed, Piero de' Medici may not have been forcibly removed from power and exiled in November 1494 if he had taken heed of his responsibilities as a patron to satisfy worthy clients' requests, as seriously as his sister, Maddalena, and other women in the Medici family obviously did.[209]

Image Making and Remembrance

Because of the importance of one's reputation to the Florentines, contemporary and near-contemporary characterisations of the Medici women can give us some sense of how successfully they were able to exercise power as influential patrons in the first 60 years of the family's rule. Such representations and acts of memorialisation can also provide us with valuable clues as to the longer-term place and importance of these Medici women in the collective memory and image making of their descendents as well as the reasons for it.

Cosimo de' Medici was declared to be the 'Father of his Country' by the Florentine government shortly after his death in August 1464 and his son, Piero, received a large number of formal letters of consolation including one from Pope Pius II.[210] On the other hand, despite her position of authority within the Bardi and Medici families, Contessina's death some time between September 26 and October 25 1473, received no such public announcement or such letters from politically important allies to her relatives.[211] Instead two letters of consolation were sent to Lucrezia by far less prestigious mourners. One was from Luigi Pulci, a maternal relative of Contessina's, who wrote to his patron on the 26th of October saying: 'I returned and did not find Monna Contessina here [Florence] therefore I am very unhappy. I would at least have liked to have seen her.'[212] A fortnight later Elizabetta Gaetani, abbess of the Pisan convent of San Matteo and a frequent

correspondent, began a letter to Lucrezia with words of consolation over the death of her mother in law.[213] It is probable that because her activities as a patron only began when she was widowed, Contessina did not engage in such activities for long enough to build up a public reputation as a powerful patron as Lucrezia was able to do because she began such activities as a mature wife.

In fact, Lucrezia's contemporary reputation as an important patron was acknowledged while Piero was still alive. He wrote to her while she was ill and convalescing at Bagno a Morbo in late 1467, telling his wife that 'the prayers that have been said and are said in the appointed places are in part by those you know and by those that you do not know'.[214] A few weeks earlier, Piero placed silver ex-voto images of Lucrezia and Lorenzo in the church of SS Annunziata, on the left of the altar. This gift was made in fulfilment of a vow Lucrezia had made during an earlier illness, which also included a promise to dispense 4,000 florins worth of alms.[215] In 1471, the abbot of Valdecastro requested alms from Lucrezia, suggesting that she continue her devotion to the shrine of St Romualdo, which had begun during her illness in 1467, since this saint 'has achieved your liberation'.[216] (This saint was also the founder of the Camaldoli hermitage to which Piero and Lucrezia had made donations in 1463.[217]) The placing of votive images of Lucrezia in churches, including Florence's cathedral, continued into her widowhood, and may have been part of the Medici family's increasing sacralisation by their Florentine supporters.[218] Interestingly, in 1494, shortly after the expulsion of the Medici, the image of Lorenzo was removed from the church of SS Annunziata, while Lucrezia's was not.[219] The government of the day obviously did not consider the reverential image of Lucrezia, in contrast to that of Lorenzo, to be politically significant or a focus for those loyal to the previous regime. It is clear that Lucrezia's strict contemporaries would not have held such a view of her.

The extent of her contemporary reputation is further illustrated by the fact that Lucrezia's death after illness on March 25, 1482 invited much public comment and words of consolation to her son on his grievous loss. On the day of her death, Lorenzo sent a number of letters announcing his mother's passing to various allies in other Italian cities as well as to ambassadors, family members and important members of the Church in Florence.[220] His sending out of such letters to significant friends and allies of the Medici indicates how important her position and influence was in its own right to the success of the Medici regime.

Lucrezia's passing was also marked in a variety of other ways. It was noted in two contemporary chronicles, lamented by the burlesque poet Bernardo Bellincioni in a sonnet and letters of consolation and eulogies to mark the occasion were sent to her son.[221] Guidantonio Vespucci, for example, wrote to him four days after her death, telling Lorenzo that he had better look out for his enemies: 'now that your mother is not here to protect you anymore ... as she used to do'.[222] A few weeks later Francesco da Castiglione, a canon in the Medici parish church of San Lorenzo, went further and reminded Lorenzo that his mother was often better at dealing with Medici clients than he was himself.

> [S]ometimes her actions ... were more prudent than yours. Because you only attend to the great things and forget the lesser.... She advised the most important people as well

as the magistrates concerning matters of grave importance. And the most humble people were admitted to her presence and all of them left happy and content. But you know all this better than I, as you did nothing without consulting her, as she did nothing without asking your opinion.[223]

This passage highlights not only Lucrezia's political skill and acumen, but also her special relationship with the poor and humble. Her and Lorenzo's relationship was seen here as being one of equal partners, in a manner akin to that of the Virgin Mary with her son, Jesus. It is not surprising, then, that Lorenzo linked the commemorative masses for his mother's soul, which began in November 1482, with the two Marian feasts of her Nativity and the Visitation.[224]

In his twenty-eighth and final *canto* of the *Morgante* which was completed in 1483, Luigi Pulci specifically described Lucrezia in Marian terms, as being his 'shield' (stanza 131), 'almost perfect' (stanza 132), and as someone who, in heaven, had been married to God (stanza 134), and can therefore fight for him there if the *Morgante* is criticised (stanza 136).[225] Lucrezia became in death an intercessor in heaven with both God and Mary, as she was in life with Piero and Lorenzo.

Pulci does not explicitly sanctify her, but an anonymous poet, writing shortly after her death, did. He began by praising Lucrezia in fairly conventional terms, as 'font of charity, compassionate woman,/kind, knowledgeable, honourable and gracious', and declared to God that 'for her good works beatify her'.[226] This was the first part of the canonisation process. The poet continued his case by praising her work with the poor, and by emphasising that her actions were a model for others wishing to enter paradise.[227] In the final stanza, the poet declared: 'I say saint and I want to offer proof.'[228] This 'proof' was Lucrezia's visiting the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova during which, he says, she gave eggs and meat to the sick, who wished to kiss her hand.[229] The anonymous poet argued: 'Thus this is a good and true proof,/ together with the many other good deeds that she has had done'.[230] He ended the poem by openly declaring that she was 'Saint Lucrezia, [now] included amongst the litanies'.[231] This sanctification of Lucrezia was a metaphor for her exemplary conduct and activities. Its use is highly indicative of contemporary attitudes to Lucrezia, her activities, and perhaps to her family. It has recently been suggested that after Guiliano di Lorenzo de' Medici's assassination in 1478, the Medici cultivated the notion that they were the head of a 'holy government', as one contemporary put it, and Lorenzo himself was even described as 'a true and living god'.[232] In this context, the posthumous description of Lucrezia as a saint fits in well with the tendency of some contemporaries to portray the Medici as Florence's holy family.

A person's portrait was a visual form of commemoration and memorialisation, although not necessarily an exact likeness. Apart from a bust commissioned by her husband, there are known portraits of Lucrezia Tornabuoni: one in the Medici household, dating from her widowhood, and one in the house of her brother, Giovanni. She most probably also appeared in the fresco cycle of the Tornabuoni chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella, which was commissioned by Giovanni and painted by Domenico Ghirlandaio.[233] The portrait of Lucrezia

commissioned by Giovanni represents her as a mature woman dressed simply and acting as a pious exemplar[234] (See Fig. 2.1). In the Ghirlandaio fresco she could be represented in each of the three birth scenes depicted therein, as an older widow at the rear of a group of women. First, in *The Visitation,* second as the older widow at the rear of a group of three women visiting the new mother in *The Birth of St John the Baptist* (See Fig. 2.2.) and third, she may appear in *The Birth of the Virgin*, at the rear of a group of women near the stairs.[235] Her patronage of a chapel dedicated to *The Visitation* and Lucrezia's well-known devotion to St John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary suggests that a commemoration of his older sister in such a way in this fresco cycle by Giovanni Tornabuoni was highly likely.[236] Lorenzo's own desire for a portrait attests to his especial high regard for her, as it was unusual to commission a separate portrait of one's mother.[237] These visual images of her reinforce Lucrezia's pious reputation and testify to her central place in the Tornabuoni and Medici families, both during her lifetime and in the respective families' collective memories as a role model for future generations of their women.

Lucrezia was also praised in the decades after her death by two sixteenth century biographers of two famous Medici men. Niccolò Valori, who wrote a biography of Lorenzo, and Paolo Giovio, biographer of her grandson, Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici (Pope Leo X), pointed to her exceptional attributes for a woman, in eloquence and virtue.[238] It was Lucrezia's image, both as a mother and as an intercessor as well as her reputation for sanctity, that enabled her to achieve what was beyond the reach of other women of her day, while she still conformed to conventional notions of acceptable female behaviour.

Medici supporters well into the sixteenth century memorialised Lucrezia, testifying to the strength and endurance of her reputation. An anonymous and undated account of Duke Cosimo's lineage began with Lucrezia Tornabuoni:

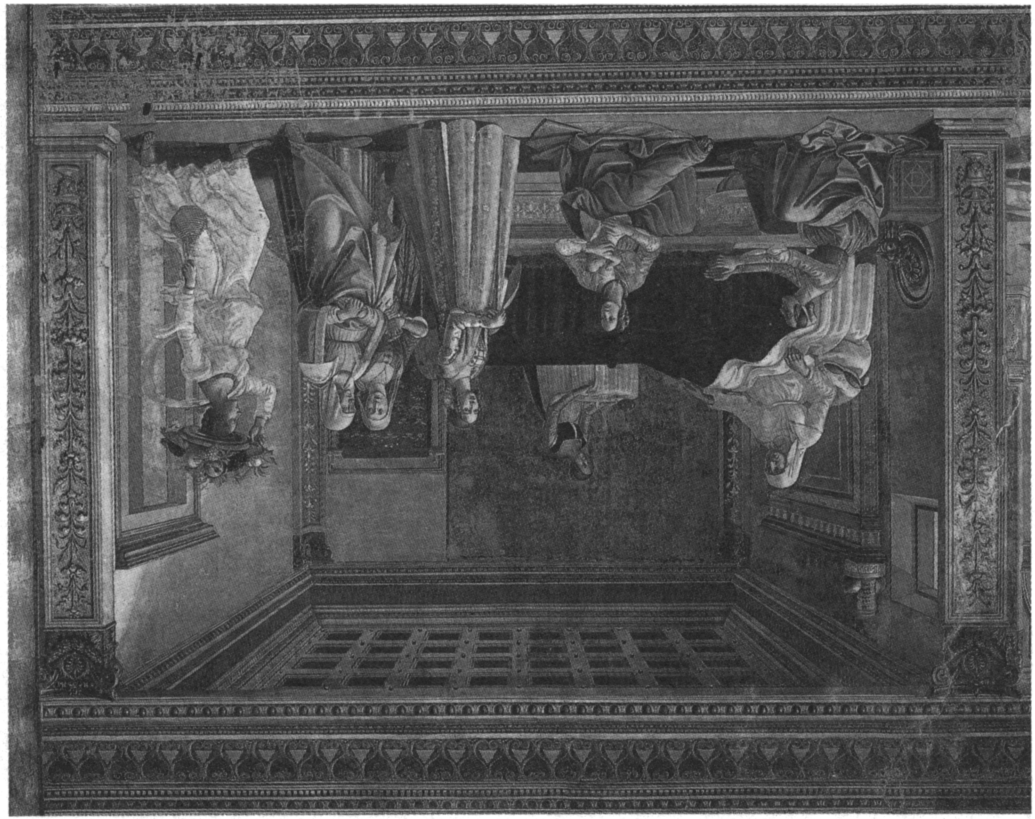
> Madonna Lucrezia, daughter of Francesco di Messer Simone de' Tornabuoni, previously Tornaquinci, died on the 25th of March 1482, was left a widow by Piero de' Medici, son of Cosimo, Father of the Country, on the 2nd of December 1469. She was mother of the Magnificent Lorenzo, father of Pope Leo X, and of Lucrezia Salviati married to Jacopo Salviati, [who was] mother of the Lady Maria, and grandmother of the most serene Grand Duke Cosimo I.[239]

Lucrezia had become, by virtue of her reputation as a mother and saint, a key element in the Medici's own story of their dynastic success as Florence's ruling family.

In contrast to Lucrezia's passing, Clarice Orsini's death in July 1488 was perceived as being of little immediate political importance. The Ferrarese ambassador neglected to inform his duke of her death until several days later, 'because it did not seem to me to be important enough'.[240] Several years later the Medici went to great pains to preserve Lorenzo's sculpture garden after their expulsion in late 1494 and were successfully able to reclaim it upon their return in 1512, while Clarice's neighbouring garden was not preserved.[241] However her marriage to Lorenzo may have sometimes been linked to the Medici's

congratulatory self-representations of their achievements. Increasingly after 1469, roses, which were an Orsini heraldic device, began to appear in Medici art, testifying to the dynastic and political importance attributed to this first Medici-Orsini alliance.[242] Clarice was also symbolically recognised and memorialised in 1514 when, at Cardinal Giulio di Giuliano di Piero de' Medici's investiture celebrations, she was portrayed on a float as a goddess standing between the gods of the Arno and the Tiber.[243] As a member of the noble and powerful Orsini, Clarice had enabled the Medici to forge new links with Rome and begin their ascendancy towards its most glittering prize — the papacy. Once the Medici achieved this in 1513, Clarice's own daughters and daughter in law were able to exercise power in both Florence and Rome from then on in an increasingly seigneurial manner that was unavailable to the earlier generation of Medici women.

2.1. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Lucrezia Tornabuoni*, c.1475, courtesy of Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art. Washington D.C.



2.2 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of St John the Baptist*, Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, c.1488, courtesy of Scala Art Resource, Florence

Notes

[1] Pulci (1962), p. 914, canto 28, stanza 134. 'una donna famosa al secol nostro'.

[2] The literature concerning Italian Renaissance patronage is discussed in the introduction to Kent & Simons (1987), pp. 1-21. Articles therein specifically dealing with the Medici are those by D. Kent, R. Gaston and L. Polizzotto. See also among many possible studies, Kent, (1978), Part I; A. Molho, 'Patronage and the State in Early Modern Europe', in A. Maczak (ed.) *Klientelsysteme in Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich: R. Oldenburg, 1988), pp. 233-242; Kent (1993); F.W. Kent, '"Un paradiso habitato da diavoli": Ties of Loyalty and Patronage in the Society of Medicean Florence', in A. Benvenuti et al. (ed.) *Le radici cristiane di Firenze* (Florence: Alinea, 1994), pp. 183-210; F.W. Kent, 'Individuals and Families as Patrons of Culture in Quattrocento Florence', in A. Brown (ed.) *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 171-192, esp. pp. 176-182. For a slightly different view, see M.M. Bullard, 'Heroes and Their Workshops: Medici Patronage and the Problem of Shared Agency', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* **24** (2) (1994), pp. 179-198.

[3] On the importance of relatives, friends and neighbours in Florentine patronage relationships, see in particular C. Klapisch-Zuber, '"Kin, Friends and Neighbours": The Urban Territory of a Merchant Family in 1400', in Klapisch-Zuber (1985), pp. 68-93; Kent (1977a); Kent (1978), Part I; D.V. Kent & F.W. Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century* (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1982); N. Eckstein, *The District of the Green Dragon: Neighbourhood and Social Change in Renaissance Florence* (Florence: Olschki, 1995). Useful comparisons can be made with women in Venetian neighbourhoods, see D. Romano, *Patricians and Popolani in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 131-140; M. Chojnacka, *Working Women in Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 50-102. For an example of a particular patron-client relationship based on networks of friendship between a man of lower social origins (Bartolommeo Cederni) and the men of the influential Pandolfini family, see F.W. Kent & G. Corti (eds) *Bartolommeo Cederni and His Friends: Letters to an Obscure Florentine* (Florence: Olschki, 1991). On god parenthood, see C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Patroni celesti per bambini e bambine al momento del battesimo (Firenze, secc: xiv-xv)', in L. Ferrante, M. Palazzi & G. Pomata (eds) *Ragnatele di rapporti: patronage e reti di relazione nella storia delle donne* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1988), pp. 191-200; L. Haas, '"Il Mio Buono Compare": Choosing Godparents and the Uses of Baptismal Kinship in Renaissance Florence', *Journal of Social History* **29** (4) (1995), pp. 341-356. A useful discussion of political patronage and clientage in the broader European context is S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth Century France* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 3-39 and S. Kettering, 'The Historical Development of Political Clientism', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* **18** (3) (1988), pp. 419-447. On women's involvement as political patrons and clients in early modern England and France, see respectively B.J. Harris, 'Women and Politics in Early Tudor England', *The Historical Journal* **33** (2) (1990), pp. 259-281 and S. Kettering, 'The Patronage Power of Early French Noblewomen', *The Historical Journal* **32** (4) (1989), pp. 817-841.

[4] On this whole theme, see F.W. Kent, '"Be Rather Loved than Feared": Class Relations in Quattrocento Florence', in W.J. Connell (ed.) *Society & Individual in Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 13-50.

[5] On models of female involvement in the public arena during the Roman Republic, see T. Hillard, 'On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of Politically Active Women in the Late Roman Republic', in B. Garlick, S. Dixon & P. Allen (eds) *Stereotypes of Women in Power:*

Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views (Westport, Conn. & New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), pp. 37-64. For the Catholic model, see the references cited in the next note.

[6] On the Marian cult and its appeal from the twelfth century onwards, see M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Picador, 1976), esp. Part 4 (Mother) and Part 5 (Intercessor); P.S. Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image Attitude and Experience in Twelfth Century France* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1985), pp. 68-75; On the Virgin Mary as queen and patron saint in Italian cities, see D. Webb, 'Queen and Patron', in A.J. Duggan (ed.) *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997), pp. 205-222. On St Monica and the popularity of her cult in Renaissance Italy, see C.W. Atkinson, '"Your Servant, My Mother": the Figure of Saint Monica in the Ideology of Christian Motherhood', in C. Atkinson, C.H. Buchanan & M.R. Miles (eds) *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985 repr. 1987), pp. 139-172, esp. pp. 147-152, 163-164; C. Valone, 'Roman Matrons as Patrons: Various Views of the Cloister Wall' in Monson (1992), pp. 49-72, at p. 65.

[7] J. Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 74-75.

[8] Henderson (1994), p. 75; Wilson (1992).

[9] Kent (1993), pp. 279-313, esp. p. 279. 'gran maestro'; 'maestro della bottega'. See Strocchia (1992), p. 187, for her discussion of fictive kinship.

[10] On Cosimo de' Medici, see Brown (1992), ch.1. See now Dale Kent's forthcoming book, *Fathers & Friends: Patriarchy and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* which discusses Cosimo's emphasis on his intercessory function as a father and therefore as Florence's premier patron (personal communication with Dale Kent in September 2001). On Lorenzo de' Medici, see Kent (1993), p. 279.

[11] ASF MAP 17, 337, 10/9/1461. 'Lorenzo è uno buono garzone et volentieri si stanno mecho tutti quanti'. (All archival references are to the ASF unless otherwise indicated.)

[12] MAP 21, 236, 2/9/1471. 'a[m]basciadore ... alla Santità di Nostro Signore' ... 'Perché appresso il figliuolo [Lorenzo] non è miglior mezo che la madre, [l]o mando a voi'. Cited in part in Felice (1905a) p. 644 and in part in Pieraccini (1986) v. 1 p. 38. Contessina's correspondence with her Bardi relatives has recently been published. See now, O. Gori, 'Contessina moglie di Cosimo "il vecchio": lettere familiari', in *Scritti in onore di Girolamo Arnaldi* no ed. (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2001), pp. 233-259, which publishes the seven extant letters at pp. 251-255 with the letter referred to here published in full at pp. 254-255 (letter vii) and discussion of it at pp. 248-249. I was made aware of this article too late for the information in it to be utilised fully in this study.

[13] MAP 85,145, 16/4/1475 [sic]. 'Io ò scrit[t]o una lettera alla Magnificienza di Lorenzo'. 'Io mi rachomando a voi, e preghovi che ne diciate due parole cholla Magnificienza di Lorenzo'. As written, the date of this letter must be an error as Contessina died in late 1473. The five (5) was probably meant to be a three (3), that is, the letter should be dated 1473 not 1475.

[14] AB, I, B i, tomo i, 62^{r-v}, 18/11/1465. ' ...m'ànno detto gli ufficiali del monte che con la sicurtà loro tu poi venire et acordarti con queste tue gravezze et da lloro [sic] harai ogni piacere...'. The letter referred to here is published in full in Gori (2001), pp. 252-253 (letter iv) with discussion of it at pp. 244-245.

[15] MAP 106, 5, 31/8/1456.

[16] MAP 106, 5, 31/8/1456. 'Magnifica tanquam soror ammatissima mia'.

[17] MAP 106, 5, 31/8/1456.

[18] MAP 6, 585, 20/6/1461. 'Contessa Marsibalia'.

[19] See above, p. 48 for Ginevra's request of Barbara. She, too, frequented baths, see the reference by Chambers in the next note.

[20] D.S. Chambers, 'Spas in the Italian Renaissance', in M.A. di Cesare (ed.) *Reconsidering the Renaissance* (Binghamton, NY: MRTS, 1992), pp. 3-27; C.R. Mack, 'The Wanton Habits of Venus: Pleasure and Pain at the Renaissance Spa', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* **26** (2) (2000), pp. 257-276. Cf. the letter of a woman of lower social origins, Papera Cederni, to her son Bartolommeo, from the baths at Petriuolo. Published in Kent & Corti (1991), pp. 63-64, (letter 6, 7/5/1447).

[21] MAP 106, 7, 22/5/1455, 9, 161, 31/5/1455 and 106, 9, 21/10/1459. I have been unable to discover anything further about the identity of this woman.

[22] MAP 106, 9, 20/10/1459. 'vostra come minima sorella'.

[23] MAP 85,11, 13/12/1465. '[E] quando avete abizognar di qua [Lucca] per li vostri benivoli avete a commandare come madre'. 'vostro figl[i]uolo'.

[24] MAP 85, 21, 2/8/1478. 'quanto madre karissima'.

[25] On the obligation of patrons to reward their clients for good service, see Bullard (1994a), pp. 189-191.

[26] MAP 106, 13, 3/9/1461, 'Lorenzo Pandol[f]i del quale altra volta a bocha vi parllai'. 'Giovanni vostro'. 'che è donna troppo buona'.

[27] MAP 106, 5, 31/8/1456. '...al Magnifico mio compar[e], Cosimo'. V]i pregho gli lo voglate ricommandare strectemente et operare in tale forma che io intendo le mie intercessione havere havuto loco apresso la Magnificentia Vostra'.

[28] MAP 7, 122, 20/10/n. y. (before 1 August 1464).

[29] MAP 6, 736, n.d. (before Giovanni's death in 1463). 'Umilissamente ti priego tu adoperi con Giovanni tuo gli sia di piacere iscrivere dua versi ad Amdrea [sic] della Stufa, podestà di Prato, che Ser Lorenzo, prete in Sam [sic] Piero Magiore di Firenze, gli sia rachomandato e che gli sia di piacere prestarmi tanto favore per la corte sua che io [Ser Lorenzo] sia paghato di fiorini sesanta d'oro ò ad avere dal Ceppo di Francescho di Marcho [Datini] in Prato'.

[30] MAP 10, 432, 27/9/1462 (Pisan style), 1463 (modern style). '[...she is a] chugina di Piero e di Giovanni, e molto m'à preghato io la rachomandi a Piero e a Giovanni...'.

[31] ASMa, AG, 1085, 58, 3/1/1465/66. 'Io so male scrivere e peggio dectare e come donna scriverò alla Vostra Signoria'.

[32] ASMa, AG, 1085, 58, 3/1/1465/66, 'nostro compare'.

[33] ASMa, AG, 1085, 58, 3/1/1465/66, 'operate che il Conte Vanni abbia avenire costà'.

[34] ASMa, AG, 1085, 58, 3/1/1465/66. 'se di qua io potessi fare alchuna cosa che sia di vostra piacere ...'.

[35] A. Brown, 'Piero's Infirmity and Political Power' in Beyer & Boucher (1993), pp. 9-19.

[36] On the significance of Piero's bedroom as a place for informal political meetings, see B. Preyer, 'Planning for Visitors at Florentine Palaces', *Renaissance Studies* **12** (3) (1998), pp. 357-374, at p. 362.

[37] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 60-61, (Letter 10, 18/3/1465).

[38] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 61, (Letter 11, 19/4/1465). 'Parlai con Piero quanto mi commettesti, ... Tutto udì volenterissimo ...'.

[39] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 60. 'vostra minore sorella ...'.

[40] On Filippo's relationship with the Neapolitan Court, see H. Gregory, 'The Return of the Native: Filippo Strozzi and Medicean Politics', *Renaissance Quarterly* **38** (1) (1985), pp. 1-21.

[41] MAP 80, 7, 9/11/1467. 'Illustrissima madre'. 'benigissima madre', 'per misericordia'. 'Solamente lo padre Piero et voi ci potete aiutare'.

[42] MAP 28, 633, 30/10/1472. 'mihi tanquam mater honoranda etc. [... et] mia benefactrice'.

[43] MAP 14, 216, 21/7/1481. 'mater honorandissima'. 'allo honore et l'utile mio'. 'buono affectionatissimo amicho di casa vostra...'.

[44] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 102-103 (letter 56, 12/1/1471/2). 'Magnifica ac generosa tanquam mater honoranda etcetera'. 'ogni aiuto e favore'.
[45] Kent (1993), p. 281.
[46] MAP 85, 31, 7/1/1471/2. 'Reverendissima quanto madre etc. Perché... la vostra beningnità [sic] umanissima ... vi mando parecche trote. '[m]agnifica e generosa donna commare honoranda'.
[47] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 121-122 (letter 73, 18/9/1473). '[m]agnifica e generosa donna commare honoranda ... 'in vostro nome andai a uccellare, et quella pocha uccellagione ... mando a essa Vostra Magnificenza ...'.
[48] MAP 80, 45, 24/5/1477. '....certe cose come vedrà. Pregovi acceptate la mente mia più che il piccholo dono ... come era et è mio debito'.
[49] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 104-105 (letter 57, 12/2/1471/2), quotation at p. 104. 'La chagione di questa si è perché molte volte abiamo inteso da molti in voi regniare inverso delle povere persone miserichordia, però pigliamo sicurtà nella Magnificença Vostra, pregandovi che il simile usiate verso di noi, vostri schiavi e buoni servidori'.
[50] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 104 (letter 57, 12/2/1471/2).
[51] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 116-117 (letter 69, 12/7/1473). 'Il perché io e miei compagni vi ci racommandiamo e preghianvi in carità e per l'amore di Dio che voi faciatte una lemosina'.
[52] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 117.
[53] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 130-131 (letter 81, 25/4/1474).
[54] MAP 80, 131, 12/9/1477. 'per vostro mezo'.
[55] Cited in O. Muzzi, 'The Social Classes of Colle Valdesa and the Formation of Dominion (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)', in W.J. Connell & A. Zorzi (eds) *Florentine Tuscany: Structures and Practices of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 264-292, at p. 283.
[56] P.O. Kristeller refers to this document in his *Marsilio Ficino and His Work after Five Hundred Years* (Florence: Olschki, 1987), p. 160.
[57] Tornabuoni (1993), pp.126-127 (letter 77, 26/10/1473), quotation at p. 127. '...e oggi questo dì s'è conchiusa mediante la gratia di Dio e l'aiuto d'essa Vostra Magnificentia'.
[58] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 129-130 (letter 80, 24/1/1473/4), quotation at p. 129. 'Io non ho altro refugio né altro subsidio che la Magnificentia Vostra et ad voi ricorro a madre e signoria'.
[59] MAP 29, 745, 17/9/1473.
[60] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 138-139 (letter 90, 18/4/1475). 'Magnifica madonna mia, le humane et amorevoli lectere che Vostra Magnificentia a' dì passati mi scripse, me hanno quasi mezzo resuscitato da morte a vita.... Sono nel settimo anno del mio exilio, prego Vostra Magnificentia me habbi a mente, et porga la sua aiutrice mano alla mia fragil barchetta,et riducala in porto di salute'.
[61] MAP 85, 189, 12/3/1477/8. 'l'humanità che regna in la prefata Vostra Magnificentia'. Cf. MAP 80, 142, 25/6/n.y.
[62] MAP 85, 77, 22/2/1473/4. 'benefactrice unica ... altro refugio non ò che cotesta Magnifica Casa [Medici], vostra Magnificentia'.
[63] MAP 80,129, 25/4/1475. 'humanità'; 'mie povere fanciulle'; 'ricorrere alla benignità vostra.'
[64] MAP 80,129, 25/4/1475. 'pensate dove io mi truovo, et altro refugio che lla Magnificentia Vostra no[n] mi resta'.
[65] MAP 85, 219, 6/12/1478.
[66] MAP 85,190 4/3/1477/8. 'Io vi pregho charamente per l'amor di Dio quando vi pare mi raccomandiate a la Magnificenzia di Lorenzo vostro.... So bene ch'io no[n] merito d'aver gratia per lo errore comesso...per l'amor di Dio e di quat[t]ro figl[i]uoli ch'io ò e sono sanza

madre, dovete pensare come elle stanno; non potesti fare mag[g]iore limosina di fare le povere innocente figl[i]uole riabino il lor[o] povero padre'.

[67] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 134-135 (letter 85, 22/10/1474), quotation at p. 134. 'madonna pietosa de' poveri e maxime delle religiose'. See the comments by K.J.P. Lowe, (1993b), p. 62, and K. Lowe, 'Lorenzo's "Presence" at Churches, Convents, and Shrines in and Outside Florence,' in Mallett & Mann (1996), pp. 23-36. See now Justine Heazlewood, '"Letters are the Leaves, Prayers are the Fruit": Florentine Nuns in the City', (M.A. Thesis, Monash University, 1999). I am grateful to her for allowing me to cite her thesis. Piero and Lorenzo, of course, also patronised convents. See for example, F.W. Kent, 'Lorenzo de' Medici, Madonna Scolastica Rondinelli e la politica di mecinatisimo architettonico nell'convento delle Murate, Firenze, (1471/72)', in A. Esch & C.L. Frommel (eds) *Arte, committenza ed economia a Roma e nelle corte della Rinascimento (1420-1530)* (Rome: Einaudi, 1995), pp. 353-382.

[68] MAP 85, 221, 17/1/1479/80. 'madre nostra'. 'madre de' poveri [e] pietosa a tutti i miseri'. 'mediatrice col Lorenço'. Cf. MAP 85, 86, 1/5/1473, and MAP 36, 120, 5/2/1478/9 for other examples of Lucrezia being asked to intercede with Lorenzo.

[69] MAP 80,127, 30/11/1472 or 1476. 'madre e prottetora de' luoghi pietosi'.

[70] The letters are MAP 29, 313, 1/5/1473 (to Lorenzo); MAP 85, 86, 1/5/1473 (to Lucrezia); MAP 85, 87 1/5/1473 (to Clarice). These letters are analysed in Heazlewood (1999), pp. 151-153.

[71] MAP 29, 313, 1/5/1473. 'con sicurtà e come padre'.

[72] MAP 85, 86, 1/5/1473 (to Lucrezia) '...con sicurtà, vi preghiamo per lo honore di Dio vi vogliate intenpera[r]e che Lorenço vostro'; MAP 85, 87 1/5/1473 (to Clarice). 'Non vi sia grave persuadere al vostro sposo Lorenço ...'. The translations are from Heazlewood (1999), pp. 151-153.

[73] MAP 85, 218 3/12/1478.

[74] Cited in A. Gelli, 'Lorenzo de' Medici: Discorso', *Archivio Storico Italiano* ser 3, **17** (1873), p. 431 n. 9. The letter is MAP 26, 1361, (13/12/1478). 'sì ch'io vi prego che o per la sua provata fedeltà, o per compassione della madre, o per la sua dispozione, o *per la intercession mia* l'habbiate per raccomandato'.

[75] For these descriptions of Lorenzo, see Kent (1994), p. 209. 'Idi[o] vivo e vero'.

[76] D. Cortese, 'Noterelle Medicee: un epigramma per Simonetta Cattaneo e otto lettere di Claricia Orsini al Magnifico', in no ed. *Medioevo e Rinascimento veneto con altri studi in onore di Gino Lazzarini* v. 1 (Padua: Antenore, 1979), pp. 529-539, at pp. 535-536, quotation at p. 536. (letter 1, 30/8/1478). 'pur di Casa [Medici]'.

[77] MAP 37, 237, 18/4/1479. '[e]l nipote del piovano di San Giovanni ... mi prega che io i[n]terceda con voi'. MAP 37, 261 24/4/1479. 'è buono giovane'.

[78] Spedale di Santa Maria Nuova, 1254, fol. 102^{r}. 'nostra cosa'. 'per mio amore'.

[79] M. del Piazzo (ed.) *Protocolli del carteggio di Lorenzo de' Medici* (Florence: Olshcki, 1956), p. 393, records a letter from Lorenzo dated the 17th of April to Clarice's sister Aurante, in which he tells her that his son Piero is soon to leave Florence to fetch Alfonsina and Clarice.

[80] MAP 137, 544, 8/10/1492. 'Questa [cosa] con sicurtà e confidentia ricorò alla humanità vostra, perché più sicuro e fidato mezo nonn ò che essa...me chomanda alla Magnificentia di Pier de' Medici, vostro genero'.

[81] MAP 85,701, n.d. (before Nov. 1494).

[82] MAP 106,42, 12/9/1490. 'figliuola amatissima'. 'mia dolcissima Alfonsina'.

[83] MAP 106,42, 12/9/1490. 'Magnifica et principal donna di Toschana'.

[84] MAP 106, 42^{v}, 12/9/1490. 'Illustrissima Magnifica potente et nobile donna Madonna Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici...'.

[85] See Tornabuoni (1993), Appendix 1 for a complete inventory of Lucrezia's correspondence. The number of letters by nuns to Lucrezia compared to other Medici women of her era can be used as a unit of analysis. About 40 letters to Lucrezia survive from female religious while only four (4) letters from nuns to Clarice Orsini have survived.
[86] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 157-158 (letter 108, 7/6/1479), quotation at p. 157. 'per vostro amore'.
[87] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 106 (letter 59, 14/8/1472). 'ricevetti vostra lettera, et inmediate trassi Fantino di prigione ... et sono molto contento averne fatta la volontà vostra'.
[88] MAP 85, 199, 13/7/1477. 'una vostra parola diciate a' consoli dell'Arte della Lana'.
[89] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 136-137 (letter 88, 30/1/1474/5); MAP 80, 85, 12/6/1480; MAP 20, 702, 10/10/n.y., respectively.
[90] Letters dealing with tax relief are MAP 26, 2, 14/5/1470; MAP 85, 20, 10/1/1471/2 and from a priest wrongly imprisoned, MAP 22, 393, received 18/12/1476 in Florence.
[91] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 108 (letter 61, 20/9/1472). 'che questa causa è mia e io sono electo'.
[92] MAP 26, 231, 7/7/1479.
[93] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 117-119 (letter 70, 13/7/1473), quotation at p. 117. '[k]arissima quanto Madre'.
[94] MAP 137, 871, 23/11/n.y. 'non habiando altri prottetori che vui et vostro figliolo ...'.
[95] MAP 28, 610, 23/10/1472. 'sempre ce troverete disposti ad tucte le cose ad voi e ad vostri figlioli grate'.
[96] See the letter to Lorenzo from the novices in which Lucrezia is referred to (incorrectly, as 'his aunt'), cited in M. Holmes, *Fra Filippo Lippi, the Carmelite Painter* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 276 n. 16. The source is MAP 7, 436, n.d. '...desidereremo non mutare altro governo'.
[97] Cited in Kent (1996), p. 19.
[98] L. Sebregondi, 'Lorenzo de' Medici, confratello illustre', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **150** (2) (1992), pp. 318-341; Eckstein (1995), pp. 206-222.
[99] On Lucrezia's devotion to St John the Baptist, see above chapter 1 and below chapter 3. On women's (small) membership of lay confraternities see Eckstein (1995), pp. 75-76. There were a handful of confraternities for women only, on which see Henderson (1994), pp. 451,460, 465. A male usually officially headed these confraternities. Eckstein (1995), pp. 119-120, and n. 109. For an example of a woman founding a confraternity, see *ibid.* p. 114.
[100] Sebregondi (1992), pp. 321-322, quotation at p. 322. 'Mona Lucretia donna fu del Magnifico Piero di Chosimo de' Medici e de' suoi figliuoli et nipoti e per suo marito et generalmente per tutta la chasa sua'.
[101] Sebregondi (1992), p. 322.
[102] MAP 85, 662, n.d. 'vostra fraternità di San Giovanni [B]aptista'.
[103] G. Richa, *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine* 10 vols, (Florence: G. Vivani, 1754-1762, repr. Rome: Multigrafica, 1972), v. 7 pp. 196-211 at p. 210.
[104] MAP 34, 329, 29/5/1476.
[105] Tornabuoni (1993), pp.137-138 (letter 89, 1/4/1475).
[106] MAP 28, 259, 30/6/1472. 'Massa di Piero... vostro amicissimo'.
[107] MAP 80, 82, 6/3/1480/81.
[108] MAP 26, 26, 29/7/1471. 'per il meçço vostro e di Lorenzo ...'.
[109] MAP 80,78, 12/8/1479. 'perché lui dice che voi lo volete dare a uno che tolghi una fanciulla per fare a quella fanciulla quella limosina'. This letter has recently been published in full by A. Brown (ed.) *Bartolomeo Scala: Humanistic and Political Writings* (Tempe, AZ: MRTS, 1997), p. 55.

[110] Cited in Pezzarossa (1978), p. 26. '[M]ona Lucretia, mia madre, per sé distribuisce per l'amore di Dio buona somma di denari et in spezialità tutte le rendite di Fiesole, perché mio padre alla morte sua a parole lascio che l'entrate di Fiesole si distribuissero per Dio come pareva a detta mona Lucretia mentre ch'ella vivesse'.

[111] St Antoninus, *Opera a ben vivere* (ed.) P.L. Ferretti, (Florence: Libreria editrice fiorentina, 1923). On widows' charitable bequests to two Florentine confraternities, see Eckstein (1995), pp. 39-40, 111-120. For examples of widows giving bequests to a religious movement, namely, the Savonarolan *Piagnoni*, see L. Polizzotto, '"Dell'Arte del Ben Morire": The Piagnone Way of Death, 1494-1545', *I Tatti Studies* **3** (1989), pp. 27-87, esp. pp. 35-36, 42. The roots of these practices date from the widows who were influential patrons in the early Roman church. See E.A. Clark, 'Patrons Not Priests: Gender and Power in Late Ancient Christianity', *Gender and History* **2**(3) (1990), pp. 253-273.

[112] On poor widows as a high priority for charity because they were the most deserving, see Chabot (1988), pp. 291-292.

[113] F.W. Kent & A. Lillie, 'The Piovano Arlotto: New Documents', in Denley & Elam (1988), pp. 347-367; On the general use of such stories as historical evidence, see L. Martines, 'The Italian Renaissance Tale as History', in Brown (1995), pp. 313-330.

[114] G. Folena (ed.) *Motti e facezie del Piovano Arlotto* (Milan & Naples: Ricciardi, 1953), pp. 79-80, tale no. 47. 'Motto della santa elemosina'; 'per amore di Dio', 'non tòrre la roba d'altri, né la fatica né il sudore di persona, massime de' poveri uomini'. This story is briefly discussed in Kent & Lillie (1988), p. 356. Cf. Kate Lowe's view that this story is evidence of contemporary depictions of Lucrezia as pious. Lowe (1993b) p. 62.

[115] Bullard (1994c), chs 1-2.

[116] Cited in Molho (1994), pp. 108-109 and n. 68.

[117] Molho (1994), p. 109 n. 68, lists the names of the committee members and the numbers of candidates they recommended.

[118] The Dominican friar and reforming preacher, Fra Girolamo Savonarola, suggested in March 1496 that women alone form a committee similar to those in the Florentine government, to deal with the reform of female dress. This radical suggestion was withdrawn some days later. On this issue, see F.W. Kent, 'A proposal by Savonarola for the Self-Reform of Florentine Women (March 1496)', *Memorie Domenicane*, n.s. **14** (1983), pp. 335-341; Tomas (1992), pp. 38-57, esp. pp. 49-51.

[119] MAP 85, 661, n.d.; Tornabuoni (1993), p. 168 (letter 119, 6/8/n.y.). For additional letters, see the archival references cited in *ibid.* p. 29 n. 111.

[120] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 168. '[v]iene per gratia et miserichordia alla fonte, alla speranza universale di poveri et povere chontadini ...'.

[121] MAP 80,14, 27/4/1470. '... povero con 6 fanciulle igrande [sic] e sanza dota ...'.

[122] Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 88. 'in helemosine o a fanciulle a maritare'.

[123] MAP 36, 1112, 7/10/1478. 'per amore di Dio et per compassione di mia poveredà [sic] ...'.

[124] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 133-134 (letter 84, 12/10/1474), quotation at p. 133. '[p]er l'amore di Dio'.

[125] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 167-168 (letter 118, n.d.), quotation at p. 168. 'per l'amor di Dio'.

[126] MAP 85, 235, 1/8/1479. 'la humanità vostra'.

[127] For a complete list, see Tornabuoni (1993), Appendix I.

[128] MAP 85, 96, 1/12/1473. 'ché sono in prigione ... sono abandonato'.

[129] MAP 34, 280, 21/1/1473/4.

[130] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 115-116 (letter 68, 22/6/1473).

[131] de' Medici, (1977- [2001]), v. 2 pp. 76-77, (letter 185, 31/12/1474), quotation at p. 76. 'nostro fiorentino poverissimo huomo nostro'.

[132] de'Medici (1977-[2001]), v. 2 p. 77, n. 1, 80-81 and n. 1. The letter to Lucrezia is MAP 85, 98, 2/1/1474/5.
[133] de' Medici, (1977-[2001]), v. 2 p. 136 (letter 87, 10/11/1474). 'per l'amor di Dio e della gloriosa Vergine Maria'.
[134] K. Park, 'Healing the Poor: Hospitals and Medical Assistance in Renaissance Florence,' in *Medicine and Charity Before the Welfare State* (ed.) J. Barry & C. Jones (London & New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 26-45.
[135] See above, p. 66.
[136] MAP 29, 749, 15/9/1473. 'pratiche'.
[137] MAP 106, 24, 12/2/1471/2. 'adoperare che tale hospitale [*Ceppo*] sia gov[er]nato come si governa l'opera di Sancto Jacopo di Pistoia'.
[138] The hospital was called 'L'ospedale Nuovo del Misericordia'. See Medici (1977–[[2001]), v. 2 p. 167 n. 3. The letter to Lucrezia is MAP 21, 536, 19/3/1474/5. 'l'ospedale della Magnificentia Vostra'. Cf. MAP 26, 158, 24/4/1475.
[139] Ospedale, 39, entitled, 'Ricordanze di Madonna Lucrezia, che fu moglie del il [sic] Piero de' Medici...'.
[140] Ospedale, 39, 1^{v}.
[141] Ospedale, 39, 2^{r}.
[142] Ospedale, 39, 4^{r}-5^{r}.
[143] Ospedale, 39, 7^{v}, 11^{r}, 16^{r}, 19^{r-v}.
[144] MAP 85, 673, n.d. 'Richoriamo a Vostra Magnificentia, fonte di miserichordia ... siamo in gran necessità,... non ci è rimasta altra speranza che lla humanità vostra'. Cf. similar comments regarding her well-known reputation for piety and charity, MAP 85, 63, 5/7/1472.
[145] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 134-135 (letter 85, 22/10/1474), quotation at p. 134. 'la benignità e carità vostra'.
[146] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 135 (letter 86, 6/11/1474). 'perfetta limoxina'.
[147] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 135 (letter 86, 6/11/1474).
[148] See Lucrezia's accounts for that year. MAP 99, 7, c.27^{r}, 1474. The tax was 1 soldo, 1 danaro.
[149] MAP 99, 7, 1474, c. 27^{r-v}.
[150] MAP 29, 205, 23/3/1473/4 and MAP 85, 105, 29/3/1474, on the wax. On the customs tax, see MAP 85, 176 and 13/n. m/1475/76. On the feast day, see MAP 85, 171, 13/8/1476.
[151] MAP 24, 6, 8/2/1469. 'Magnifice Vir et mi tanquam fili...'.
[152] BMF Frullani Autog., 1398, 18/8./n.y. [before 2/12/1469]. 'Johannes Lodovicho et tucti sui fratelli'.
[153] Shaw, (1992), p. 261.
[154] de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 1 pp. 129-130, (12/5/1470).
[155] de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 1 p. 532 (3/7/1474).
[156] de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 6 p. 120 (3/12/1481).
[157] de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 6 p. 223 (18/1/1481/82). 'la Clarice ringratia voi della diligentia ne havete facta'.
[158] MAP 21, 127, 25/6/1469. 'tucta casa vostra'.
[159] MAP 21, 127, 25/6/1469. 'per nostro amore gle dia omne favore'.
[160] MAP 85, 680, 27/9/1472.
[161] MAP 85, 185, 18/1/1477, 'notario delli Magnifici Signori Fiorentini ...'.
[162] MAP 85, 185, 18/1/1477, 'Ser Michele nostro capitano, che desidera entrare nella compagnia delli preti'.
[163] MAP 106, 36, 19/4/1477. ' [s]arà da voi Messer Bartholomeo Calvo, Spagnolo...'. Bisognando racomandare il bisognio suo al Magnificentia di Lorenzo'.
[164] MAP 24, 278, 25/11/1472. 'Apresso noi scrivemo ad Lorenzo una lectera in adiutorio et favore de Girolamo de Zarzana, sopra uno beneficio quale li ha conferito monsignore el

Camarlengho, pare che per uno altro l[o] sia data al dicto Girolamo grande controversia. Per tanto ti prego strectamente che per nostro respecto vogli più volte recordare a Lorenzo li sia racomandato decto Girolamo, che ad noi fia assai grato'.

[165] MAP 85, 74, 28/10/1472.

[166] MAP 85, 127, 26/9/1474. '[E]t per recupero de lu mio honore mancho, dalla Magnificentia de Lorenzo me voglia mi prestare ducati ducento cinquanta. Li quali promecto rendere infinino [sic] de uno anno etc'.

[167] MAP 34, 64, 19/3/1472. Cf. MAP 34,76, 10/4/1472, where the request is repeated.

[168] MAP 85,40 27/6/1471. 'con el vostro favore.' 'li piaccia scrivere a quelli huomini'.

[169] MAP 21, 133, 12/7/1469; MAP 85, 20, 25/6/1469; MAP 85, 22 8/10/1469; MAP 85, 81 10/3/1473; MAP 85, 82, 15/3/1473; MAP 85, 204, 2/11/1477; MAP 85, 675 20/1/1472; and MAP 106, 19, 20/8/1469.

[170] MAP 21, 133, 12/7/1469 and MAP 106, 19 20/8/1469.

[171] MAP 106, 19, 20/8/1469. 'Io scrivo ad Piero [de' Medici], ad Pierfrancesco [de' Medici], ad Guglielmo de' Pazzi [Clarice's brother-in-law], Johanni Tornabuoni [Lucrezia's brother], ad Bernardo Rucellai [Clarice's brother-in-law] et ad multi altri'.

[172] Del Piazzo (1956), p. 28. '... per ordine di Madonna Clarice'.

[173] Del Piazzo (1956), p. 292. '[a]l Vicario di Poppi, per uno amico di Clarice'.

[174] Del Piazzo (1956), p. 308. '[a]l Bargello per la securtà d'uno amico di Madonna Clarice'.

[175] Pulci (1962), pp. 977-978 (letter 24, 9/4/1472) (visit to Rome); *ibid*, p. 994 (letter 38, 6/4/1474).

[176] Del Lungo (1867), pp. 45-46, (letter 1, 1/12/1475) (hunting trip), p. 47, (letter 2, 8/4/1476) (San Miniato).

[177] On Lorenzo's secretaries and their importance to his regime, see A. Brown, 'Lorenzo de' Medici's New Men and Their Mores: The Changing Lifestyle of Quattrocento Florence', *Renaissance Studies* **16** (2) (2002), pp. 113-142.

[178] MAP 39, 269 29/7/1484.

[179] See MAP 21,25 28/8/n.y. and Clarice's letters to him in BNF, GC, 29,38[bis] fols 1-36.

[180] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fol. 1. 15/5/1472, 'E mi piaciuta assai la lettera vostra ... et più la prudentia che usate al darmi avixo delle nuove di costì'.

[181] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fols 2,4. 20/9/1478, and 7/8/1479, respectively.

[182] Pierpont Morgan Library, N.Y. f. 132, n. 12 27/8/1478, and n. 13 31/8/1478, respectively.

[183] F. Redditi, *Exhortio ad Petrum Medicem con appendice di lettere* ed. P. Viti, (Florence: Olshcki, 1989), p. 119. ' [q]uello seguirà di Roma ne darò notitia alla V(ostra) M(agnificentia), alla quale mi raccomando'.

[184] Redditi (1989), p. 118.

[185] Redditi (1989), p. 96.

[186] BNF GC 29, 38[bis] fol.6, 8/9/1479 '[a]mico carissimo'.

[187] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fol.8. 'Et raccomandatemi spesso a Lorenzo al quale ancora raccomanderete la faccenda del Marchese Lionardo del Soldo'.

[188] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fol.11, 12/8/1480. '[s]arà vostro officio ancora raccomandarlo an [sic] chi in simil caso lo può aiutare'.

[189] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fols 13, 11/9/1480) 16, 18/7/1482, 17, 20/7/1482, and 23, 31/5/1487) In addition, one letter was sent from Rome recommending a client of her brother, Rinaldo Orsini, fol. 27 11/1/1487/8.

[190] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fol.16. 'Prieghovi siate chontento parlarne in suo benefitio, racchomandolo'.

[191] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fol.17. 'cose nostre'.

[192] BNF GC 29, 38[bis], fol.23. 'per essere contadino e per non havere chi sia per lui'... Fatene come di cosa nostra...'.
[193] Franco (1990), appendix, pp. 142-143, 2/10/1489, quotation at p. 142. 'L'Agnoletta, mogle di Ser Giovanni da Pescia, è qua mia vicina (et) familiare ...[u]na fanciulla tanto da bene et amorevole di me... quanto sorella'.
[194] Franco (1990), pp. 152-153, 23/8/1492, quotation at p. 152. '...stretti parenti della mia balia ...'.
[195] MAP 18, 386, 9/9/1494. 'grandissimo amico mio ...'.
[196] Franco (1990), pp. 144-145. 16/4/1490.
[197] Franco (1990), p. 104, 8/6/1491. 'In somma vi priego che facciate che Lorenzo scriva a Roma all'oratore in mio favore, perché *così scriva madonna [Maddalena] al Papa*; cioè fate che l'oratore facci col Papa che la Pieve di San Donato in Poggio che sta per vacare la reservi per M. Matheo Francho ec[etera]'.
[198] See M. del Piazzo, 'I ricordi di lettere di Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **112** (2) (1954), pp. 378-432, esp. pp. 397, 399, 407-408.
[199] MAP 18, 82, 18/1/1493. 'Piero mio, avendovi più dì fa, rachomandato unna[sic] mia povera persona, alla quale desideravo farli una limosina, per rispecto della sua poverta, io gli avevo ordinato che gli avessi uno luogho di provigionato per un suo figliuolo,.... Di nuovo, vi priegho che vi piacci operarvi per me.... Priegovene strettissimente me ne consoliate che é grandissima e' limosina'.
[200] MAP 47, 464, 24/4/1493.
[201] MAP 14, 85, 12/6/1492. 'come sapete, homo da bene et antichissimi amici et lui et i sua di casa nostra ...'.
[202] MAP 47, 462, 20/6/1493.
[203] MAP 47,460, 26/6/1492. 'utile et honore'.
[204] Franco (1990), pp. 47-48. Matteo's biography is discussed in pp. 23-59.
[205] MAP 18, 91, 4/2/1493/4. 'poca autorità con voi'.
[206] Cited in Kent (1977a), p. 201 Cf. p. 207. For a broader discussion of the crucial importance of honour in Renaissance Florentine (and Italian) society with full bibliography, see Strocchia (1998), pp. 39-60. Strocchia sources the contemporary perception that honour was dearer than life itself at n. 1. See now Crabb (2000), pp. 5-7, who discusses the importance of honour in Renaissance Florence as well as in the broader Mediterranean context, with full bibliography.
[207] Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 235-236, quotation at p. 236. 'Se io vi secchassi troppo la testa con lettere di raccomandatione per questo et quello altro, vi prego me abiate per iscusata, che io non posso levarmigli dinanzi, et pregovi quelli che voi non volete servire li date bone parole, che non mi perda questa poca riputatione'. See on the difficulties patrons could experience when trying to juggle the competing demands of clients and their own honour and reputation: V. Ilardi, 'Crosses and Carets: Renaissance Patronage and Coded Letters of Recommendation', *American Historical Review* **92** (5) (1987), pp. 1127-1149.
[208] Franco (1990), pp. 147-149.
[209] Rubinstein (1997), pp. 264-267 and Shaw (1988) both discuss Piero's political failure and his alienation of key supporters.
[210] On Cosimo's posthumous reputation, see Brown (1992), ch. 1 and Ames-Lewis (1992). For the letters received by Piero de' Medici on the occasion of Cosimo's death, see Strocchia (1992), p. 186.
[211] In a letter of September 25 1473 addressed to Lucrezia, Contessina was said to be well. Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 37.
[212] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 127-128, quotation at p. 128 (letter 78, 26/10/ 1473). 'Sono tornato e non ci [Firenze] ò trovata la nostra monna Contessina, di che sono troppo male

contento. Vorrei almanco haverla veduta'. Pulci's mother was Brigida di Bernardo de' Bardi. See Pulci (1962), p. xlix.

[213] MAP 80, 36, 12/11/1474 (Pisan style), 1473 (Florentine style). For all the letters from Gaetani, see Tornabuoni (1993), Appendix 1.

[214] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 95-96, (letter 50, 1/10/1467), quotation at p. 95. '... le prece et orationi che si sono facto et fanno ne' luoghi ordinati, che in parte ti sono noti et di quelli che tu non sai'.

[215] Lowe (1993b), p. 61.

[216] MAP 85, 49, 2/12/1471. 'se n'è conseguito lo scampo vostro'. Cf. MAP 85, 136, 13/11/1474, which has a similar theme.

[217] See below chapter 3.

[218] Kent (1997), p. 28.

[219] K. Lowe, 'Patronage and Territoriality in Early Sixteenth Century Florence', *Renaissance Studies* 7 (3) (1993), pp. 258-271, at p. 266.

[220] Del Piazzo (1956), pp. 187-188. Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza sent similar letters to allies when his mother, Bianca Maria Visconti, died in 1468. See Lubkin (1994), p. 65.

[221] Landucci (1983), p. 40; L. Morelli, 'Cronica di Lionardo Morelli', in da San Luigi (1770-1789), v. 19, p. 196; B. Bellincioni, *Le rime di Bernardo Bellincioni* (ed.) P. Fanfani, 2 vols (Bologna: Commissione di testi di lingua, 1876-1878; repr. 1968), v. 2 pp. 128-129. A list of these dialogues is in Levantini-Pieroni (1883), pp. 78-79; Pezzarossa (1978), p. 36. See also, G. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 259, n. 24, which lists a neo-platonic consolatory dialogue on Lucrezia's death to Lorenzo. On the genre of consolatory dialogues, see P.O. Kristeller, 'Francesco Bandini and His Consolatory Dialogue Upon the Death of Simone Gondi,' in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (ed.) P.O. Kristeller (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1969), pp. 411-435, esp. p. 419 and n. 27 on such a dialogue being received on the death of Albiera degli Albizzi in 1473. J.M. McManamon, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideals of Italian Humanism* (London & Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 113-114, 225-226 for references to women of the Italian courts, such as Eleonora of Aragon and Bianca Maria Visconti Sforza, who did receive public funeral orations.

[222] MAP 38, 421, cited in de' Medici, (1977-[2001]), v. 6 p. 285 n. 2. 'ora che la sua madre non c'è più a preservarlo como soleva fare'.

[223] Levantini-Pieroni (1883), pp. 14-15. I am using the author's translation of the original Latin text in BML, Plut. 53 11, c. 16^{v}- c. 26^{v}. '[T]alvolta, ... l'opera sua,... era... più guardinga della vostra, perché voi solamente intesi ai grandi negozi, trascurate i piccoli ... Coi personaggi più ragguardevoli, coi magistrati, intorno alle cose di grava importanza chiedava e dava consigli; e anche le più umili persone ammetava alla sua presenza e tutti rimandava lieti e contenti del fatto suo: ma tu conosci meglio di me tutto ciò, tu che non facesti mai nulla senza consultarla, com'ella nulla operò senza il tuo parere'. Cf. another laudatory letter by Ugolino Verino in BML Plut. 39, 40, c. 58^{r-v}.

[224] Cited in R.C. Trexler, 'Lorenzo de' Medici, and Savonarola, Martyrs for Florence', in his collected essays *Dependence in Context in Renaissance Florence* (Binghamton, NY: MRTS, 1994), pp. 41-60, at p. 46.

[225] Pulci (1962), pp. 913-915. 'scherma'. 'anzi perfetta'.

[226] Published in Tornabuoni (1992), pp. 19-20, quotation at p. 19. 'fonte di car[i]tà, donna piatosa/ benigna, savia, onesta e grazïosa,/ ... per l'opre buone sua, falla beata'.

[227] Tornabuoni (1992), p. 19.

[228] Tornabuoni (1992), p. 19, 'Io dico santa e vorre' far la pruova'.

[229] Tornabuoni (1992), p. 19.

[230] Tornabuoni (1992), p. 19. 'Adungue questa è vera e buona pruova/ con di molti altri ben' ch'ella fa fare'.
[231] Tornabuoni (1992), p. 20. 'Lugrezia santa/ in su le letanie'.
[232] Cited in F.W. Kent (1994), p. 209. 'governo santo', idi[o] vivo e vero'.
[233] On a surviving marble bust and portrait of Lucrezia in the Medici palace, see Spallanzani & Bertelà (1992), pp. 27, 124; On the bust specifically, see S. Zuraw, 'The Medici Portraits of Mino da Fiesole', in Beyer & Boucher (1993), pp. 317-340 and the discussion on Piero's commissioning of this marble bust in chapter 3 below. On the portrait in the Tornabuoni household and her possible identification in the Ghirlandaio frescoes, see P. Simons, 'Portraiture and Patronage in Quattrocento Florence with Special Reference to the Tornabuoni and Their Chapel in Santa Maria Novella', (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Melbourne University, 1985; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1987), 2 vols v. 1 pp. 146, 306; v. 2 pp. 121-122n.210 and v. 2 pl. 10 (*The Visitation*), pl. 11 (*The Birth of St John the Baptist*) and pl. 18 (*The Birth of the Virgin*); P. Simons, 'Alert and Erect: Masculinity in Some Italian Renaissance Portraits of Fathers and Sons', in R.C. Trexler (ed.) *Gender Rhetorics: Postures of Dominance and Submission in History* (Binghamton, NY: MRTS, 1994), pp. 163-175, at p. 165.
[234] Simons (1987), v. 1 p. 146. On the commissioning of portraiture as an act commemorating the worthy character of the sitter, see A. Wright, 'The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture', in G. Ciappelli & P.L. Rubin (eds) *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 86-113 at p. 88ff.
[235] The possible identification of Lucrezia in *The Visitation*, as the third of a group of women on the centre left, is suggested with reservations by J.K. Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio: Artist & Artisan* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 242-243. For the scene, see p. 128, pl. 132. Surprisingly in her descriptions of the fresco scenes at p. 243, Cadogan does not refer to Lucrezia's equally likely appearance in either *The Birth of St John the Baptist* or *The Birth of the Virgin*. For a more positive identification of Lucrezia in *The Visitation* and her acknowledgement of Lucrezia's likely representation in the other two birth scenes of *St John* and *The Virgin*, even allowing for the common physiognomic type used throughout the frescoes for the representation of older exemplary women, see Simons (1987) v. 1 p. 306, v. 2 p. 122n. 210.
[236] For a discussion of Lucrezia's patronage of religious projects and institutions connected to either St John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary or the Visitation of St Elizabeth, see below chapter 3.
[237] P. Simons (1994), p. 165.
[238] Valori (1991), p. 95; P. Giovio, *Le vite di Leon Decimo et di Adriano VI* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1551), pp. 21-22.
[239] MAP 99, c. 1, n.d. 'Madonna Lucrezia, figliuola di Francesco di Messer Simone de' Tornabuoni, già Tornaquinci morì e' 25 di Marzo 1482, resta vedova di Piero de' Medici, figliuolo di Cosimo, Pater Patriae a dì 2 di Dicembre 1469 — fu madre del Magnifico Lorenzo, padre di Papa Leone X, e della Lucrezia maritata a Jacopo Salviati, madre della Signoria Maria, et avola del Serenissimo Gran. Duca Cosimo Primo'.
[240] Cited in Felice (1906a) p. 71. 'perchè non mi parea fosse cosa importasse altrimenti'.
[241] Elam (1992), p. 54.
[242] Cox-Rearick (1984), p. 20 n. 19.
[243] For a description of the floats in Giulio de' Medici's investiture celebrations, see A.M. Cummings, *The Politicised Muse: Music for Medici Festivals, 1512-1537* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 64.

CHAPTER THREE

Medici Matronage

In his *Zibaldone* or commonplace book, Giovanni Rucellai, an eminent Florentine art patron, quoted the aphorism: 'Men are made to do two main things in this world: The first is to procreate: The second is to build'.[1] Both these tasks were designed to ensure the continuation and the glorification of the patrilineage, and it explains why in his treatise on architecture Antonio Filarete conceptualised the patron as the father of a building and the architect as its mother, a gendered metaphor that emphasised the relatively more significant role of the assumed male patron in this process.[2] Apart from the notable exception of Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, many historians have also often assumed a male as patron of Renaissance culture. Indeed, it is only relatively recently that the cultural patronage of women of ruling families of the Northern courts of Renaissance Italy has been receiving much needed attention.[3] Similarly, the Medici women have received equally little attention in the voluminous literature on Medici artistic and literary patronage, with the possible exception of a small amount of work on Lucrezia Tornabuoni's artistic and literary patronage and just recently on Alfonsina Orsini's patronage of art.[4] But the surviving evidence suggests that even this literature underestimates the importance of the Medici women's cultural patronage. Their support for convent building in particular, as well as other forms of artistic and literary patronage, including projects of a more secular type, was intimately bound up with, and vital to, the success of broader Medici strategies for shoring up support for themselves and their regime in the immediate environs of the family palace as well as in towns and territories that were part of Florence's territorial state. After the accession of Cardinal Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici to the papal throne in 1513 as Pope Leo X, one could add Rome to this list as well. It was in Leo X's Rome that Alfonsina Orsini turned Rucellai's aphorism on its head by becoming a matron who built a palace, effectively engaging in what some historians have recently termed 'matronage' in their efforts to elucidate the visible differences and the similarities between men and women's cultural patronage.[5]

Part of the reason as to why it is so difficult to identify art patronage projects and commissions by the Medici women in the fifteenth century is because many such projects in this period were undertaken as part of a team. Such projects included those undertaken solely by male members of the family, with the joint artistic commissions of Cosimo and his younger brother Lorenzo (1395-1440), being one example, and Piero de' Medici's involvement with his brother Giovanni's building of a villa at Fiesole being another.[6] It is difficult to judge the extent of the contributions of the women of the family to artistic commissions when they acted together with their spouses as Ginevra and Lucrezia did in the

1460s. This is especially because the Medici men would have provided the financial contribution, even if the impetus to undertake the commission may have come from a particular Medici woman or was the result of a joint decision. When the Medici women participated as part of a group of like-minded women as happened with Clarice and Alfonsina Orsini later in the century, the extent of their involvement is much more transparent.

This was also the case in instances where a Medici woman acted on her own, as Lucrezia Tornabuoni did when widowed, or Maddalena and Alfonsina were able to do as young wives in the immediate years prior to the Medici exile of 1494. As a mature woman the widowed Alfonsina went even further during the pontificate of her brother in law Giovanni de' Medici (Pope Leo X), undertaking at the pontiff's request major oversight of the building works for the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano. Even more significant was her building of a palace in Rome, an act of artistic patronage no other woman of the Medici family could have contemplated in Florence, and one that was only rarely undertaken by other women, apart from, notably, the ruling queens of Alfonsina's native Naples.[7]

The Partnership of Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Piero de' Medici

More usually the extent of the Medici women's art patronage has left far fewer clear traces in the historical record. For example, it has been suggested that there is no independent evidence of Lucrezia Tornabuoni's commissioning of art prior to her widowhood. The debate has centred in particular on the evidence available for her influence with Piero regarding the choice of theme for the altarpiece for the Medici chapel painted by Fra Filippo Lippi, which featured St John the Baptist as a young child among a group of saints adoring the baby Jesus, and her involvement in the commissions of other paintings on similar themes by Lippi and Alesso Baldovinetti.[8]

However it is dangerous to assume that the relative lack of documentation for Lucrezia's patronage activities during Piero's lifetime necessarily means that she was not active in this area. Often evidence regarding women's (particularly wives') patronage activities did not survive.[9] Possibly this is because a married woman was more likely to be financially dependent on her spouse and generally unable to access her dowry without her husband's permission unless he was about to become bankrupt or was in exile.[10] Only upon widowhood was a woman entitled to her dowry for her financial support and in some cases (such as Lucrezia Tornabuoni's), a wealthy widow was able to exercise great financial independence.[11] Consequently, it was unlikely that independent evidence of Lucrezia's patronage activities before her widowhood would have survived.[12]

Therefore, it is highly likely that even if Piero commissioned and paid for Filippo Lippi's two paintings, *The Adoration of the Virgin and Child* (1459) and *The Camaldoli Adoration* (1463) as well as for Alesso Baldovinetti's Cafaggiolo altarpiece on a similar theme, his wife's keen interest in the legend of St John the Baptist as a young child could well have provided the creative impulse behind these commissions.[13] Certainly, in 1464 she provided the altar plate for the altar in

the cell of a Medici nun, appropriately dedicated to St John the Baptist, which Piero had built in the Camaldoli hermitage.[14] Also Contessina Bardi may a year earlier have acted as an executrix for her son's order to build the cell as he was confined to bed at the time.[15] The altar had both Medici and Tornabuoni arms on it, indicating that the altar and Lippi's *Camaldoli Adoration*, which was also commissioned for the cell, were gifts of the whole family, including Lucrezia, with Piero at its head.[16] There are also three other known instances of Tornabuoni and Medici arms on art works commissioned by the Medici, which in fact suggests that this was not so very uncommon.[17] This is because the presence of the Tornabuoni's coat of arms alongside that of the Medici's serves to highlight Lucrezia's involvement in these commissions, pointing also to the couple's unity of purpose as well as the importance to both of Lucrezia's dual identity as a Medici wife and a Tornabuoni daughter. Such a model suits much better the contemporary Florentine emphasis on a collective familial interest as here exemplified by the Medici rather than our more modern notion of individual interest and aesthetic choice.[18] Finally, since both Filippo Lippi and her husband died in 1469, Lucrezia lost the two people with whom she shared this common interest. Now a widow with the financial capacity to commission art on a more independent basis, Lucrezia, as we have seen in Chapter One, channelled her interest in the subject of St. John the Baptist as a young child in other directions, namely, the writing of religious poetry and the patronage of religious institutions dedicated to him.

Another example of Piero's and Lucrezia's shared interests in the area of art patronage relates to the Medici family's parish church of San Lorenzo. In 1465, the Chapter of this church gave Piero permission to assign all the nave chapels along the north side of the church to whomever he wished; he gave one to his wife.[19] This chapel was dedicated to the Visitation, an appropriate theme for Lucrezia, given her well- known devotion to St John the Baptist as well as to the Virgin Mary.[20] Lucrezia also provided gifts of wax to San Lorenzo for the feast of the Visitation during the 1470s.[21]

Piero de' Medici may have commissioned a portrait bust of his wife from the sculptor Mino da Fiesole, as a companion to his own in 1453/4.[22] According to the inventory of the Medici palace, there were two busts placed above opposite doorways (although, sadly, no actual surviving portrait bust has been firmly identified as being that of Lucrezia, despite several attempts at attribution).[23] In any case, the original commissioning of these two busts by Piero indicates on a more symbolic level, the companionate nature of this marriage.

Convent Building and Other Religious Commissions

The Medici women's support for convent building was particularly apposite as it was also a traditionally acceptable form of women's artistic patronage.[24] The endowment, building and refurbishment of convents, churches, confraternities and hospitals by lay women was an appropriate act of piety and charity which had a long tradition going back to the fourth century patronage of convents by female followers of St Jerome, who actively encouraged the practice.[25] It was one of the

only forms of architectural patronage in which women in Florence could legitimately engage.

The Medici women's patronage of religious institutions also had another motive. Their patronage activities in this area were part of the general Medicean strategy to shore up their own support in Florence and its territories. It involved benefiting a number of religious institutions within their neighbourhood as well as within the wider city and Florence's subject territories more generally. The family's penchant for working as a team with common interests further facilitated the women's involvement in acts of territorial patronage designed to strengthen the Medici regime.

Similarly to her sister in law, Ginevra Alessandri was a strong supporter and patron of nuns, visiting the prestigious Benedictine convent of Le Murate, which also enjoyed the favour of Piero, Lucrezia, Clarice and Lorenzo — the last of whom himself provided funds to help rebuild the convent after a fire nearly destroyed it.[26] Together with her husband, Ginevra helped to finance building works at the convent of Santa Verdiana in 1463, where the abbess was a Medici relative whom Piero later solicited for special prayers for Cosimo's soul.[27] According to the convent's account book, Giovanni and Ginevra financed this work 'for the love of God ... because they know that the said convent of Santa Verdiana is in great need and straitened circumstances'.[28]

Clarice Orsini's previous quarrel with Poliziano indicated that she preferred religious literary works to humanist ones, so it is not surprising that she had a preference for commissioning religious literary works and supporting monasteries and convents. Her only known commission from Lorenzo's humanist circle was the translation into Italian of St Jerome's Latin Psalter by the neo-Platonist philosopher, Marsilio Ficino, who also wrote a preface to it.[29] And Vespasiano da Bisticci, Florentine humanist bookseller and biographer of Cosimo de' Medici, could not have chosen a better exemplar of religious piety than St Paula, herself an erstwhile follower of St Jerome and convent builder, to whose Life he wrote a prefatory epistle dedicated to Clarice.[30] Her patronage of religious works benefited the nuns of Le Murate who produced illuminated manuscripts and from whom, in 1474, Clarice commissioned a small book containing an *Office for the Dead*.[31] In the same year as the commission from Le Murate, she funded building works at the convent of San Onofrio, called Foligno, via the Medici bank, and lent the convent a 100 ducats that was finally repaid in full in 1486.[32] Finally, Clarice's patronage of religious institutions included the Florentine Cathedral, to whose chapter she donated 'a pair of gold brocade vestments'.[33]

Neighbourhood Patronage

The Dominican monastery of San Marco and its sister institution the convent of Santa Lucia both situated near the Medici Palace, had always benefited from the family's patronage, with Cosimo's de' Medici's association being particularly well-known.[34] He endowed four feasts at San Marco: the Epiphany, St Mark, his own patron saints of SS Cosmas and Damian, as well as that of St Peter the Martyr who was the patron saint of his son, Piero.[35] According to San Marco's records,

Piero 'together with his mother, that is mona Chontessina' continued to endow his namesake's feast.[36] Clarice Orsini continued on the association with San Marco, leaving money in her will to it for an annual celebration of commemorative masses for her soul.[37] Clarice as well owned a garden opposite to it that was acquired in 1480.[38] She also gave alms to the convent of Santa Lucia for the feast of St Dominic.[39]

The money to pay for her religious patronage and charitable bequests may well have come from funds Clarice Orsini received from the pawning of jewellery and other precious objects as well as possibly from rental income received during the early 1480s from a piece of property that had previously been used as a hospital.[40] Clarice's ability to fund such activities suggests that despite the legal limitations imposed upon their capacity to engage in financial transactions, wives were still able to exercise some degree of economic independence.[41]

Other Medici women also supported Santa Lucia by funding its building programme. The suggestion is sometimes made that Contessina Bardi rebuilt the convent with the proceeds of her dowry and the support of Florence's Archbishop Antoninus. Unfortunately, no documentary evidence has been put forward to support this assertion.[42] More likely is the scenario advanced by the eighteenth century historian Giuseppe Richa, who states that Alfonsina Orsini, her mother Caterina di Sanseverino, Clarice Orsini, and Contessina di Giuliano Salviati supposedly undertook to enlarge the convent of Santa Lucia in Via San Gallo, then home to a group of Dominican tertiaries.[43] Richa's information is not always accurate, however. He argues that this building took place in 1484, under the influence of the Dominican friar at San Marco, Girolamo Savonarola; but since Alfonsina and her mother did not arrive in Florence until May 1488, this is inaccurate.[44] Clarice, nonetheless, may have been interested in the project at an earlier date. According to Richa, this group of women decided to benefit Santa Lucia and 'bought the houses and lands next to it to expand the dormitories to 120 cells, building small and large rooms, chapels and rebuilding a vaulted church, from its foundations, with the large portal in Via San Gallo'.[45] In light of the fact that the area around Via San Gallo was part of the Medici's ancestral district, it is not surprising that at about the same time as his daughter in law was involved in the rebuilding of Santa Lucia, Lorenzo was engaged in the building of an Augustinian monastery at the San Gallo gate, designed by Giuliano da Sangallo.[46] The major part of the refurbishment to which Richa refers actually took place in 1490 (interestingly, at about the same time as Lorenzo was acquiring further land in the area for his project of urban expansion).[47] The rebuilding of Santa Lucia was probably part of a larger plan to ensure the ongoing support of the residents in this area for the Medici. Cilia da Ricasoli provides further evidence of this project in a letter to Alfonsina in June 1507. She reminded her 'that when those vaults of Santa Lucia were being built [in 1490], Her Ladyship the Countess [Caterina di Sanseverino] of blessed memory wanted money from the [Medici] bank and it was denied her because of the absence of the Magnificent Piero of blessed memory, who was not in Florence...'.[48] And so Cilia, who was a loyal friend of Piero and Alfonsina — indeed, she was condemned, in October 1495, for plotting to aid Piero — was asked, as a client of the bank, to guarantee the money for Caterina until Piero returned, which she did.[49]

This letter was written by Cilia in 1507, because officials responsible for reclaiming Medici property had been to see her and asked questions about this transaction and Cilia wished Alfonsina to verify her role in it. 'They want to annoy me ... I am not bothered about something for which I am not responsible, as in fact, you well know that I lent only my name to the money for the building of Santa Lucia...'.[50] Piero, supposedly, sent his wife and mother in law to the safety of this convent when he was expelled from Florence in November 1494.[51] Alfonsina and Caterina apparently built for themselves at Santa Lucia 'several rooms near the street that goes towards San Marco', which in 1516 the nuns reaffirmed they could use at any time.[52] Alfonsina also was described in a later chronicle of the convent as: 'Medici, Alfonsina di Piero, benefactor of the convent...'.[53]

In contrast to her sister in law, Alfonsina Orsini, Lucrezia Salviati did not begin her patronage of convent building until well into the pontificate of her brother, Giovanni de' Medici (Pope Leo X), when she was a mature woman living in Rome where her husband and eldest son occupied prestigious positions at the papal Curia, in large part because of their connection to the pontiff.[54] Such wealth and prestige enabled Lucrezia in 1520, according to Giuseppe Richa, to support Pope Leo X's plan to found new convents in Florence by paying for 'new cloisters, dormitories and workshops', for the convent of San Giorgio.[55] Lucrezia's supposed patronage of this building project, in a fashion similar to Alfonsina's patronage of Santa Lucia, would have been designed to increase support for the Medici in the convent's immediate environs.

Lucrezia's financial position could also be used to benefit Roman religious institutions. In 1533, Lucrezia and her eldest son Cardinal Giovanni acquired a half-share in a palace in Rome known as Palazzo Penitonzieri, which they rented from the hospital of Santo Spirito, and which would, upon their deaths, pass to the brotherhood of the Annunziata in Rome, who in accordance with the terms of Lucrezia's will of 1538 were to build a chapel dedicated to St John where all the Salviati family members would eventually be laid to rest.[56] And Lucrezia purchased a farm at Antella that was donated to the Oratory of the church of Madonna de' Ricci.[57] She also sought and received a papal bull to permit her to found two chapels in the church of Santa Maria degli Alberighi in late 1530.[58]

Territorial Patronage

It is no accident that a number of the convents and monasteries that the Medici women supported outside of Florence such as the convents of Santo Agostino, San Domenico, Santa Marta, San Matteo and the abbey of San Michele were in Pisa. In addition, many of Lucrezia's clients or employees came from Pisa or its surrounding district. About ten percent of the correspondence to her also originated in this city.[59] Pisa, which was conquered by Florence in 1406, had long been a prime focus of Medicean interest with the family owning a palace there since 1441, and under Lorenzo this interest increased.[60] His mother's financial and patronage interests in Pisa and its surrounding districts indeed indicated that she played a significant role in Medicean attempts to maintain support and increase their power

within Florentine territories, by building up the family's holdings and its support base via local patronage.[61]

The town of Fiesole just outside Florence is another example of this phenomenon. Cosimo was famous for his patronage of its abbey, and his son, Giovanni de' Medici, had built a villa there.[62] Lucrezia had inherited the income of the Medici farm in Fiesole, as we have seen, and may have used some of this money for the endowment of a canonry in the Fiesole cathedral in 1476 or 1477, an annual amount of 16 lire to be paid on the feast day of St. John the Baptist.[63] This canon would be elected 'by the sons and masculine descendents of the said Mona Lucretia, and by her while she is alive', and confirmed by the Merchants' Guild, who agreed to pay this amount for the canonry every year in exchange for one of her shops. The Guild had to pay the same amount annually on the first Wednesday in December to commemorate Piero de Medici, both to the church of San Lorenzo and to the confraternity of San Giovanni in Florence.[64] (This request was honoured even during periods of Medici exile, by virtue of a special *provvisione*, or law, of the Florentine Government and persisted well into the Ducal period.[65]) Two chronicles, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively, record that Lucrezia endowed one of the ten chapels dedicated to the Ten Thousand Martyrs in the Abbey of Fiesole. Hers was one of those on the right side of the altar. Men in the Medici family endowed all other chapels on both sides of the altar.[66] This desire to perform acts of piety became a part of the overall Medici strategy for control of Florentine territories, and as such Lucrezia was a partner with Lorenzo in this enterprise. As a woman, she was able to do so because contemporaries would not necessarily have viewed her activities as part of Medici and Florentine attempts to 'colonise' these territories. Rather paradoxically, however her activities would have served to increase the loyalty towards the Medici and possibly towards Florence of those Lucrezia aided.

Her piety could also be expressed in the commissioning of minor works of art. Lucrezia arranged in 1476, for example, for a miniaturist in Venice to illustrate a missal for her.[67] In 1473, Lucrezia also seemed to entertain more than a passing interest in a proposed new design for the chapel of San Marco and Santa Viviana in Pisa. In response to her query, Niccolò Michelozzi explained that 'concerning the matter of your design of the chapel in San Marco and of Santa Viviana ... it seems to me that Francesco and Zanobi dalla Parte should change the proposal for the chapel and so the columns will not be needed'.[68] Niccolò's reference to Lucrezia's 'design' for the chapel is unclear since the term can mean anything from a mere suggestion to a full-scale plan, so it is difficult to determine what was meant here. Lucrezia replied: 'I have your [letter], by which I understand what you say and with respect to what has been done concerning the chapel. I commend you in everything'.[69] Apart from the benefit to the Medici of the fact that this building project occurred in Pisa, Lucrezia's involvement with this project suggests that she had a greater interest in this type of patronage than has previously been supposed.[70]

Indeed, the artistic patronage of churches by widows was not so very unusual. They provided altarpieces for confraternities and funerary or votive altarpieces for their local church.[71] In this context, a priest's request to Lucrezia on behalf of the 'friars of the order and convent of Sancta Maria de' Cigoli ... [to provide either] a

cloth on the altar of Our Lady for its ornamentation ... or rather to have painted the story in miniature of Our Lady on a small panel that is under the said altar...' is not at all surprising.[72] (According to Franco Sacchetti, this church was the site of a Marian cult in the fourteenth century.[73]) Santa Maria de' Cigoli was a rural church, which provided Lucrezia with yet another opportunity for territorial patronage. Thus its location, together with the choice of topic for the miniature at the altar, made this a highly appropriate project in which to involve herself. It was also a suitable project for a widow to patronise because it was an act of piety.

Secular Art Patronage

Not all of the Medici women's art patronage was undertaken for religious purposes. The purchase in 1477 of the thermal baths of Bagno a Morbo near Volterra, for example, combined Lucrezia Tornabuoni's need for frequent visits to such baths because of recurring bouts of gout and arthritis, with her business acumen.[74] She was granted a perpetual lease in February 1477.[75] The baths were in a dilapidated condition when they were acquired and Lucrezia rebuilt them to include new cisterns, a bathhouse, shower baths with a hydraulic system to ensure even warmth and an inn that first received guests in April 1478.[76] Such places attracted members of Italy's ruling families and provided opportunities for cultural and political exchange.[77] These were considerations that would have appealed to Lucrezia as such patronage was to Medici advantage. It is also worth noting that the Lorenzo de' Medici's regime had been responsible for putting down a major revolt in Volterra in 1472, and although Lucrezia may have chosen to redevelop the site at Bagno a Morbo for health and financial reasons, her involvement with the baths would have also served to reaffirm and reinforce the Medici's ties to and presence in the area.[78]

Maddalena Cibo's financial interest in the rundown baths of Stigliano in 1488 mirrored that of her grandmother's in the baths at Bagno a Morbo. Matteo Franco was responsible for managing these old baths. In a letter to Piero Dovizi, dated the 6th of May, he said that he hoped to earn Maddalena more than 400 florins that would be paid to him by the people using the baths. '[A]nd they all have to pay me, because I believe that I will earn for madonna Maddalena more than four hundred ducats from [the baths]....'[79] Maddalena, then, unlike her grandmother, was able to engage in some business activity while still a very young wife.

Alfonsina Orsini's activities before November 1494, to an extent, anticipated Alfonsina's involvement in art patronage during the height of her power in the mid-1510s. Although as far as we know, no information regarding Alfonsina's education has survived, it is highly probable that her upbringing at the Neapolitan court of King Ferrante and the influence of her noble, wealthy widowed mother Caterina di Sanseverino — who probably educated her young daughter in the *modus operandi* of powerful women in the Italian courts — equipped Alfonsina for an eventual position of influence in Florence more akin to that of women in Italian courts than in republics.[80] The Kingdom of Naples after all, had had two queens regnant, both of whom were named Giovanna. Queen Giovanna I had reigned in the mid-

fourteenth century and Queen Giovanna II ruled in the early fifteenth century.[81] They each built palaces, fortresses and tomb monuments for their consorts as well as churches and hospitals.[82] A number of the ruling women in the Northern Italian courts in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were born in the Kingdom of Naples, with the young Alfonsina only having to look towards the court of Ferrara and its Neapolitan-born duchess, Eleonora of Aragon, for a contemporary example of a powerful female ruler and significant art patron.[83] The history of the Kingdom of Naples would therefore have provided a good example to her of the political power (and notoriety) that ruling women could achieve.

Alfonsina's probable patronage of the artist Mariotto Albertinelli is an example of how her Neapolitan upbringing influenced her path as a patron of art.[84] The personal commissioning of paintings from an artist which was common in the Northern Italian courts was something, as far as we know, women in the Medici family had previously not done. According to the mid-sixteenth century account of Giorgio Vasari, Albertinelli worked for Alfonsina until Piero's expulsion in 1494, and she sent several of his paintings to Orsini relatives in Rome.[85] 'A painting, of a lifelike portrait of the head of Madonna Alfonsina', which was in Piero's antechamber may well have been the portrait which Vasari claimed Mariotto painted of his patron.[86]

The secular architectural patronage with which Alfonsina was involved both in Florence and Rome, whether alone or with other family members, is an indicator of both her and the Medici family's increasing departure from republican models of rule towards a more seigneurial model of governance after their return from exile in 1512, even as they continued to work within a republican framework. According to both Classical and Christian traditions, architectural patronage was a sign of magnificence and a virtue. In republican Florence, magnificent building by a male private citizen glorified his family, God, and the city; while in the seigneurial regimes of Milan and Ferrara, for example, it glorified the ruler.[87] There was a sharp distinction between republican sentiments towards magnificence as exemplified by Cosimo de' Medici, which emphasised the public good, and the view held in courtly regimes that focussed on the private magnificence of the ruling family.[88] In a signory this focus on private magnificence meant that the *signore*'s private funds were often difficult to distinguish from those provided by the state.[89]

Alfonsina, together with her son Lorenzo, was responsible for the continuing work to complete the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano at the pope's request from 1515 to 1519.[90] The building of this villa, which was originally begun in the late fifteenth century by Alfonsina's father in law, Lorenzo de' Medici, was a task of prime dynastic and patrilineal significance and Alfonsina's involvement in this project testifies to her importance and power within the Medici regime.[91] Baccio Bigio was her preferred architect, and he was responsible for organising the wood to be used at the villa, for building work at the Lake of Fucecchio, and for improvements to the garden in Florence that had originally belonged to her father in law. The *operai* or members of the building committee of the Florentine cathedral consigned cartloads of wood 'to the most Illustrious Alfonsina Orsina [sic] de' Medici for the account of several places, that is Poggio, the Lake [of Fucecchio]

[and] the garden in Florence....'[92] Alfonsina would not brook any delays to her orders for loads of wood to be delivered, she informed a Strozzi relative in early 1516.[93] Goro Gheri, Alfonsina's and Lorenzo's deputy in Florence, kept Alfonsina up to date on progress and problems with these various projects while she was in Rome from late 1516. 'And concerning Baccio Bigio, I will arrange what Your Ladyship ordered; he returned yesterday from the Lake [of Fucecchio] and ... told me that things are going very well. And I will ask him and will press him to look after matters at the Lake and at Poggio....'[94] Gheri followed up a few days later with a timeline of Baccio's movements, adding: '...and in order to finish the stables I have arranged with the *Otto di Pratica* [the Foreign Affairs Committee] that they will make some money available....'[95] The public purse seemed to be supporting Medici (and Alfonsina's) private interests, which, in the manner of signories, had become one. '... I will follow the order that Your Ladyship has given me and I have already paid Lanfredini ... 47 ducats for the building account of Poggio', he informed her in January 1516.[96] But by March, Gheri told another Medici secretary, Baldassare Turini, to inform Alfonsina that: 'there is no more money for building Poggio'.[97] But it is unclear to which source of funds he referred. Gheri may in fact have made no distinction between the use of private funds by the Medici for their own projects and public money being used by them for the same purpose, since in his eyes the two would have been indistinguishable.

Alfonsina, however, was solely responsible for the construction of a palace in Rome, now known as the Medici-Lante Palace.[98] It may originally have been designed by Giuliano da Sangallo, and after his death, in October 1516, the work was continued by Baccio Bigio, who came to Rome immediately after finishing work at Poggio in December 1516 'on account of the building that Madonna Alfonsina wishes to have done here next to the Customs House ...'.[99] She had begun the process of acquiring the land for the palace while living in Rome in May 1514, and completed it nearly a year later shortly before her return to Florence.[100] The choice of the site near the papal palace is no surprise, given the amount of time Alfonsina had spent there and the distance of her abode from the papal court.[101] But her choice of locale is also instructive on another level. It would have been impossible for Alfonsina to undertake such a project in Florence, given the existence of a Medici palace and villas in that city or its surrounds and the prevailing attitudes of Florentines to the building of both villas and palaces as a significant expression of the virtue of male magnificence. Women may have been responsible for the building of convents, but it was rare indeed, even in a court, for women to engage in this type of architectural patronage, because it represented and glorified the patrilineage.[102] Rome was a more appropriate site for palace building because it provided Alfonsina with the opportunity to build magnificently in a more courtly environment which was also home to the Orsini, and now to the Medici, thereby emphasising her own seigneurial position and that of her son's family. In Rome, the presence of a court and Alfonsina's nobility of birth together enabled her to undertake this extraordinary project. It is probably no coincidence indeed that when the widowed Caterina Piccolomini, sister of Pope Pius II, built a palace during the 1460s in her native Siena that it was known as the *Palazzo del Papesse*, or papal palace.[103] This building activity was designed as an act of

dynastic matronage intended to glorify her natal family in an area of the city marked by extensive Piccolomini residence and building, suggesting that it was her familial connections to a celibate pope that made such an undertaking possible for Caterina as it later became under similar circumstances for Alfonsina.[104] The rarity of such an undertaking by a woman points to how far the Medici had come from their republican roots by the second decade of the sixteenth century in part because of their connection to the papal court.[105]

Literary Patronage

Lucrezia Tornabuoni's cultural patronage was not restricted to the visual arts. She indicated her interest in music and Italian poetry from the early days of her marriage. In March 1445, Rosello Roselli sent Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici some music for a ballad and he also sent a copy to a musician named Ser Francesco, so that he could teach Lucrezia to sing it.[106] A month later Ugo della Stufa wrote to Giovanni in Rome: 'The ballad pleases me, [it] turned out well and so I advise you that Lucrezia finished learning it 3 days ago and is singing it'.[107] Michele di Giogante, an accountant and compiler of popular rhyme, dedicated two sonnets to Lucrezia during the early years of her married life. In the first, he began by describing her as: 'Magnanimous, noble, modest and pleasant,/charming, kind, wise, honourable and gay/' and ended the poem with reference to Lucrezia being 'Well-born to a deserving line'.[108] In the second poem, Giogante spoke of wanting '... to return to those who value you:/to the cage, or the lap of your Lucrezia'.[109] This was not only high praise, it was also indicative of his view of her as a valued patron who, like the Virgin Mary, was highly virtuous and a source of refuge and comfort.

Lucrezia was interested in supporting vernacular poets both secular and sacred and was friendly with many literary figures of Lorenzo's circle. She was a patron of Feo Belcari, Luigi Pulci, and Bernardo Bellincioni all of whom wrote vernacular poetry, as well as a friend of Angelo Poliziano, a humanist poet of renown.[110] Lucrezia's literary patronage and her interest in Italian poetry rather than the Latin humanist tradition of Marsilio Ficino, reflected her personal literary preferences as well as her vernacular education. [111] In contrast to Lorenzo, who received an education in both Latin and the vernacular, it would have been difficult for Lucrezia to take an active interest in Neoplatonism and other forms of humanist thought in Florence, because humanism was linked so strongly to the public realm of government.[112]

This did not mean that Lucrezia was unaware of what was happening in her son's humanist circle. Lorenzo's tutor, Gentile Becchi began his letter of September 1473 to Lucrezia, in which he recommended Giovanni Terriciuola for a position as a lecturer at the *Studio* (university) in Pisa, by saying:

> You have always read so much that the study is full of books ... [and] you have spent all of your life with worthy men; thus, you should not disqualify yourself from recommending one lecturer, but it is shameful that you have not had to provide all of this *Studio* yourself.[113]

His respect for her literary knowledge and intelligence is obvious.

Feo Belcari wrote a sacred play on the Virgin Mary's Annunciation that was performed in Piazza San Felice on the occasion of the visit of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan to Florence in 1471, a choice of topic that would no doubt have pleased Lucrezia.[114] He may also have introduced her to the popular vernacular translation of the 'Lives of the Holy Fathers' written by Domenico Cavalca, a Pisan monk in the early fourteenth century, which, in addition to Belcari's own sacred play on the subject, Lucrezia then possibly used as a source for her own writings on St John the Baptist.[115]

Luigi Pulci was Lucrezia's protegé.[116] In 1466, Pulci referred to his shared literary interests with her and with Lorenzo when he wrote: 'I have sent Madonna Lucretia [sic] a sonnet; I am sending you [Lorenzo] a copy'.[117] And according to Pulci, it was Lucrezia who commissioned him to write the chivalric epic poem, *Morgante*.[118] Both Pulci and Bernardo Bellincioni sent elegies to her on the occasion of the death of Lucrezia's younger son, Giuliano, in 1478.[119] However, more usually, Bellincioni wrote humourous rhymes and sonnets.[120] Bernardo and Lucrezia exchanged some burlesque sonnets in the mid 1470s, Lucrezia probably learning to write this poetic form from the Petrarchan and burlesque poet, Rosello Roselli, who taught her to sing in the early days of her marriage.[121] She lamented having lost Bellincioni's sonnet to her and he, in reply, praised Lucrezia's rhymes and intellect.[122] She sent him some of her poetry to read and Bellincioni assured her that: 'I have kept your book safely, similarly, as with every other one of your works. Everyone who desired to see it found it very pleasing'.[123] Angelo Poliziano, too, read Lucrezia's poems, and on one occasion, when returning them to her, he told her that her granddaughter and namesake, Lucrezia, had memorised them.[124]

Her choice of poetic form and subject both as a writer and as a patron may also have had another motive. The vernacular poetry she enjoyed was similar in style to the 'popular' poetic forms of Dante and Petrarch, beloved of 'communal' Florence of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Lucrezia's explicit patronage of Tuscan vernacular writings would have helped to ensure the support of those old Florentine patricians, who, yearning for a distant past and older literary traditions, were disenchanted with Lorenzo and humanist culture.[125] In addition, her known affinity with Florence's patron saint, St John the Baptist, would again have aided the Medici's quest to keep the old patrician families on their side.

Some women of the family continued this tradition of vernacular literary patronage well into the sixteenth century. Lucrezia Salviati and Clarice Strozzi both received literary gifts specifically dedicated to them. Filippo Valori dedicated his Italian translation of his father Niccolò Valori's Latin life of Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, , to Lucrezia.[126] And Francesco Vettori's *Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici, Duca D'Urbino* states that: 'it was composed by Francesco Vettori and sent to [his sister] the illustrious and prudent Madonna Clarice [Strozzi]...'.[127] Whether these works were commissioned by Lucrezia and Clarice respectively or were sent to each by the authors in the hope of receiving future commissions from them is not yet known.[128] In November 1520, Filippo Nerli informed Niccolò Machiavelli that Lucrezia Salviati had received a Latin life of Alexander the Great that he had read to her that evening. Nerli did not think much of the work;

nonetheless, he told his friend that he was sending it on because Lucrezia requested that it be sent to Machiavelli 'so that you might rearrange it, *adding to it certain parts of her doing* as you saw fit [my emphasis]'.[129] This letter suggests that Lucrezia was not averse to expressing her own opinion on literary matters, expecting Machiavelli and Nerli, both of whom were expert in the area, to take account of her view even if they did not agree with her.

More often, however, Lucrezia Salviati's patronage activities, like those of her grandmother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, were focussed on supporting literary and religious projects that spoke to traditional republican sympathies. Her ownership of works by the celebrated Tuscan poet, Dante Alighieri, and by Giovanni Sercambi, a Sienese writer of popular tales in the vernacular, provides some insight into Lucrezia's particular literary interests and tastes.[130] She was of specific assistance to the Savonarolan poet, Girolamo Benivieni, whose friendship with Jacopo and Lucrezia enabled him to have the ear of both Medici popes on the topic of religious reform.[131] Benivieni showed his appreciation of Lucrezia by writing a religious poem for her in November 1513, and, in the letter informing her of it, asked her to assist in gaining the freedom of an incarcerated friend.[132] Lucrezia's support of Benivieni as well as her own literary interest in supporting the Tuscan vernacular as her grandmother had done earlier, were clearly demonstrated by her writing a letter on his behalf in March 1515 (drafted by Benivieni) asking Pope Leo X to take up the old Medici project of transferring Dante's bones back to Florence from their burial place in Ravenna. Benivieni wanted this letter written because he was a key figure in the Medicean Academy, a literary society that had regular readings from Dante and operated between at least 1515 and 1519.[133] Lucrezia's intercession would have been particularly useful to Benivieni because she was able to emphasise to her brother that this was a project that had been dear to their father's heart.[134] The opportunity to honour the Medici patrilineage was reason enough for Lucrezia Salviati to act as Benivieni's patron because it enabled her to further the collective interests of the Medici. This was, after all, the primary reason why the women of the family engaged in acts of cultural matronage.

Notes

[1] Cited in Kent (1981), p. 13. 'Due cose principali sono quelle che gl'uomini fanno in questo mondo: La prima lo'ngienerare: la seconda l'edifichare'.

[2] Filarete is cited in F.W. Kent, 'Più superba de quella de Lorenzo: Courtly and Family Interest in the Building of the Strozzi Palace', *Renaissance Quarterly* **30** (3) (1977), pp. 311-323 at p. 322.

[3] On women rulers in Renaissance Italy as significant art patrons, see J. Anderson, 'Rewriting the History of Art Patronage', *Renaissance Studies* **10** (1) (1996), pp. 129-138. The whole journal issue is devoted to female art patronage in Europe from 1300-1600, and several articles in it are devoted to Italy with marvellous bibliography. See also C. Lawrence (ed.) *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), articles by Brown, Smyth and Ciletti; C.E. King, *Renaissance Women Patrons: Wives and Widows in Italy: c.1300-1550* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 247-250; *Women Art Patrons and Collectors: Past and Present: Conference: New York Public Library, New*

York, March 18-20 1999: Abstracts pp. 13-19. Some of these papers have recently been published in *Aurora* **4** (2003). Of particular relevance is the article on Eleonora of Aragon by Joseph Manca; Edelstein (2000); K.A. McIver, 'Matrons as Patrons: Power and Influence in the Courts of Northern Italy in the Renaissance', *Artibus et Historiae* **21** (4) (2000), pp. 75-89; K.A. McIver, 'The "Ladies of Correggio": Veronica Gambara and her Matriarchal Heritage', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* **26** (1) (2000), pp. 25-44; S.F. Matthews-Grieco & G. Zarri 'Introduzione' to their 'Commitenza artistica femminile' *Quaderni Storici* **35** (104) (2000), pp. 283-294, a special issue on female art patronage in Renaissance Italy; Reiss & Wilkins (2001).

[4] The literature is well covered by Kent (2000), who includes bibliography on the cultural patronage of Cosimo, Piero, Lucrezia, Giovanni and Lorenzo de' Medici. For more extensive discussion of Piero de' Medici specifically, see Beyer & Boucher (1993). See now the James S. Schouler Lecture Series given in 1999 by F.W. Kent, "A Hunger for Beauty: Lorenzo de Medici, Amateur and Patron of Art", forthcoming from Johns Hopkins University Press. Alfonsina Orsini's patronage of art is now well covered in Reiss (2001).

[5] See C. Lawrence, 'Introduction' in Lawrence (1997), pp. 1-20, at p. 1 n. 1, who uses this term in reference to the title of the conference from which her edited collection derives: 'Matronage: Women as Patrons and Collectors of Art, 1300-1800'. Cf. Patricia Simons'caution about using such a term to describe all women patrons in *ibid.* at p. 4 n. 9. However following Lawrence, Matthews-Grieco & Zarri (2000) use the term 'matronage' at pp. 287, 289.

[6] For Cosimo's and his brother, Lorenzo's joint patronage, see J.T. Paoletti, 'Fraternal Piety and Family Power: The Artistic Patronage of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici', in Ames-Lewis (1992), pp. 195-219, esp. p. 215; On the Medici villa at Fiesole being a joint project of Piero and Giovanni de' Medici, see Lillie (1993), pp. 189-205.

[7] King (1998), pp. 247-248. A.L. Jenkens, 'Caterina Piccolomini and the Palazzo delle Papesse in Siena', in Reiss & Wilkins (2001), pp. 77-91, convincingly marshals the evidence for an elite widow building a palace in the 1460s in her native Siena.

[8] See M.A Lavin, 'Giovannino Battista: A Study in Religious Symbolism', *Art Bulletin* **37** (1955), pp. 85-101; M.A Lavin, 'Giovannino Battista: A Supplement', *Art Bulletin* **43** (1961), pp. 319-326, esp. pp. 323-324, who first proposed that Lucrezia may have suggested the choice of theme for the altarpiece. For strong dismissals of this theory, see Hatfield (1992), p. 222n.5 and p. 241 n. 95 and Lowe (1993b). For her comments regarding a lack of evidence for Lucrezia's independent commissioning of art prior to widowhood, see *ibid.* pp. 63-65. On Filippo Lippi, see G. Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work with a Complete Catalogue* (London: Phaidon, 1993). See now a major new study on Lippi by Holmes (1999). On Filippo Lippi as a favoured Medici artist, see Kent (2000), pp. 259-262, 333-337 and pp. 322-328 on the altarpiece. The *Adoration of the Child* is reproduced at p. 326 (fig. 163) and *The Camaldoli Adoration* is reproduced at p. 327 (fig. 164). Alesso Baldovinetti's Cafaggiolo altarpiece is reproduced at p. 148 (fig. 57) and discussed briefly on pp. 148-149.

[9] On this point see D.G. Wilkins, 'Introduction: Recognizing New Patrons, Posing New Questions', in Reiss & Wilkins (2001), pp. 1-17 at pp. 5-6; and the articles by Crum and Gilday in *ibid.* at pp. 37-50 and pp. 51-75, respectively. On the issue of women as art patrons generally and the differences between wives and widows, see, King (1998), chs 2-3.

[10] For a woman's legal right to dowry restitution if her husband was insolvent or in exile, see J. Kirshner, 'Wives Claims on Insolvent Husbands', in J. Kirshner, & S. Wemple (eds) *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 256-302, esp. pp. 257, 259 (insolvency), 275-278 (exile).

[11] Women were considered perpetual legal minors. Florentine law required all women, regardless of their marital status, to have a male legal guardian (*mundualdus*) who certified any contracts they made. This could be any man, and often was, with his guardianship

lasting only for the duration of a single transaction. Therefore, such guardianship probably did not deter or prevent women from making contracts. On the legal position of women, see Kuehn (1991) chs 8-10; Kuehn (1996); Kuehn (1998); T. Kuehn, 'Daughters, Mothers, Wives and Widows': Women as Legal Persons', in A.J. Schutte, T. Kuehn & S.S. Menchi (eds) *Time, Space and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001), pp. 97-115.

[12] See the comments of P. Salvadori, 'La gestione di un casato: il carteggio di Lucrezia Tornabuoni dei Medici', *Memoria* **3** (18) (1986), pp. 81-89 at p. 82.

[13] See Lavin (1955) and Lavin (1961). Ruda (1993) discusses the *Camaldoli Adoration* at pp. 230-232, 465-266 and reproduces the convent's eighteenth century chronicle account at p. 541 (Doc. 26), noting that it is not entirely accurate (pp. 465-466). Holmes (1999) briefly refers to the Camaldoli commission as a joint venture between Piero and Lucrezia at pp. 117, 155 and 174 and reproduces it at p. 175 (plate 171), but provides no new information.

[14] Ruda (1993), p. 466.

[15] Ruda (1993), pp. 465, 541.

[16] Ruda (1993), pp. 465-466.

[17] Lowe (1993b), pp. 64-65 acknowledges this joint use of arms, but is incorrect in suggesting here that the number of surviving examples makes it uncommon.

[18] On this theme in relation to our understanding of gender inequality in Renaissance Florence, which borrows much from social anthropologists understanding of social relationships, see Kuehn (1996) and, with reference to its application to women's art patronage, see Jenkens (2001), pp. 82-83.

[19] C. Elam, 'Cosimo de' Medici and San Lorenzo', in Ames-Lewis (1992), p. 175 and n.75.

[20] See above chapter 2 for reference to Lucrezia's possible representation in scenes depicting *The Visitation*, *The Birth of St John the Baptist* and *The Birth of the Virgin* in frescoes in the Tornabuoni family chapel.

[21] Lowe (1993b), p. 63.

[22] Zuraw (1993), at p. 317. See now the remarks by Geraldine Johnson on the problematic nature of female portrait busts. She suggests that they lack the individualised features common to the busts of male sitters, instead conforming to an idealised model of female beauty. G.A. Johnson, 'Family Values: Sculpture and the Family in Fifteenth-Century Florence', in Ciappelli & Rubin (2000), pp. 215-233, at pp. 227-229.

[23] Zuraw (1993), pp. 319, 323. See now, Kent (1997), p. 5, for a discussion of the current debate concerning this sculpture and its identity, with full bibliography.

[24] On this theme, see C.E. King, Medieval and Renaissance Matrons, Italian Style', *Zëitschrift für Kunstgeschicte* **55** (1992), pp. 342-393, esp. pp. 372-373, 380, 387, 391; C.E. King, 'Women as Patrons: Nuns, Widows and Rulers', in *Siena, Florence, and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400* ed. D. Norman, v. 2: *Case Studies* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 243-266; King (1998); Anderson (1996), pp. 129-138, and other relevant articles in this issue of *Renaissance Studies* devoted to female art patronage.

[25] Valone (1992), pp. 59-65. Cf. the patronage by women of architecture for the Catholic reforming orders of the mid-sixteenth century. C. Valone, 'Architecture as a Public Voice for Women in Sixteenth Century Rome', *Renaissance Studies* **15** (3) (2001), pp. 301-327; O. Hufton, 'Altruism and Reciprocity: The Early Jesuits and Their Female Patrons', in *ibid.* pp. 328-353 and J. Heideman, 'The Unravelling of a Woman's Patronage of Franciscan Propaganda in Rome', *Renaissance Studies* **15** (4) (2001), pp. 500-513.

[26] Ginevra's visit to Le Murate is referred to in MAP 106, 26, 18/11/1461. (All archival references are to the ASF unless otherwise indicated.) Lucrezia was asked to assist a relative of a nun in Le Murate by its abbess, see Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 155-156 (letter 106, 19/4/1479). Clarice received two letters from Le Murate, see MAP 85, 118, 13/6/1474;

MAP 35, 225, 27/2/1477/8. For Piero's soliciting of masses for Cosimo's soul from Santa Verdiana and Le Murate, see Strocchia (1992), p. 185. On Lorenzo's relationship with Le Murate, see Kent (1995). Le Murate also attracted the patronage of Argentina Soderini, wife of the permanent head of the Florentine Republic, Piero Soderini, between 1502 and 1512. The convent later received the support of Catherine de Medici, Queen of France who had spent time there as a young child and of Queen Leonor of Portugal (1458-1525), about all of whom see K. Lowe, 'Rainha D. Lenor of Portugal's Patronage in Renaissance Florence and Cultural Exchange', in K. Lowe (ed.) *Cultural Links Between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 225-248.

[27] Strocchia (1992), p. 185.

[28] Cited in K. Lowe 'Nuns and Choice: Artistic Decision-Making in Medicean Florence', in E. Marchand & A. Wright (eds) *With and Without the Medici: Studies in Tuscan Art and Patronage 1434-1530* (Aldershot & Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 129-153, quotation at p. 143. 'per l'amore di Dio ... perchè cognoscono el detto monastero de Sancta Verdiana esser in summa necessità e streteza'.

[29] P.O. Kristeller (ed.) *Supplementum ficinianum* v. 1 (Florence: Olschki, 1937), pp. 185-187.

[30] This epistle is discussed in the editor's introduction to V. da Bisticci, *Il libro delle lodi delle donne* (ed.) G. Lombardi, (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 1999), pp. xliv-xlvi.

[31] MAP 30, 409, n.d./n.m./1474.

[32] Lowe (1998), p. 142.

[33] Cited in F.W. Kent, 'Lorenzo de' Medici at the Duomo' in T. Verdon & A. Innocenti (eds) *La cattedrale e la città: Saggi sul Duomo di Firenze, Atti del VII Centenario del Duomo di Firenze* 3 vols (Florence: Edifer Edizioni Firenze, 2001), v. 1 pp. 340-368, quotation at p. 355 n. 85. '... i paio di paramenti di brocchato d'oro'.

[34] See Paoletti (1992) and the relevant sections of Kent (2000), esp. Part III and the index.

[35] Paoletti (1992), p. 215 n 51.

[36] Paoletti (1992), p. 215 n.51. 'insieme cholla madre cioè mona Chontessina'.

[37] L. Polizzotto, 'Lorenzo il Magnifico, Savonarola and Medici Dynasticism', in Toscani (1993), pp. 331-355, at p. 339.

[38] Elam (1992), pp. 42-55 and pp. 78-80.

[39] CRS 111, 39, c. 23^{r-v}.

[40] The accounts of Filippo da Gagliano document Clarice's pawning of jewellery and a religious painting in 1480. Filippo gave the jewellery to his mother, Mona Ginevra. The jewellery and painting was redeemed in February 1484. See now on this man and his account book, Brown (2002), pp. 122-123, with the specific reference to Clarice at p. 123. The reference to property from which Clarice received rent in 1484 is in A. Doren, *Le arti fiorentine* v. 1 (Florence: Le Monnier, 1918), p. 406 n. 3. See below chapter 4 for a discussion of Clarice's eldest daughter Lucrezia and daughter in law Alfonsina respectively pawning goods to help finance their efforts to return the Medici men to Florence in the mid-1490s.

[41] Of particular use on this point is Kuehn (2001), pp. 103-107.

[42] Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 37 makes this statement without providing any evidence. D'Addario (1964), p. 306 repeats Pieraccini's assertion. See too, n. 45 below for further discussion of this point.

[43] Richa (1754-1762), v. 8 pp. 347-360, at p. 348; On the convent of S. Lucia, see also E. Paatz & W. Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz: ein Kunstgeschichtliches Handbuch* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1940-1954), v. 2 pp. 602-605; O. Fantozzi-Micali & P. Roselli, *Le soppresioni de conventi in Firenze: riuso trasformazione da secolo XVIII in poi* (Florence: LEF, 1980), pp. 182-183.

[44] Richa (1754-1762), v. 8 p. 348.

[45] Richa (1754-1762), v. 8 p. 348. The capitalisation is in the text. 'presero a beneficare il luogo di Santa Lucia .... Comprarono queste Dame e' Case e terreni contingui per ampliare i dormentori sino a 120 celle murando, Stanze, Sale, Capelle, e da' fondamenti rifacendo una Chiesa voltata con la Porta grande in Via di San Gallo'. Pieraccini may have confused Contessina Bardi with the Contessina mentioned in this passage, who was actually the wife of a supporter of Savonarola, namely, Giuliano Salviati. See Polizzotto (1994), p. 246 n. 32. However, future research may provide concrete evidence to support Contessina Bardi's involvement in earlier building works at Santa Lucia.

[46] F.W. Kent, 'New Light on Lorenzo de' Medici's Convent at Porta San Gallo', *Burlington Magazine* **124** (1982), pp. 292-294.

[47] On the date of the rebuilding works, see Fantozzi-Micali & Rosselli (1983), p. 183. On Lorenzo's plans for urban expansion in this area see C. Elam, 'Lorenzo de' Medici and the Urban Development of Renaissance Florence', *Art History* **1** (1) (1978), pp. 43-66; C. Elam, 'Lorenzo's Architectural and Urban Policies', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 357-383. CRS 111, 39 contains much evidence of building at Santa Lucia in the late 1490s, but not under the auspices of the Medici.

[48] MAP 80, 106, 9/6/1507. '...chome quando e' murorono quelle volte di Santa Lucia, [in 1490] la buona memoria della Signoria della Contessa [Caterina di Sanseverino] volle danari dal bancho [Medici] e li furono neghati per l'absenzia della buona memoria del Magnifico Piero che non si trovava in Firenze ....'

[49] On Cilia's condemnation, see P. Parenti, *Storia fiorentina: I: 1476-78, 1492-96* (ed.) A. Matucci (Florence: Olschki, 1994), p. 277. For her accounts of 1494 with the Medici bank, see MAP 80,44 c. 147 $^{r-v}$, which documents Cilia's lending of the money to Caterina di Sanseverino.

[50] MAP 80, 106, 9/6/1507. '[V]ogliono molestare me.... Io non sia molestata da quello non debbo, che in fatto sapete bene che prestai solo el nome alli danarai [sic] andarono nella muraglia di Sancta Lucia'.

[51] Parenti (1994), p. 125.

[52] Acq e Doni, vol. 293, unfoliated. 'alcune stanze verso la via che va a San Marco'. Cited in Strocchia (1992), p. 231. I am using the translation of Sharon Strocchia. The date of Caterina's death is unknown, but she probably died about 1504, when Alfonsina received her Orsini inheritance. The nuns may have been referring to an earlier document. On the practice of corrody, that is, of married women and widows being granted a cell in a convent in return for a donation or a testamentary bequest, see K. Lowe, 'Female Strategies for Success in a Male Ordered World: the Benedictine Convent of *Le Murate* in Florence in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', *Studies in Church History* **27** 1990, pp. 209-221 at pp. 219-220.

[53] Archivio di S. Marco, Monastero di S. Lucia, n.d. 'estratti di cronica', unfoliated. The document is a later copy. 'Medici, Alfonsina di Piero, benefattrice del convento'.

[54] See below chapter 5.

[55] Richa (1754-1762), v. 10 p. 346. 'nuovi chiostri, dormentori ed officine'. I have been able to find out nothing further about Lucrezia's patronage of this convent.

[56] Hurtubise (1985), p. 270 and n. 12 on the 1533 purchase. For the burial chapel, see *ibid.* pp. 106, 309-312.

[57] Richa (1754-1762), v. 8 p. 251.

[58] C. Re, *Girolamo Benivieni fiorentino: cenni sulla vita e sulle opere* (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1906), p. 350 (letter 46, 20/9/1530). Cf. p. 354 (letter 52, 17/4/1531).

[59] Tornabuoni (1993), Appendix 1.

[60] Tornabuoni (1993), p. 24 n.90; P. Salvadori, 'Rapporti personali, rapporti di potere nella corrispondenza di Lorenzo de' Medici', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 125-146, at p.129; A.

Lillie, 'Lorenzo de' Medici's Rural Investments and Territorial Expansion', *Rinascimento* n.s. **33** (1993), pp. 53-67.

[61] Heazlewood (1999), ch. 4 discusses this theme in relation to Medici patronage of convents in Pisa, including Lucrezia's.

[62] On Cosimo and Fiesole, see F. Ames-Lewis, (1992). On Giovanni and the Medici villa, see Lillie (1993a), pp. 189-205, and the discussion on Ginevra Alessandri in chapter 1 above.

[63] C.S. II, 51. III, c. 148^{r-v}.

[64] N.A. 10200, 8^{r-v}, 11/4/'1476, quotation at 8^{v}. 'da figliuoli et de[s]cendenti maschi di detta Mona Lucretia et per lei mentre viverà'.

[65] C.S. II, 51.III, c.148^{r-v}, esp. 148^{v} that cites the *provvisioni* from 1494 until 1506 as found in the *Deliberazioni* of the *Signoria*. I was unable to locate these.

[66] Manoscritti, 176, Busta 9, unfoliated. 'Badia Fiesolana... Quarta capella da detta banda dieci milla martiri, funne padronata Madonna Lucrezia, madre di Lorenzo de' Medici', from a document of 1508. Manoscritti, 625, Badia Fiesolana, 1432-1474. 'Ultima capella di questa banda fu fata da Madonna Lucrezia de' Medici, madre di Lorenzo il Magnifico...' from a document of 1632, which includes the Tornabuoni coat of arms next to this entry.

[67] MAP 32, 23, 24/1/1475/6, and MAP 33,34, 23/3/1475/6. Both letters were written by Giovanni Lanfredini on Lucrezia's behalf.

[68] Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 128-129 (letter 79, 29/10/1473), quotation at p. 128. 'de' fatti del disegno vostro della cappella in San Marco et di Santa Viviano ... mi pare che Francesco et Zanobi dalla Parte mutassino proposito della cappella e che le colonne non saranno di bisogno'.

[69] Tornabuoni (1993), pp.76-77, (letter 29, 30/10/1473), quotation at p. 76. 'Io ho la vostra [lettera] per la quale intes(i), quanto dite et chon che rispecto haver facto circa la cappella. Di tutto vi comendo'.

[70] See the comments in Lowe (1993b) and Lowe (1996), p. 28.

[71] King (1992), pp. 342-393; King (1995), pp. 243-266; King (1998). For an example of a widow commissioning an altarpiece for her confraternity, see Eckstein (1995), p. 113.

[72] MAP 21, 257, 11/9/1471. 'fratri hordine et convento di Sancta Maria di Cigoli', for her to provide either 'uno panno al tabernacolo di Nostra Donna per suo ornamento ... o sì vero di far dipigniere la storia in piccole figure di Nostra Donna in una tavoletta che è sotto detto tabernacolo'.

[73] Cited in Henderson (1994), p. 226.

[74] The various members of the Medici family's constant battles with gout and arthritis are well covered by Pieraccini (1986) v. 1. On the acquisition of Bagno a Morbo and its development by Lucrezia, see Tornabuoni (1993), p. 26 and references cited there. Her correspondence from the baths in 1477 is in *ibid.* pp. 81-88, and the works there are discussed on pp. 150-152.

[75] MAP 99, 33, 19/2/1476/7.

[76] Payments for work on Bagno a Morbo are recorded in MAP 99, 7, c. 28^{r}. The building works are described by the man supervising them, Piero Malegonnelle, in Tornabuoni (1993), pp. 150-151 (letter 102, 5/4/1478). Further information on this project is found in Pezzarossa (1978), p. 17, and in Chambers (1992), pp. 18-19. See too, Kent (1997), pp. 9-10. There is a photograph of the remains of Bagno a Morbo in Mack (2000), p. 261 (fig. 5).

[77] Chambers (1992), pp. 20, 24-26.

[78] On Florence's relations with Volterra, see L. Fabbri, 'Patronage and its Role in Government: The Florentine Patriciate in Volterra' in Connell & Zorzi (2000), pp. 225-241, with Medici visits to Volterra to frequent baths at p. 239.

[79] Franco (1990), pp. 88-89. '[E] di tutto m'ànno a pagare, chè credo in questo anno avanzarne per madonna Magdalena più di quattrocento ducati ....'

[80] On the Neapolitan nobility see M.A. Visceglia, *Identità sociali: La nobilità napoletana nella prima età moderna* (Milan: Unicopli, 1998) and with reference to the Orsini and Sanseverino families, see p. 110. On the female-centred nature of Neapolitan lineages, see G. Delille, *Famiglia e proprietà nel regno di Napoli xv-xix secolo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1988), pp. 127-147; Delille (1998), 155-173, esp. pp. 163ff.

[81] Queen Giovanna I was the only contemporary woman who received an account of her life in G. Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* translated by G.A. Guarino (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963), pp. 248-250. On the two Giovannas as ruling queens of Naples, see A. Wolf, 'Reigning Queens in Medieval Europe: When, Where and Why', in J.C. Parsons (ed.) *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St Martins Press, 1993), ch. 10 at pp. 174-176.

[82] For their building projects, see King (1998), pp. 247-248.

[83] On Eleonora of Aragon as ruler and art patron, see Gundersheimer (1980); Edelstein (2000). For other Neapolitan-born female rulers, see *ibid* and the women rulers referred to in the Introduction above and the references cited there.

[84] On Mariotto Albertinelli, see L. Borgo, *The Works of Mariotto Albertinelli* (New York & London: Garland, 1976). Alfonsina is briefly referred to on pp. 6, 12. On portraiture commissioned by women in courts, see Edelstein (2000) and Reiss & Wilkins (2001).

[85] Reiss (2001), p. 128 and Vasari's text is cited at p. 146 n. 35.

[86] Reiss (2001), p. 128 for a discussion on this point. M. Spallanzani & G.B. Bertelà (eds) *Libro d'inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Associazione Amici del Bargello, 1992), p. 94. 'Uno quadro suvi ritratto al naturale la testa di madonna Alfonsina'.

[87] For the use of the theory of magnificence in Florence, see A.D. Fraser-Jenkins, 'Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* **33** (1970), pp. 162-170; Kent (1977b). Cf. republican Venice, M.L. King, 'Personal, Domestic and Republican Virtues in the Moral Philosophy of Giovanni Caldiera', *Renaissance Quarterly* **28** (4) (1975), pp. 535-574; On the court of Milan, see L. Green, 'Galvano Fiamma, Azzone Visconti and the Revival of the Classical Theory of Magnificence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* **53** (1990), pp. 98-113; On Ferrara, see Shepard (1995).

[88] Kent (2000); Shepard (1995), p. 20.

[89] Shepard (1995), pp. 20-21.

[90] P. Foster, *A Study of Lorenzo de' Medici's Villa at Poggio a Caiano* 2 vols (New York & London: Garland, 1978), v. 1 pp. 114-116, 415-419 with appropriate documentation. See also Reiss (2001), pp. 135-136 and fig. 13.

[91] The Medici style of rule after 1512 is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

[92] MAP 149, 27, cited in Reiss (2001), p. 25 n. 26. 'alla Illustrissima Madonna Alfonsina Orsina de' Medici per conto di più luoghi, cioè Poggio e Lagho [di Fucecchio] e giardino di Firenze ...'. On the purchase of the Lake at Fucecchio, see O. Tommasini, *La vita e gli scritti di Niccolò Machiavelli* (Rome: Ermanno Loescher, 1883-1911), 2 vols in 3 v. 2(2) p. 1053. On improvements to Lorenzo's garden in April 1519, on Alfonsina's orders, see Elam (1992), p. 52.

[93] C.S. III, 167, 27, 15/1/1515/16. Alfonsina to Federigho di Lorenzo Strozzi.

[94] MAP 142, 304, 12/11/1516 is published in Foster (1978), v. 1 p. 417n.363. 'E con Baccio Bigio ordinerò quanto la Signoria Vostra commette; el quale hieri tornò dal lagho e ... me ha decto che le cose vanno benissimo. Et ordinerò et lo solleciterò che lui proveda alle cose del lagho e del Poggio...'. Cf. Gheri's reference in January 1517, to wanting to know her wishes regarding security at Fucecchio so he would know what to do. Copialettere, I, 320^{v}-321^{r}, 25/1/1516/7.

[95] MAP 142, 315, 15/11/1516 is published in Foster (1978), v. 1, p. 417n. 364. '...et per finire le stalle... ordinai colli Octo di Pratica che facessino provedere qualche ducato ...'.

[96] Copialettere, I, 297[v] (14/1/1516/17).'...[S]eguirò l'ordine che la Signoria Vostra comecte et di già a Lanfredini ho pagati... 47 ducati a conto della muraglia del Poggio'.
[97] Copialettere, II, 144[v]. (9/4/1517) is published in Foster (1978), v. 1 p. 418n.367, 'non c'è più danari per la muraglia del Poggio'.
[98] On this palace, see L. Marcucci & B. Torresi, 'Palazzo Medici-Lante: un progetto mediceo in Roma e il "raggiustamento" di Onorio Longhi (I)', *Storia architettura* **5** (1982), pp. 39-62; L. Marcucci & B. Torresi, 'Palazzo Medici-Lante: un progetto mediceo in Roma e il "raggiustamento" di Onorio Longhi (II)', *Storia architettura* **6** (1983), pp. 21-44; Reiss (2001), pp. 129-130 and figs 5 & 6.
[99] Cited in Marcucci & Torresi (1982), p. 52. 'per conto d'una muraglia che vuole fare Madonna Alfonsina qui presso alla Doghana ...'.
[100] Marcucci &Torresi (1982), pp. 41-42 includes a map of the acquisitions at fig. 2. The legal documentation for one of these acquisitions dated 18 August 1514, which involved the purchase by Alfonsina of two houses from the widowed Vittoria Pucci, is in Dipl. Archivio Mediceo, 18/8/1514.
[101] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 983.
[102] On the glorification of the patrilineage of the male patron, see Kent (1977b), pp. 311-323. On women and convent patronage, see the relevant references at n. 24-26 above. Cf. the comments of King (1992), pp. 342-393 who suggests that women were absent from palace building.
[103] Jenkens (2001).
[104] Jenkens (2001).
[105] See below chapter 5.
[106] F.A. D'Accone, 'Lorenzo il Magnifico and Music', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 261-290 at p. 266 n. 18.
[107] D'Accone (1994), p. 268, n. 24. 'Piacemi la ballata riesca buona e sì t'aviso la Lucrezia l'ha compiuto d'aparare 3 dì sono e sì la canta'.
[108] A. Lanza (ed.) *Lirici Toscani del quattrocento* v. 1 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1973), pp. 667-671, quotation at p. 667. 'Magnanima, gentil, discreta e grata,/ vaga, beninga, saggia, onesta e lieta,/ ... Di stripe degna e degnamente nata'.
[109] Lanza (1973), quotation at p. 671. '...ritornare a chi ti prezia:/o 'n gabbi o 'n grembo de la tua Lucrezia'.
[110] See the references and letters to Lucrezia in Angelo Poliziano's correspondence. Del Lungo (1867), pp. 45-85.
[111] On the 'traditional' nature of Lucrezia's literary interests, see Paolo Orvieto's comments in his introduction to Tornabuoni (1992), pp. 11-37, at p. 15; Pezzarossa (1978), pp. 39-40. See above, p. 94 for further discussion of this point.
[112] See Bruni's description of an appropriate education for women, which specifically excluded the study of Latin rhetoric and oratory because this was only necessary for those in public office. Bruni (1987), p. 244. See also the references cited in chapter 1, n. 141 above on women's education.
[113] Tornabuoni (1993), pp, 122-123 (letter 74, 23/9/1473), quotation at p. 122. 'Voi havete sempre tanto lecto si pieno lo scriptoio di libri ... praticho tutto il tempo di vostra vita con valenti huomini che, non che vi si disdica raccomandare uno doctore, ma è si vergogna che voi non habbiate hauto provedere voi tutto chodesto Studio'.
[114] M. Marti, 'Belcari, Feo', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* v. 7 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1965), pp. 548-551, at p. 549.
[115] On Domenico Cavalca's writings as a popular source for Tuscan women's religious writings, see K. Gill, 'Women's Production of Religious Literature in the Vernacular, 1300-1500', in E.A. Matter & J. Coakley (eds) *Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Women: A Religious and Artistic Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

Press, 1994), pp. 64-104, at pp. 73-77. For the possibility that Lucrezia may have used Cavalca as a source for her own writings facilitated by Belcari, see Lavin (1961), p. 323. This is a far more likely explanation than that of Niccolò Valori, Lorenzo's sixteenth-century biographer, who suggested that Lucrezia translated her sacred stories from Latin. Valori (1991), p. 95.

[116] On the nature of Pulci's relationship with Lucrezia, see for example, the letter to Lorenzo, in which he refers to himself as her perpetual servant. Pulci (1962), p. 962 (letter 16, 4/12/1470). See too, Pezzarossa (1978), p. 47 and M. Martelli, 'La cultura letteraria nell'età di Lorenzo', in Garfagnini (1994), pp. 39-84 at pp. 42, 50.

[117] Pulci (1962), p. 951 (letter 7, 23/8/1466). 'Mandai a Madonna Lucretia uno sonetto; mandoti la copia'.

[118] For Lucrezia's commissioning of the text of the *Morgante,* see Pulci (1962), esp. p. 883 (canto 28, stanza 2). See now, Pulci's reference to his working on the *Morgante* in Pulci (1962), p. 962 (letter 16, 4/12/1470).

[119] On Pulci's elegy, see I. Maïer, *Ange Politien: la formation d'un poète humaniste* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), p. 367 n.2. Bellincioni's elegy is in Bellincioni (1968), v. 2 pp. 160-165.

[120] On Bellincioni, see R. Scrivano, 'Bellincioni, Bernardo', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* v. 7 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1965), pp. 687-689, esp. pp. 687-688; Bellincioni (1968).

[121] Tornabuoni (1992), p. 26.

[122] Bellincioni (1968), v. 2 pp. 87-89.

[123] MAP 80, 77, 22/8/1479 reproduced in autograph in A.M. Fortuna & C. Lunghetti (eds) *Autografi dell'Archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato* (Florence: Corradino Mori, 1977), p. 176, letter 88. 'Io ò fatto a sichurtà del vostro libro, chome d'ogn' altra simile vostra opera. Ell'è piacuta asai ad chi lla disiderava vedere'.

[124] Del Lungo, (1867), pp. 72-74 (letter 25, 18/7/1479), at p. 72.

[125] Tornabuoni (1992), pp. 15ff; Martelli (1994a), pp. 71-72, 75-76.

[126] Valori (1991), p. 93.

[127] F. Vettori, 'Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici, duca d' Urbino', in F. Vettori, *Scritti storici e politici* ed. E. Niccolini (Bari: Laterza, 1972), pp. 259-272, quotation at p. 261. '... composta per Francesco Vettori e mandata alla illustre e prudente madonna Clarice [Strozzi] ...'.

[128] Such gifting of unsolicited literary works to a possible future patron was commonplace. After all, it is well known that Niccolò Machiavelli had earlier written his most famous work, *The Prince*, without a commission and sent it to the Medici, with Cardinal Giulio de' Medici later commissioning him to write his *Florentine History.*

[129] N. Machiavelli, *Tutte le opere* (ed.) M. Martelli, (Florence: Sansoni, 1971), pp. 1200-1201 (17/11/1520), quotation at p. 1201. '... perché voi lo rassettassi con aggungiervi di certa parte della cose sua, come vi paressi'. The translation is taken from J.B. Atkinson & D. Sices (trans & eds) *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), p. 329.

[130] Lucrezia's ownership of these works is documented in G. Pampaloni, 'I ricordi segreti del Mediceo Francesco Agostino Cegia (1495-1497)', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **115** (2) (1957), pp. 188-234, at p. 211.

[131] Butters (1985), p. 65.

[132] O.Z. Pugliese, 'Girolamo Benivieni, umanista riformatore (dalla corrispondenza inedita)', *La Bibliofilia* **72** (1970), pp. 255-288, at pp. 275-276, letter 5 (8/11/1513).

[133] P.O. Kristeller, 'Francesco da Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the Sixteenth Century', in Kristeller (1969), pp. 287-336, letter at pp. 328-329. On Girolamo Benivieni as an editor in 1506 of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and Benvieni's poem in praise of him,

see S. Roush, 'Dante as Piagnone Prophet: Girolamo Benivieni's "Cantico in laude di Dante" (1506)', *Renaissance Quarterly* **55** (1) (2002), pp. 49-80.
[134] Kristeller (1969b), pp. 301-302, 324.

CHAPTER FOUR

In Exile

The women who were either born or married into the Medici family during Lorenzo de' Medici's *de facto* rule of Florence both reaped the benefits of their membership of the city's chief family during the height of its power in the late fifteenth century, and experienced the negative consequences of the family's fall from favour. The significant social, political and economic costs for the Medici of exile is nicely encapsulated in the life of Alfonsina Orsini, wife of Lorenzo's eldest son Piero de' Medici, who described the period from November 1494 until September 1512 as '19 years out of the house'.[1]

The expulsion of Piero de' Medici from Florence was a watershed. It marked the beginning of a period of crisis for the family which, in turn, facilitated opportunities for its female members to engage in activity in the public arena far beyond that exercised by the women of the previous generation, and by so doing, permanently changed the parameters of future permissible action. Lorenzo's daughters and his daughter in law cut their respective political teeth between 1494 and 1512 in their quest to aid the return of their exiled male relatives. In the process, these Medici women learnt valuable lessons about political survival. By the time of the Medici's second period of exile from Florence from May 1527 until August 1530, Lucrezia Salviati, Lorenzo's eldest daughter and the last surviving of his children, and Alfonsina's daughter Clarice Strozzi, not only did everything they could to aid the men of their families as was their duty and responsibility, they themselves became more involved in the political process. Indeed, it was the Medici women's involvement in public life that often perplexed, frustrated and angered the men of the two anti-Medicean regimes with whom they sometimes came into contact. Occasionally, this was to the Medici women's advantage, but often it was also to their detriment.

Women and Exile

The imposition of sentences of exile was common in Renaissance Italy as a useful means of punishing the opponents of a particular city-state's ruling group or family for past misdeeds and/or possible future treachery.[2] Florence was no exception. Perhaps its most famous exile was Dante Alighieri in the early fourteenth century, but he was not the only one. Male members of well-known Florentine families such as the Acciaiuoli, Alberti, Albizzi, Bardi, Brancacci, Neroni, Pazzi, Soderini, Strozzi, and of course, the Medici, suffered a similar fate at various times during the fifteenth century.[3] Because of their status as legal and political minors, women

were not held to be responsible for the political actions of the men in their families. Therefore, they were not included in these sentences. However as the female relatives of exiles they were still subject to significant political, economic and legal sanctions. A law of April 1438, promulgated by the *Otto di Guardia* (The Eight on Security) specifically stated '... that no mother, wife or female relative of a rebel or a confined person ... within ten days of the said sentence can go to the said rebels or confined persons' without the *Otto di Guardia*'s permission nor could the women leave their exiled relatives in order to return to Florence without the *Otto di Guardia*'s specific licence.[4] The penalties for disobedience were harsh, with women who broke the law incurring up to two years in the communal prison (the *Stinche*) and a two hundred florins fine for each offence.[5] Occasionally, women who breached this rule were even exiled themselves. One example was that of Margherita Ginori, wife of Dietsalvi Neroni, who was exiled in 1467 for ten years probably because she had visited her exiled husband without official permission.[6]

The women members of exile families who remained in Florence rather than joining their male relatives played a vital role in maintaining a base for the exiled men of their families within Florence, often battling to ensure that the interests of these men were protected with a view to their eventual political, social and financial rehabilitation.[7] These women also suffered severe financial and social difficulties as a result of the exile of their male family members. Usually they had only their dowries for sustenance (*alimenta*), with the family's finances and assets being subject to constant scrutiny and punitive taxation by the Florentine government.[8] Alessandra Macingi Strozzi's difficulties are the best known,[9] but other examples include the women of the families involved in the anti-Medicean plot of 1466 (Acciaiuoli, Dietsalvi, Neroni). Margery Ganz argues that the women from these families 'paid the price for the men's failure' because they had to battle to retrieve property confiscated by the Florentine government, both during the exile and for years after their husbands' or sons' return home.[10] Most exile families had considerable difficulty in finding spouses for their children because of the suspicion attached to those who associated with exiles and their families.[11] But none was subjected to such harsh treatment as that meted out to the daughters of the men involved in the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478 who were forbidden to marry Florentine men. Any Florentine who ignored this law would be considered a rebel and thereby suffer property confiscation and exile.[12] Interestingly, however, an exemption from this punishment was granted to Guglielmo de' Pazzi's daughters who were also Lorenzo de' Medici's nieces and they were given permission to marry Florentines in 1484.[13] The Medici women's experience of the effects of the exile of their male relatives in November 1494 and again in May 1527 were in many ways identical to that of women in Florence of previous generations in terms of many of the difficulties they suffered, but it was also markedly different because of the opportunities available to them for some direct political action.

1494-1512: 'Nineteen Years Out of the House'

Political upheaval often heralds both chaos and profound social change. It can sometimes create opportunities for otherwise disenfranchised groups to appear on the political stage and to influence as well as to participate in political, religious, and social action. The invasion of Italy by the French King, Charles VIII, and the expulsion of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici from Florence in November 1494 inaugurated one such period for the women of that city.[14] The women of the Medici family became more directly involved than the previous generation in the political sphere during this period of change and transition, as they worked towards the return of their men to Florence from exile and the Medici's re-establishment as the first family of the city.

None of the Medici women was included in the exile decrees of 1494 and 1495 that formally expelled Piero and his brothers Giovanni and Giuliano as well as their cousin, Giulio, from Florence.[15] The exemption of women from the sentences of exile imposed on their male relatives was common practice, as we have noted. But nonetheless the effects on the women of the Medici family of Piero's expulsion were severe and far reaching, as Alfonsina's reference to the Medici's period of exile as literally being '19 years out of the house' would suggest.[16] Like the women discussed by Margery Ganz, they also paid a heavy price for the political failure of their male relatives.[17]

Crisis and Retribution

Alfonsina was the one most immediately affected by her husband's expulsion. As Piero's wife, she was heavily involved, together with her mother Caterina di Sanseverino, in the battle to defend and protect Medici family interests with Charles VIII. The contemporary chronicler, Piero Parenti, records that: 'the wife of Piero de' Medici with her mother, *a woman of authority and management ability* [my emphasis]...' together with several male 'accomplices of Piero', attempted to persuade the French King that her husband had been unjustly expelled and should be allowed to return, while opponents of the Medici attempted to convince him otherwise.[18] The severe crisis for the Medici and their supporters caused by Piero's exile demanded that Alfonsina be involved in these negotiations, which were firmly in the domain of the political. But it may well have been Caterina di Sanseverino who took the lead with Alfonsina learning by example from this Neapolitan noblewoman who was politically experienced and astute.[19] However it seems the crisis also enabled other women in the Medici circle to be involved in the discussions, namely 'the [wife] of Lorenzo Tornabuoni with her sister and sister in law and others'.[20] These negotiations were successful, and King Charles VIII forced the Florentine government to rescind the edict declaring Piero and his brothers to be rebels, and to allow Alfonsina to stay in Florence with her two surviving young children, Lorenzo and Clarice.[21]

However, unlike other women whose husbands or sons in law were expelled from the city, Alfonsina and her mother bore the brunt of the Florentine anger

against the perceived abuses of the Medici. Bartolommeo Cerretani recounts the *Signoria*'s eviction of Alfonsina and Caterina from the Medici Palace after Charles VIII left Florence in late 1494:

> By command of the Signoria, several citizens entered the [Medici] Palace and they threw out the wife of the said Piero and his mother in law ... and first they pulled off all the jewels from their fingers and ... they sent them crying to the convent of Santa Lucia in Via San Gallo.[22]

This eviction was an unprecedented action compounded by the fact that Alfonsina was denied access to her dowry by the government. This was contrary to the law that allowed the wives or widows of exiles to claim their dowries from their husbands' estates even if the government had seized all the assets.[23] Piero Parenti condemned Alfonsina's request for her dowry to be repaid from seized Medici property as well as many other Medici demands, because he said that they were 'damaging and completely hateful to our city....'[24] His anger against the Medici was focussed upon Alfonsina whom he accused also of bribing the King with 'money and jewels' in her possession.[25]

This is the first among many descriptions by the Florentines of Alfonsina that represent her as greedy and corrupt. In fact, her actions were in accordance with her duty as a wife and mother to protect the interests of her husband and children. But in contrast to the positive views held by their contemporaries of the previous generation of Medici women who undertook such activities, the events of November 1494 and their aftermath changed all that. Any activity that could be seen to be of benefit to the Medici was now considered by the new anti-Medicean republican regime to be detrimental to Florence's recently restored liberty. Alfonsina's and her mother's participation in the political sphere was viewed as benefiting only the 'private' interests of the Medici and as such were roundly condemned by the Florentine government's supporters, regardless of their traditional 'female' character. Alfonsina's activities on behalf of her family were now unnatural, disorderly, against the common good, and dangerous; while the criticism against hers and other women's involvement became a metaphor for the abuses of Medici rule.[26] This view of them, together with Alfonsina's and Caterina's foreignness (that is, their being non-Florentines), helps to explain why they received such unusually harsh treatment from the new anti-Medicean republican regime of Florence. Paolo Giovio, papal secretary and biographer of the Medici Pope Leo X, writing in the mid-sixteenth century was far more supportive of Alfonsina's pleas to the French King, which was not surprising given his own Medicean sympathies: 'Madonna Alfonsina di Pietro ... lamented the misfortune of her small child and the ruin of the family, which she had not deserved...'.[27] His emphasis on her maternal concern for her children's welfare accorded with acceptable models of female behaviour and therefore he was able to justify Alfonsina's actions according to his pro-Medicean stance.

In May 1495 in accordance with Florentine law, Alfonsina applied to leave the city for Rome and have Piero join her there. Piero Parenti pointed to the suspicion

this aroused as a reason for the *Otto di Guardia* refusing her permission.[28] In September of that year, she fled the city and joined her husband in Siena, at which time Piero and his brother, Giuliano, who had broken the terms of their exile, were declared rebels.[29] The circumstances of her departure suggests the difficulties Alfonsina was once again having in Florence, and may indicate some collusion with her husband. While wives sometimes accompanied their husbands into exile, Alfonsina's actions were a significant departure from the prevailing model of patient wives who remained in Florence waiting out their husband's exile, which was exemplified in Vespasiano da Bisticci's account of Alessandra de' Bardi Strozzi's stoic acceptance of her husband's exile by the Medici in 1434.[30] The expulsion of Caterina di Sanseverino in March 1497 by order of the *Otto di Guardia*, 'for the good of the Republic', further highlights the fact that Alfonsina and Caterina were seen by the Florentines to be as politically dangerous as the men of the Medici family.[31]

Lucrezia Salviati's loyalty was somewhat more ambiguous, because of divided allegiances to both of her brothers and to her husband Jacopo, who was an influential supporter of the current regime.[32] Her involvement in the August 1497 plot to return Piero to Florence was well documented by contemporary observers.[33] Lucrezia was interrogated and freely admitted to spending 3000 ducats to aid her elder brother's return.[34] However, she made it clear that Jacopo was ignorant of her actions.[35] Here, Lucrezia was both acting as a 'good wife', who protected her husband from the consequences of her actions and from possible harm, and as a loyal sister, who had risked her own safety to further her natal family's interests. By so doing, Lucrezia legitimated an otherwise treasonable act, and thus was able to construct a defence of her actions in terms of her duty to aid, defend, and protect the men of her family. She was released, even though one of her interrogators thought the crime so heinous 'that she should be punished for it, even if she was a woman...'.[36] This decision to free her would have been greeted with approval by most Florentines.[37] The reasons are clear. Lucrezia escaped the death sentence meted out to five of her male co-conspirators because of her husband's influence with the republic's leader, Francesco Valori, who also thought that it was an 'evil thing to injure a woman'.[38] In this instance, Lucrezia was exempted from punishment because of Jacopo's position of influence and her gender. She was, by definition, a weak female prone to be easily led and, therefore, subject to the special protection of her husband. The regime chose to release her because it could not contemplate the reasoned political judgement of a woman, much less her physical punishment, and so chose to ignore her action. But ironically, Francesco Valori's, nephew, Niccolò, in his laudatory life of Lorenzo de' Medici, chose instead to represent Lucrezia Salviati as 'the generous and magnanimous sister [of Piero]', who assisted her brother 'with that spirit and prudence with which she was endowed and had always used, especially in unfortunate situations'.[39] Valori's description of her generosity, prudence, and skill in handling adversity was high praise indeed of a woman, as females were generally considered to be the opposite in nature.[40] This characterisation of her was indicative of the generally positive

contemporary views of Lucrezia, which illustrates how successful she was in developing an image of herself and her motives that enabled her to act on behalf of her natal family without fear of reprisal.

The ability of Alfonsina and Lucrezia to expedite effectively the return of the Medici men required money. The women who remained behind when their male relatives were exiled from Florence were expected, as we have seen, to make every effort to conserve their family's wealth and property. Medici property, including Alfonsina's dowry, was seized upon Piero's expulsion by the new Florentine government and not returned for several years. It seems that Alfonsina, Lucrezia, and Caterina di Sanseverino benefited from assistance given to them between 1495 and 1497 by the Medici partisan and henchman, Francesco d'Agostino Cegia. Cegia himself narrowly escaped imprisonment in 1494, and was executed in 1497 as a consequence of his involvement in the August conspiracy.[41] Cegia was Alfonsina Orsini's procurator and his secret account book documents Alfonsina, her mother and Lucrezia as major debtors and creditors.[42] He paid Alfonsina's bills from his account with her and provided Alfonsina with money after she left Florence via messengers who were visiting the various towns Alfonsina stayed in before she returned to Rome in late 1497.[43] As Clarice Orsini had done earlier, it was common for money to be obtained through pawning goods as well as through usury. Alfonsina, in fact, was reputed later to have acquired her wealth through her own usurious lending.[44] Lucrezia seems to have borrowed money from this man, and also pawned jewellery, books and a painting of St Jerome by Filippo Lippi with Cegia.[45]

The Beginning of the End

Piero's death in 1503 was an important turning point for the Medici and facilitated their efforts to garner support for their return. Cardinal Giovanni became the new head of the Medici in exile. Rome became a centre for pro-Medicean activity and Giovanni and Alfonsina, as the most important members of the Medici family, were a focus of the Florentine community in Rome.[46] As part of this attempt to gather support, Cardinal Giovanni hosted a banquet on the feast day of two Medicean saints, Sts Cosmas and Damian, in late September 1504 for all Florentine merchants in Rome. (We do not know if Alfonsina was present, but given the all-male nature of the gathering it is unlikely.) Forty people attended, despite a Florentine law of January 1497 prohibiting Florentines from associating with the Medici.[47] The ambassador to Rome wrote to the Florentine government on October 1st, describing the banquet as 'great and splendid.... From the Florentine nation [of merchants] every type were there, almost 7/8 of those found here'.[48]

More generally, Giovanni received assistance in his quest to gain the support of the Florentines from his older sister Lucrezia, who, according to Paolo Giovio, '... with singular prudence and manly office [... made the most of any opportunity] to raise the reputation of the family, and to rekindle the ancient good wishes of the people'.[49] Giovio's description of Lucrezia's prudence and 'manly' abilities was not only high praise; it also further illustrated her ability to escape retribution for

actions in support of the Medici. In contrast to the foreign — and quite possibly arrogant — Alfonsina, in the years after the Medici's exile from Florence, she received praise rather than blame for assisting her male relatives, because as both a Florentine and a Medici by birth she was perceived as working within rather than outside the republican Florentine tradition of women acting unselfishly to aid their families. Giovio also presents Lucrezia here in the typically female role of mediator, successfully bringing Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici and the Florentines closer together.

Giovanni's courting of the Florentines seemed to have had some success. In February 1505, Contessina and Lucrezia placed a wax life-size statue of an ill Giuliano in the church of Santissima Annunziata as a votive offering.[50] This practice had a long history among Florentines and was especially favoured by the Medici. This particular church was a major site for the placement of wax statues and sometimes silver votive images. It had previously contained a statue of Lucrezia Tornaborni and, after the Pazzi conspiracy of April 1478, images of Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici and of his murdered brother Giuliano di Piero. This church was therefore strongly associated with the Medici family and these images symbolically evoked their sacrality.[51] Not surprisingly, then, the Soderni family attempted to take over this church as a patronage site after Piero Soderini became the Republic's leader for life in 1502.[52] Therefore, what appears to be a simple and highly appropriate act of piety by two sisters in the name of their ill brother had the effect of symbolically re-establishing Medicean links with Santissima Annunziata and invoking again the notion of the Medici as Florence's holy (and chief) family. Piero Parenti's own prefatory comment to his description of this incident highlights his (and probably many others') changed attitude towards the Medici, compared to the years immediately following Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici's expulsion. '[T]he rule of the Medici for a long time had been better as then the city was always flourishing, and from then till now it has always gone from bad to worse'.[53] Parenti reports that Giuliano di Lorenzo's votive image was '.... almost life like and not dissimilar to his own face. It was visited frequently by many citizens ... who said a few words in favour of him and the [Medici] House'.[54] Not surprisingly, the *Otto di Guardia* ordered it be removed.[55]

The Medici-Strozzi Parentado

Alfonsina's visit to Florence in early 1507 to arrange for the marriage of her daughter, Clarice, as well as to reclaim her dowry, also had profound political implications. According to the chronicler Filippo Nerli 'she was visited and entertained by many citizens who had belonged to the Medici party, or ... were against the Republic's leader [Piero Soderini]. And the Salviati also much favoured her.... She went about entertaining those that seemed to her of possible benefit to the Medici...'.[56] Alfonsina's's purpose in visiting Florence, therefore, was not merely that of a mother searching for a suitable son in law, or of a widow wishing to recover her dowry. In a fashion similar to the banquet and the placing of the wax statue in Santissima Annunziata, it was an attempt to enlist support from the

Florentines for a return by the Medici to their native city. Therefore, before returning to Rome, Alfonsina 'held secret meetings to marry her daughter Clarice [to someone] in Florence'.[57]

The ensuing *parentado* with the Strozzi — an old enemy of the Medici who had exiled the groom's father and grandfather — was a strategically important part of the family's plan to return and caused immense controversy.[58] According to Cerretani, when news reached Florence from Rome in early December 1508 of the betrothal of Clarice to Filippo di Filippo di Matteo Strozzi the issue '... was rejected for a long time as no one could believe it ... there was great agitation over it in the city'.[59]

This situation highlighted the ambiguity of the political status of women of exiled families. Francesco Guicciardini argued that the law regarding rebels specifically 'had exempted the women'.[60] Filippo was accused by the *Otto di Guardia* on 12 January 1509 of consorting with rebels, but argued that Florentine law did not prohibit marriage with the daughters of rebels and that Alfonsina and her brothers in law were never declared rebels but were only banned from Florentine territory.[61] The *Otto di Guardia* fined Filippo 500 florins and confined him to Naples for three years.[62] They declared then that henceforth Piero's brothers and his son, Lorenzo, were to be considered rebels but that Clarice was not.[63]

The complexity and fluidity of the political situation in Florence was further highlighted when it was revealed that Piero Soderini had tried to arrange a marriage between Clarice and his nephew with Cardinal Giovanni 'via the mediation of Madonna Lucrezia, wife of Jacopo Salviati', who was again being cast in the role of mediator between the Medici and their opposition.[64] But negotiations fell through and disenchanted with Soderini, Jacopo and his wife were then heavily involved in the marriage negotiations with the Strozzi.[65] On orders from Rome Lucrezia continued on with her mediating role, going to Piero Soderini and begging for clemency for Filippo Strozzi.[66]

But Lucrezia was not the only Medici woman in Florence working towards both Filippo's and the Medici's return. Clarice and Filippo had quietly married in Rome, and, with Filippo exiled to Naples, his wife returned to Florence and became a focus for those wishing a change in government.[67] As Melissa Bullard has noted, Clarice's considerable dowry of 4000 ducats made her 'above all a tool of Medici family policy, a pawn to be risked for the greater good of securing their family's future in Florence'.[68] But this did not mean that she was politically passive. In a further illustration of the web of interlocking social and political networks in Florence, Clarice used her position as Soderini's godchild to persuade him to allow Filippo to return (which eventually happened in December 1509, some two years before the expiry of the sentence of exile).[69] Here, she effectively used the traditional female role of a mediator to aid her spouse in his time of travail.

Alfonsina's Dowry War

In the aftermath of the controversy concerning the Medici-Strozzi *parentado* the Florentine government confiscated all of the Medici property in Florence and Pisa and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Tower Officials who were responsible for the affairs of rebels. Alfonsina's dowry of 12,000 ducats was included in this confiscation.[70] This dowry confiscation is further evidence of how much more difficult the Florentine government made the lives of the Medici women than that of women from earlier exiled families. Alfonsina's subsequent attempts to reclaim the money were in accordance with the legal right of the wives or widows of exiles to reclaim their dowries, as we have already seen. In many cases this money was these women's only source of income, but this was not the situation Alfonsina faced. Apart from her considerable dowry of 12,000 ducats, she received the Castello San Angelo, near Tivoli, as part of her Orsini inheritance in 1504 as heir to her mother.[71] In addition, Alfonsina did have funds available from the usurious lending described above, and in 1509, prior to a settlement with the Florentine government over the restitution of her dowry being reached, she purchased the Palazzo Medici in Rome, formally the residence of Cardinal Giovanni, from Giuliano and Lorenzo for 11,000 ducats.[72] While the desire to have her dowry returned was important to Alfonsina, I would suggest that the major reason for her taking this action was to retrieve Medici property as part of the family's overall strategy for returning to Florence. It is probably not coincidental that in 1505 Maddalena made a claim on her dowry.[73] This may have not been deliberate but it was certainly entirely appropriate at a time when, led by Cardinal Giovanni from Rome, the Medici family were making a concerted effort to enlist support and thus needed access to all the available Medici patrimony.

In August 1507 Cardinal Francesco Soderini was asked by the Florentine government to help find a solution to the problem of the return of Alfonsina's dowry, but it took a further three years to resolve.[74] In addition to the 12,000 ducats that was her dowry, Alfonsina was demanding a further 3,000 owed to her mother.[75] Cerretani notes that an agreement could not be reached with Alfonsina in December of that year.[76] Accordingly, the Florentine government passed a law in early 1508 that allowed Communal officials to control and manage all property and assets owned and money owned by or owed to the Medici since 1494.[77] In Cerretani's view, this situation had dominated government business: 'Here in Florence nothing was done except for the making of a law concerning the actions of the Medici....'.[78]

Alfonsina battled strenuously to retrieve the money owed. The surviving correspondence from the Florentine ambassadors in Rome to the *Signoria* between May 1508 and June 1510 provides ample evidence of this battle.[79] The ambassadors gave detailed accounts of events and negotiations in Rome relating to this dispute. In the earliest letter of this correspondence, the ambassador, Roberto Acciaiuoli, informed the *Signoria* of his view on the matter. 'And I have sought out the viewpoint of many people I have encountered here, the majority of whom believe that if she had asked for what was owed her when she left Florence, as the

other creditors did, then she would not have to suffer this damage'.[80] However, obviously Alfonsina did not hold such a view and was willing to act decisively to obtain what she thought legitimately belonged to her as part of her dowry restitution. In early June 1508, the ambassador told the *Signoria* that a cardinal had told him that Alfonsina had had Pope Julius II informed of the matter at hand 'and she sought an interdict against the cathedral church of the city [of Florence]'.[81] The pope then asked the cardinal to whom Alfonsina had spoken to investigate the matter and the ambassador, in turn, took care to inform the said cardinal of what had been done to satisfy Alfonsina's demands, in his view.[82] Some two months later, Acciaiuoli told the *Signoria* that her representative had visited him and despite his assurances of a speedy resolution, the representative's threat to make the dispute a public matter and the consequent dishonour to Florence was of concern to the ambassador.[83] Alfonsina's efforts to involve the Roman Curia in this dispute testifies to her ability to access those in power in order to advance her cause.

The matter dragged on into the New Year and the new Florentine ambassador, Matteo di Niccolò, sent an account of the costs incurred thus far in the dispute to the *Signoria*, justifying the huge amounts of money spent by reminding these men that they wished the matter resolved as soon as possible.[84] The ambassador often complained of the various difficulties involved in trying to resolve this dispute with Alfonsina that was still ongoing in November 1509. He wrote on the 21st of that month that he had thought that the dispute would have been over by now, blaming its lack of resolution on the supposed unpredictability of the suspicious female: 'But because she is a woman and suspicious we have not yet come to an agreement'.[85] Alfonsina too, must have been frustrated with the lack of progress on the issue and perhaps with the ambassador himself. Earlier in November, Alfonsina herself wrote to the *Signoria* saying: 'God is my witness that I have always desired that the matter of my dowry be resolved peacefully and without litigation or any clamour', and then, after asserting her affection and esteem for Florence and its government, Alfonsina asked that the *Signoria* write to the ambassador.[86] Such protestations of loyalty to the republican regime were probably part of the rhetoric Alfonsina employed that was designed to ensure that the government would be less suspicious of her motives and would not stall proceedings further out of hatred for those with a Medici connection. She continued on, reiterating her desire for a speedy resolution to the dispute and ended the letter by representing herself as an innocent victim in this whole affair. In direct contrast to the wily, manipulative woman that the ambassadors portrayed, Alfonsina implored her readers '... to consider the situation in which I must find myself'.[87]

The Florentine government decided to restore her dowry in April 1510 and passed a law to that effect.[88] But this did not end the matter, as disagreements between the Florentine ambassador and Alfonsina over costs continued into June.[89] Alfonsina apparently had to appear in the *Mercanzia* court (the Merchants Court), which found in her favour on August 13, 1510.[90] Finally, on the 20th of September, the government acquiesced to the dowry's restitution and the

agreement was notarised on the 12th of October of that year.[91] Her tenacity in this instance is indicative of Alfonsina's ability to negotiate the legal system (albeit via a male procurator) as well as to fight the Florentine government. It is evidence also of her determination to see the Medici regain control of their assets. It is ironic that Florentine law, which permitted women to retrieve dowries from the property of their exiled spouses because it was assumed they had no other source of income, could be used by a wealthy Alfonsina not for her own maintenance, but to aid the return of the exiled Medici.

The Return

Alfonsina and Lucrezia's involvement in plots to restore the Medici had not ended. In December 1510, Alfonsina and Filippo Strozzi apparently angrily discussed his decision to inform the government of a plot to kill Soderini by one of Filippo's friends, Prinzivalle della Stufa,.[92] Lucrezia had also involved herself by supposedly urging this man's father to advise his son to flee, and she was accused of writing the young man's mother an unsigned letter that stated that Prinzivalle sent it.[93]

When the Medici finally returned to Florence in September 1512, it was with the aid of Spanish troops. Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici entered the city on the first day of September as a private citizen, and some two weeks later called a *parlamento*, a gathering of politically eligible males, who voted to restore the Medici to their previous position of honour in Florence. In the two weeks between Giuliano's arrival in Florence and the calling of a *parlamento*, extensive discussions took place between members of the Medici family and their supporters regarding the type of government that the Medici should lead. Cerretani records the presence of Giuliano and 'all of his sisters' at these discussions in the Medici Palace.[94] Contessina and Lucrezia along with several others apparently tried to persuade him to call a *parlamento*.[95] Their presence and participation in this political discussion was possible because the 'private' Medici palace had effectively displaced the 'public' governmental palace as the locus of decision making, thereby making it possible for Contessina and Lucrezia to be involved. This complete displacement of the locus of government effectively meant that the rigid distinction between a 'private', female domestic arena and a male 'public', political one — which had slowly been disintegrating from the 1460s onwards — had now all but collapsed. It foreshadowed the increasing involvement of the women of the Medici family in areas of political activity not previously available to them, which they would now be able to enter because of the Medici's increasingly seigneurial mode of rule.

Alfonsina was in Rome and wrote to Giulio de' Medici on the day of the *parlamento*, desperately wanting information 'because here various things are said and everyone says something [different] ... what is happening, please advise me of every detail...'.[96] She ended her letter by asking again that he tell her 'what is happening over there'.[97] It is ironic that, after all her efforts to ensure that the Medici returned to Florence, Alfonsina was not involved in the actual event. But despite her own and her sisters' in law significant contributions to the return of the

Medici family to the city, once the period of exile was over the men of the family took over the reins of government. Florence was not yet ready to be governed by a woman.

1527-1530: Leaving Florence Free for Its Citizens

The Medici's second period of exile again provided an opportunity for the women of the family to engage in direct political action when required. In May 1527, Alessandro and Ippolito de' Medici, the teenage natural sons of Giulio de' Medici (Clement VII) and Giuliano de' Medici respectively together with their papal-appointed advisor and guardian Silvio Passerini, fled Florence because of the pro-Republican, anti-Medicean feeling that was being openly expressed in the city once news was received of the Sack of Rome by Imperial troops and the imprisonment of Pope Clement VII in Castel Sant'Angelo.[98] Contemporary and near-contemporary chroniclers all record that the Medici men left Florence at the particular instigation of Clarice Strozzi.[99] In the words of one chronicler: '... and Clarice began ... with grave and injurious words to say heatedly to the Cardinal of Cortona [Silvio Passerini] and to Ippolito, that they must depart Florence, and leave the regime and the city free for its citizens'.[100] As another chronicler noted, by leaving the city, the men saved their own lives and possessions.[101] She and her spouse Filippo Strozzi, had strong republican sympathies and it was at her husband's request that Clarice acted as she did.[102] But as the chroniclers suggest, she not only sought to persuade Passerini, Ippolito and Alessandro to leave, she also berated them for their style of rule that she saw as depriving Florentines of their liberty.[103] This suggests that Clarice was as equally committed to a change in government as her husband was.

However, despite her support of the new regime, the republican government seized Medici property rightfully belonging to her as heir to Alfonsina's dotal goods.[104] In November 1527, Filippo Strozzi reported to his brother Lorenzo: 'Clarice would like one favour from me before she dies, that is to enter the house at Poggio a Caiano with the three farms ... as previously they were free gifts from the Commune to her [late] mother on account of her dowry'.[105] The irony was that Clarice's status as a *Medici* woman made her vulnerable to the anti-Medicean hatred of the very regime that she and her husband had helped to bring about.

Lucrezia and Jacopo Salviati also ironically did not enjoy the support of the new government. It declared Jacopo a rebel despite his well-known republican sympathies.[106] Only a handful of letters between the couple survive, most written from June 1527 onwards when Jacopo was in Rome, imprisoned with the pope in Castello San Angelo as a hostage to the Holy Roman Emperor.[107] At that time Lucrezia was in Venice, having taken refuge there in mid-May.[108] (Her grandson, Cosimo, and his mother Maria Salviati were also there.[109]) As usually happened to the wives of political exiles or rebels, Lucrezia experienced financial difficulties even though she could not legally be included in this decree because of her gender. Lucrezia wrote from Venice to Jacopo on 28 June 1527, telling him that she was

'with few clothes and less money, because we left Florence without arranging anything and in fear'.[110] Jacopo was able to arrange for money to be sent to Venice to assist her.[111] Some two weeks earlier, he wrote to 'my dear Lucrezia' to inform her that an agreement had been reached with the Imperial troops that encouraged him to believe that he would soon be released. To assist in the speedy payment of a ransom, he wrote: 'I would like you to write or to have written [letters] on our behalf, to all places where I have business partnerships, as without your letters ... they will pay nothing...'.[112] Lucrezia's status as Jacopo's wife made her subject to his command, but this gendered position also gave her the authority with which to work to secure his release. (Clarice had done likewise in January 1527 when she successfully sought aid from Pope Clement VII for her husband, Filippo Strozzi, who was held captive in Naples by the Spanish.[113]) Jacopo was finally released in December 1527.[114] Lucrezia, in turn, upon hearing that the pope had finally also been freed in January 1528, asked her spouse to appeal to the pontiff to help secure the release of a cardinal still held captive, because the man's mother had requested her help.[115]

Lucrezia's exclusion from the decree of exile against the Medici did not mean that she was considered to be above suspicion by those nervous about Medici ambitions to return to Florence. According to Benedetto Varchi, after August 1528 the Venetians became suspicious of her because the pope had ordered the refortification of the Romagna to assist in his return to Rome, and the Venetians thought that he wanted to retake the cities of Ravenna and Cervia, both within Venetian territory. Lucrezia was warned of this and left for Cesena immediately.[116] In a similar fashion to the events in the aftermath of the August 1497 conspiracy, Lucrezia was prosecuted by the *Otto di Guardia* and examined by the Florentine *Signoria* in late January/February 1529 because of an unspecified 'accusation' made against her on the 17th of January. However, she was allowed to plead through a procurator and no further action was taken.[117] Obviously, the republican regime of 1527-1530 set her free because it thought similarly to the earlier republican regime of 1494-1512, that it was an 'evil thing to injure a woman'.[118]

Thus their gender protected the Medici women from being formally exiled in 1527. But as their enemies' punitive actions against them suggest, Lucrezia Salviati and Clarice Strozzi were known to have the ability to influence directly the political process with the intention of aiding the return of the Medici to power in Florence.

In many instances, at the conclusion of a crisis such as war or exile, women often left the public arena to return to their traditional domestic duties. The women of the Medici family were constrained to work within gendered spaces, but the increasingly powerful position of the Medici after September 1512 gave them far greater room to manoeuvre than other women. During the first period of exile the Medici women acted in response to the crisis of exile but were not involved in any political events that helped bring about the fall of the Medici regime. But during the second period of exile, having learnt the skills necessary for political survival, Clarice Strozzi actively and successfully sought to interfere in the political process to further her own and her husband's desire for a republican government. Her able

political interference in 1527 was probably learnt years earlier in Rome at the court of the two Medici pontiffs, together with Lucrezia Salviati and the other women of the Medici family. As we shall see, there they exercised considerable political power, influence and authority during the first two decades of the sixteenth century.

Notes

[1] ASF MAP 137, 652v, 16/8/1515. 'xviiii anni fuori di casa'. For the context of Alfonsina's remarks, see below chapter 6. (All archival references are to the ASF unless otherwise stated.)

[2] On the nature of exile in Italy, see J.K. Laurent, 'The Exiles and the Signory: The Case of Ferrara', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* **11** (2) (1981), pp. 281-297, esp. pp. 282-286; R. Starn, *Contrary Commonwealth: The Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University Of California Press, 1982); L. Sozzi et al., *L'Exil et l'exclusion dans la culture italienne* (Aix en Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1991, C. Shaw, *The Politics of Exile in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); A. Brown, 'Insiders and Outsiders: The Changing Boundaries of Exile', in W.J. Connell (ed.) *Society & Individual in Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 337-383.

[3] On Dante Alighieri's exile, see Starn (1982), esp. chs 2 and 3, and articles by V. Russo and R. Stella, in Sozzi et al. (1991). On the Alberti, see S. Foster Baxendale, 'Exile in Practice: The Alberti in and Out of Florence 1401-1428', *Renaissance Quarterly* **44** (4) (1991), pp. 720-756; On the Acciaiuoli, Neroni, and Soderini, see M.A. Ganz, 'Paying the Price for Political Failure: Florentine Women in the Aftermath of 1466', *Rinascimento* n.s. **34** (1994), pp. 237-257. The Pazzi are also mentioned briefly in this article on pp. 249-250. On the Strozzi in exile, see H. Gregory, 'A Florentine Family in Crisis: The Strozzi in the Fifteenth Century' (unpublished *Ph.D Thesis* University of London, 1981) and Gregory (1985), pp. 1-21. On the Albizzi, Bardi, Brancacci, and Medici, see D. Kent, 'I Medici in esilo: una vittoria di famiglia e una disfatta personale', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **132** (1) (1974), pp. 3-63 and Kent (1978).

[4] O.G. e.r. 224, 3^{r} (24/4/1438). '... che niuna madre, moglie o donna d'alcuno ribello o confinato ... doppo x dì dai dì di detta sententia non possa andare a detti ribelli o confinati'.

[5] Examples of women being imprisoned and fined for breaching this law can be found at O.G. e.r. 224, 75^{v}-76^{r} (22/11/1439) and 76^{r-v} (16/6/1440).

[6] O.G. e.r. 224, 149^{v} (10/11/1467); Ganz (1994), p. 244. Other examples of women being sentenced to exile, possibly also for breaching this law, can be found at O.G. e.r. 224, 114^{r} (23 or later/8/1462). Fortunately for the woman concerned the bulletin was not promulgated and so she did not incur her sentence of exile for life. A second woman's sentence to exile for ten years was promulgated. See *ibid.* 121^{v} (8/6/1464).

[7] On the effects of exile on the women left behind, see Foster Baxendale (1991); Ganz (1994). For an analysis of Alessandra Strozzi's efforts to maintain her exiled sons' patrimony and to ensure their return, see Tomas (1992), ch. 3; Crabb (2000). Heather Gregory has described Alessandra 'as the lynchpin of her sons' connections with their kinsmen, in-laws and *amici* in Florence'. Gregory (1981), p. 193. See now, G Ulysse, 'De la séperation et de l'exil: les letteres de l'Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi', in Sozzi et al. (1991), pp. 89-112. More generally, the difficulties facing women of exiled families throughout Italy, including Florence, are discussed in Shaw (2000), pp. 53-54, 120-123.

[8] On women's right to use their dowries for financial support upon their husbands' exile and the competition that sometimes occurred between the government and the women concerned for these assets, see Kirshner (1985), pp. 256-302, esp. pp. 275-278.

[9] On Alessandra Macingi Strozzi's difficulties, see Tomas (1992), ch. 3 and Crabb (2000).
[10] Ganz (1994), pp. 239-257, quotation at p. 239. Alessandra di Raffaello Acciaiuoli was one such woman. She battled for the return of Acciaiuoli property from the Medici for more than 40 years after her husband returned from exile in 1484. See *ibid.* pp. 253-256 and O. Merisalo (ed.) *Le Collezioni Medicee nel 1495: Deliberazioni degli ufficiali dei ribelli* (Florence: Associazione Amici del Bargello, 1999), pp. 21, 30, 48, which documents Alessandra's attempts to reclaim property from the Medici in 1494 and 1495.
[11] On this theme, see Kent (1981), pp. 22-39; Foster Baxendale (1991); Ganz (1994); Crabb (2000).
[12] Ganz (1994), p. 249.
[13] Ganz (1994), p. 249. The text of this exemption with background information is in de' Medici (1977-[2002]), v. 8 p. 30n. 3 (letter 713, 18/10/1484).
[14] For a discussion of women's involvement in the political and religious tumult of this period, see Tomas (1992), ch. 4.
[15] A personal communication from Alison Brown of September 1994. My own research in the *Deliberazioni* of the *Signoria* and the *Provvisioni* for 1494 and 1495 found no reference to the women of the Medici family.
[16] 'xviiii [sic] anni fuori di casa'. See n. 1 in this chapter.
[17] Ganz (1994).
[18] Parenti (1994), p. 135. '... la mogliera di Piero de' Medici colla madre, donna di autorità e governo ... complici di Piero'.
[19] A small amount of Caterina di Sanseverino's correspondence survives that provides evidence of her capabilities. See MAP 40, 206, 15/2/1489 (Roman style); MAP 41, 123, 25/5/1489. (Both of these letters are to Lorenzo de' Medici). MAP 80, 146r 14/7/n.y. to Caterina di Sanseverino from Naples.
[20] Parenti (1994), p. 139. '...la [moglie] di Lorenzo Tornabuoni colla sorella e cognata e altre'.
[21] Parenti (1994), pp. 141, 144. Alfonsina gave birth to two other children both of whom did not survive infancy. The first child, an unnamed son, was born in mid 1489. See MAP 41, 123^{r}, 25/5/1489, in which Caterina informs Lorenzo that Alfonsina was due to give birth soon. In a letter two months later to his daughter, Contessina, Lorenzo tells her to kiss Alfonsina's baby boy for him. MAP 24, 494, 31/7/1489. This could not have been Alfonsina's son Lorenzo, who was born in 1492. For Lorenzo's birth date, see Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 249. Alfonsina also had a baby daughter named Luisa who died in early 1494. On this infant, see *ibid.* v. 1 p. 180.
[22] B. Cerretani, *Storia fiorentina* (ed.) G. Berti (Florence: Olschki, 1994), p. 208. 'Nel Palazo [Medici] ... v'entrò per ordine della [S]ignoria alcuni ciptadini e quali ne trassano la donna di detta Piero et la suocera, ... et prima trassano loro di dita tutte le gioie ... le mandorono piagnenddo nel monastero di Sancta Lucia in via San Ghallo'. Cf. Piero Parenti's contention that Piero sent them both there when he fled Florence. in chapter 3 above.
[23] Kirshner (1985), pp. 256-302, esp. pp. 275-278. Foster Baxendale (1991), pp. 731-732; Ganz (1994), pp. 242-244.
[24] Parenti (1994), p. 141. '...dannose e vituperose al tutto pella nostra città'.
[25] Parenti (1994), pp. 135-136. 'danari e gioie'.
[26] For a discussion of negative representations such as these of Alfonsina in later years, see below chapter 6.
[27] Giovio (1551), p. 54. '...Madonna Alfonsina di Pietro, la qual piangeva la non meritata sventura del suo picciol bambino, et della ruinata famiglia...'.
[28] Parenti (1994), p. 219.
[29] Parenti (1994), pp. 269-270. Landucci (1983), p. 116 notes that Alfonsina fled Florence to join her husband on the 20th of that month.

[30] See now da Bisticci (1997), pp. 432-462. On wives accompanying their husbands, see Foster Baxendale (1991), p. 729n.38. Alessandra Macingi Strozzi accompanied her husband into exile and only returned to Florence after his death. Tomas (1992), p. 28; Crabb (2000), p. 46.

[31] Landucci (1983), p. 145 mentions Caterina's expulsion and cites the *Otto di Guardia*'s reason for doing so at n. 1 as being 'pro bono reipublice'.

[32] Polizzotto (1994), p. 13.

[33] G. Cambi, *Istorie fiorentine*, in da San Luigi, vols 20-23, (1770-1789), v. 21 p. 109; M. Sanuto, *I Diarii* 58 vols (ed.) R. Fulin et al. (Venice: Visentini, 1879-1903; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1969), v. 1 cols. 715, 723-724; F. Guicciardini, *Storie fiorentine dal 1378 al 1509* ed. R. Palmarocchi, (Bari: Laterza, 1931), pp. 139-140, 145.

[34] See the letter of Paolo Somenzi, chancellor of Florence, to Bartolommeo Calco, Secretary to Duke Lodovico Il Moro of Milan, published in I Del Lungo, 'Fra Girolamo Savonarola', *Archivio Storico Italiano* Ser. 2, v.**18**, part 2 (1863), pp. 21-22, letter 24, 29/8/1497; Sanuto (1969), v. 1 col. 723.

[35] Sanuto (1969), v. 1 col. 723; Guicciardini (1931), p. 140.

[36] Del Lungo (1863), p. 22. '...che la ne saria punita anchor che fosse dona ....'

[37] Sanuto (1969), v. 1 col. 723.

[38] Guicciardini (1931), p. 145. 'cosa brutta toccare una donna'.

[39] Valori (1991), pp. 142-143. 'la generosa e magnanima sorella [of Piero] ... con quello animo e con quella prudenzia con la quale era vissuta e che sempre aveva usata, massime ne' casi avversi'.

[40] See the references cited in the Introduction at n.6 for contemporary views of women's nature.

[41] Pampaloni (1957), Biographical detail on Cegia is at pp. 188-196. See also R. Ristori, 'Cegia Francesco', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* v. 23 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1979), pp. 324-327.

[42] On Cegia as Alfonsina's procurator, see Merisalo (1999), p. 92. For his account book see Pampaloni (1957), pp. 198-232.

[43] Pampaloni (1957), pp. 198-206, 210, 214-218. For Alfonsina's return to Rome, see Roberto de' Medici's letter to Maddalena Cibo. Signoria Dieci...Leg. e Comm. Miss. Resp. Busta 66, c. 343^{r}, 18/11/1497.

[44] Reiss (2001), p. 131 and see below chapter 6 .

[45] Pampaloni (1957), p. 211 lists the jewellery, the painting, a miniature bible, a copy of a work by Dante Alighieri and Giovanni Sercambi's *Cento novelle* as well as some gold florins. Other references are at pp. 212, 214, 218-227, 232.

[46] K. Lowe, *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini, 1458-1524* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 67-68.

[47] Lowe (1993a). For the law of January 1497, see Butters (1985), p. 77. For breaches of this law as early as March 1497, see Shaw (2000), p. 158.

[48] 'Convito Mediceo nel 1504', in I. del Badia, (ed.) *Miscellanea fiorentina di erudizione e storia* v. 1 (Rome: Multigrafica, 1978), pp. 93-94, quotation at p. 93. 'magno et splendido.... Della natione fiorentina vi fu d'ogni spetie, quasi e' 7/8 che ci si trovano'. The banquet and the number of Florentines attending was discussed in the *pratica* of 5/10/1504. See D. Fachard, *Consulte e Pratiche della repubblica fiorentina 1498-1505*, 2 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1993), v. 2 pp. 1019-1020.

[49] Giovio (1551), p. 86. '... con singolar prudentia et ufficio virile ... solevare la riputatione della famiglia, et accendere le antiche benivolenze degli huomini'.

[50] BNF II II, 134, 46^{v}. P. Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine'.

[51] On the cult of the Annunziata and the Medici, see Trexler (1980), pp. 123-124; M. Fantoni, 'Il culto dell' Annunziata e la sacralità del potere Mediceo', *Archivio Storico Italiano* **147** (4) (1989), pp. 771-793, esp. pp. 773-774. On the Annunziata and its Piazza as part of Lorenzo's urban planning policy, see C. Elam (1994), pp. 362-368; On votive statues of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, see Kent (1997), p. 28.

[52] On the church as a site of both Medici and Soderini patronage and for a discussion of Medici votive statues, see Lowe (1993c).

[53] BNF II II 134, 46^{v} Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine'. '[E]l governo de' Medici di gran lunga essere stato migliore, et all'hora sempre la città essere fiorita et da poi in qua sempre ita di male in peggio'.

[54] BNF II II 134, 46^{v} Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine',. 'quasi naturale et non dissimile alla propria sua faccia. Questa fussi tanto vicitata da molti cittadini...dicendo qualunque parole in favore di lui et della Casa [Medici] ....'

[55] BNF II II 134, 46^{v}-47^{r} Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine',.

[56] Nerli (1728), pp. 99-100. '[Alfonsina] era visitata, e intrattenuta da molti cittadini di queli ch'aderivano alla parte de' Medici, o ...erano contro il Gonfaloniere. E da' Salviati era anche molto favorita.... [E]lla andava intrattenendo quegli che gli parevano a proposito per benefizio de' Medici'.

[57] Nerli (1728), p. 100. '... tenne anco pratiche segrete di maritare in Firenze la Clarice sua figliuola'.

[58] This whole incident has been well documented and discussed by M.M. Bullard, 'Marriage, Politics and the Family in Florence: The Strozzi-Medici Alliance of 1508', *American Historical Review* **74** (3) (1979), pp. 668-687; M.M. Bullard, *Filippo Strozzi and the Medici: Favour and Finance in Sixteenth Century Florence and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 45-60.

[59] B. Cerretani, *Ricordi* ed. G. Berti, (Florence: Olshcki, 1993), p. 176. '...s'era più temppo boc[ia]ta ma non si poteva chredere; ... erane gran turbatione a la ciptà'.

[60] Guicciardini (1931), p. 331. '...eccetuava le femine'.

[61] Guicciardini (1931), p. 327; Bullard (1979), p. 678.

[62] Butters (1985), p. 133.

[63] Butters (1985), p. 133.

[64] Guicciardini (1931), p. 326. 'per mezzo di Madonna Lucrezia donna di Jacopo Salviati ...'

[65] Guicciardini (1931), pp. 326-327, 330.

[66] Bullard (1980), p. 55.

[67] Cerretani (1993a), p. 199; Nerli (1728), p. 100.

[68] Bullard (1979), p. 681. Clarice's appearance and the size of the dowry are mentioned in a letter between two Strozzi men, dated c.1509. C.S. III 134, 55.

[69] Butters (1985), pp. 133-134.

[70] A. Lefevre, 'Il patrimonio cinquecentesco dei Medici nel Lazio e in Abruzzo', *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* **98** (1975), pp. 95-133, appendix 3, p. 129; Marcucci & Torresi (1983), p. 33 n. 1.

[71] Reiss (2001), p. 128.

[72] Reiss (2001), p. 129.

[73] Bullard (1994b), p. 128 n. 14. Maddalena's continued interest in Florence and events there after Piero's expulsion is illustrated by Roberto de' Medici's letter to her of November 1497, in which he promises to keep her informed of happenings in that city. Signoria, Dieci ... Leg. Comm. Miss resp. Busta 66, c. 343^{r} (18/11/1497).

[74] Lowe (1993a), p. 53.

[75] Cerretani (1993a), p. 158. The Office of Rebels' deliberations of 1494-1495 refer to the money owed to Alfonsina for her dowry. See Merisalo (1999), pp. 42, 49, 63, 72. A debt owed to Caterina di Sanseverino is referred to at p. 80.

[76] Cerretani (1993a), p. 158.
[77] Cerretani (1993a), pp. 163-164; Cerretani (1994), p. 353.
[78] Cerretani (1993b), p. 163. 'Qui in Firenze non si faceva niente salvo che si fe' una provisione circha a' facti de' Medici...'.
[79] The correspondence is found throughout the Signori ... Responsive, vols 31 and 32.
[80] Signori ... Responsive, 31, 72[r], 16/5/1508. 'Et havendo io facto ricercare l'animo di molti ci ho trovati li più in tale opinione che se lei adomandò il suo quando partì di Firenze, secondo che feciono li altri creditori, che lei non debbe patire questo dan[n]o'.
[81] Signori ... Responsive, 31, 72[r], 97[r], 9/6/1508. 'et ricercola dello interdetto della chiesa cathedrale della ciptà'.
[82] Signori ... Responsive, 31, 72[r], 97[r], 9/6/1508.
[83] Signori ... Responsive, 31, 145[r], 19/8/1508.
[84] Signori ... Responsive, 32, 37[r], 2/3/1509.
[85] Signori ... Responsive, 32, 164[r], 21/11/1509. 'Ma per esser donna et sospectosa per anchora non ci siamo convenire'.
[86] Signori ... Responsive, 32, 161[r], 3/11/1509. 'Dio mi sia testimone che sempre ho desiderato la causa dela [sic] dote mia si componga pacificamente et sanza lite e strepito alcuno ...'.
[87] Signori ... Responsive, 32, 161[r], 3/11/1509. '... considerare in che stato io mi debi trovare'.
[88] The petition by Alfonsina and the decision of 10 April 1510, by the *Signoria*, is recorded in MAP 150, cc.18-20 and a copy is in C.S. I, 10, 120[r]-122[r]. The law of 11 April 1510 is mentioned in the notarial document finalising the agreement for dowry restitution. N.A. 1973 (old G1973), (Bastiano de Cenni), Busta 4, Doc. 31, 12/10/1510, unfoliated. The *provvisione* for April 1510 has not survived.
[89] Signori ... Responsive, 32 268[r], 15/6/1510.
[90] N.A. 1973, Busta 4, Doc. 31, 12/10/1510.
[91] N.A. 1973, Busta 4, Doc. 31, 12/10/1510. N.A. 1976 also contains reference to the dowry restitution using the same dates and listing various Medici properties at Careggi, Poggio a Caiano and Pisa held against Alfonsina Orsini's dowry. See N.A. 1976, 179[r]-181[v], 184[r-v]. A fair copy was made on 3/3/1510/11 at *ibid.* 207[r]-208[v].
[92] Landucci (1983), p. 304 and n. 1.
[93] Butters (1985), p. 144 on Lucrezia's advice to Luigi della Stufa; Cerretani (1993b), pp. 231-232 on Lucrezia's apparent letter to Guglielmina dela Stufa.
[94] Cerretani (1993b), p. 283; B. Cerretani, *Dialogo della mutatione di Firenze* ed. G. Berti (Florence: Olshcki, 1993), p. 38. 'tutte le sua sorelle'.
[95] Cerretani (1993a), p. 38.
[96] MAP 137, 606, 15/9/1512. 'Perché qui se parla variamente et ogniuno dice qualche [cosa] ... come le cose passano; siate contento advisarme de qualche particulare ...'.
[97] MAP 137, 606, 15/9/1512. '...come le cose de là passano'.
[98] For background and a discussion of the Medici regime's unpopularity, see C. Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic* (London: Methuen, 1925); Stephens (1983).
[99] M. Foscari, 'Discorsi' in da San Luigi (1770-1789), v. 23, p. 214.; Nerli (1728), p. 151; J. Nardi, *Istorie della città di Firenze* ed. A. Gelli, 2 vols (Florence: Le Monnier, 1858), v. 2 p. 125; B. Carnesecchi, 'Storia di Firenze dal 1526 al 1529', ed. U. Dorini in *Rivista Storica degli Archivi Toscani* 3 (1931), pp. 100-112; 197-207, at p. 106; B. Segni, *Istorie fiorentine dall'anno MDXXVII al MDLV* ed. G. Gargani (Florence: Barberà Bianchi & Co., 1857), pp. 10-11, 15; B. Varchi, *Storia fiorentina* no ed. 2 vols (Florence: Salani, 1963), v. 1 pp. 129-131, 134.

[100] Nerli (1728), p. 151. '... e cominciò Clarice ... con parole gravi e ingiurose a dire arditamente al Cardinale di Cortona e a Ipolito, che si dovessero partir di Firenze, e lasciar lo stato e la città libera a' cittadini'.
[101] Carnesecchi (1931), p. 106.
[102] Nerli (1728), p. 151; Segni (1857), p. 10.
[103] Nerli (1728), p. 151; Segni (1857), p. 10; Varchi (1963), v. 1 p. 130. Benedetto Varchi was especially critical of Clarice's actions and suggested that she was extremely rude to her Medici relatives. This vitriol towards her is understandable given that he was writing at the Court of Duke Cosimo I, who waged a successful battle against Florentine republican exiles led by Filippo Strozzi in 1537.
[104] Alfonsina's bequest to her daughter and the Florentine Republic's attempts to seize her property from her heirs is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
[105] C.S. III, 108, 114^{v} 23/11/1527. 'La Clarice vorebbe da me una gratia in[n]anzi morissi, questa è di entrare nella casa del Poggio a Caiano con 3 poderi ... quali furono già cose grati [sic] dal Commune a sua madre per conto della sua dote ....' Clarice died in early May 1528 and may have been ill at the time this letter was written. On Clarice's date of death and her general health, see Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 341-342.
[106] Hurtubise (1985), p. 166.
[107] Hurtubise (1985), p. 185.
[108] Sanuto (1969), v. 45 col. 131; Roth (1925), p. 86, 124; Hurtubise (1985), p. 185.
[109] On Maria Salviati fleeing Florence to Venice to join her son who had been there since the previous December, see Felice (1906c), p. 435; Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 469-470.
[110] Cited in Roth (1925), p. 108 n. 105. 'con poco roba, e manco danari, che ci partimo di Firenze senza uno ordine al mondo et con paura'. Maria Salviati suffered similar financial difficulties as a result of the Medici's exile. See her letter to Filippo Strozzi in C.S. III, 30, c. 1-3, 2/9/1528.
[111] BNF Magl. II, III, 433, 29^{v}, n.d.
[112] BNF Magl. II, III, 433, 29^{v}, n.d., 29^{r}, 10/6/1527. 'cara Lucretia mia .... 'Io vorrei che tu scrivesi o facesi scrivere per parte nostro in tutti e' luoghi dove io sono compagno, che senza tua lettere... non pagasino cosa nesuno...'.
[113] On these events, see Nardi (1858), v. 2 p. 124; Segni (1857), pp. 7, 14; Roth (1925), p. 43; Pastor (1950), v. 9 p. 502 cites a letter written by the Mantuan ambassador detailing Clarice's efforts with Clement VII. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.
[114] C.S. I, 3, 177, 15/12/1527.
[115] C.S. I, 98, 23, 8/1/1527/8.
[116] Varchi (1963), v. 1 p. 386. Cf. Francesco Guicciardini's letter to Lucrezia of July 1527 discussing Clement's attempt to retake the Romagna from Imperial troops. F. Guicciardini, *Carteggi di Francesco Guicciardini* ed. P.G. Ricci, v. 14 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, 1969), pp. 157-158, (letter 73, 2/7/1527).
[117] O.G. [e.r.] 204, 47^{r}, 30/1/1528/9; 204, 57^{r-v}, 26/2/1528/9; 204, 87^{r-v}, 24/3/1528/9 refers to the 'querela', but does not mention Lucrezia by name. The exact details of the charge were not specified. On Lucrezia being allowed to plead through a procurator, see Roth (1925), p. 124.
[118] See the comment of Francesco Valori against the punishment of Lucrezia Salviati's involvement in the pro-Medicean 1497 conspiracy at p. 109 above.

CHAPTER FIVE

At the Papal Court

During the pontificates of the two Medici popes, Leo X (1513-1521) and Clement VII (1523-1534), the frequenting of the Curia by the pope's female relatives was commonplace. As a direct result of their familial relationships with these two pontiffs and other influential men of their circle, the Medici women wielded significant (although seldom appreciated) power and influence at the papal court. Indeed their traditional responsibility to protect and advance the interests of their male kin rather than any interests of their own, now provided the women of the Medici family with the opportunity to act with authority in a powerful political arena beyond Florence.

It could be argued that a discussion of the activities of women at the papal court is an oxymoron. After all unlike other Italian courts, the exclusively clerical character of the papal court in Rome rendered it a male-only preserve, from which women were supposedly excluded. In reality, of course, women did frequent the papal court, either as courtesans, visiting dignitaries, or, occasionally, as relatives of the incumbent pope and cardinals.[1] As such their presence might be tolerated if they did not involve themselves in the workings of the court or try to influence the decisions of its members in any way. Any such interference threatened the court's celibate, all-male clerical character, and also supposedly undermined the allegiance and loyalty owed to the Catholic Church by those in the Curia, including the pontiff himself, whom it was feared female relatives could enjoin to advance the 'private' interests of their natal families, which were sometimes in opposition to the interests of the Church. Pope Julius II's daughter Felice Orsini, for example, lived near the papal court but because of her gender, she could have no role at the court.[2] And Julius disliked his sister in law, Giovanna da Montefeltro, because she paid formal visits to cardinals, and thus transgressed the unwritten rules regarding women's behaviour in papal Rome.[3]

Similarly, negative views were held of the presence of women at the courts of the Medici popes. Despite the fact that the pope's financial problems were largely of his own making, and that men were equally involved in seeking patronage at the papal court for either themselves or for others, it was the women of the Medici family whom contemporaries blamed, at least in part, for Leo's dire financial straits because of their requests of him on behalf of male relatives. Bartolommeo Cerretani wrote:

> There were [the Pope's] three sisters with their children there, and his sister in law, that is the mother of Lorenzo, [Alfonsina Orsini] and all were waiting to ask for and to procure the incomes of benefices and cardinals' hats. There were many friends and

relatives at court to provide for appropriately, which ... has made a rich papacy into a poor one.[4]

All of the women of the Medici family were there lobbying the pope on behalf of their sons or other male members of their families in order to protect and further the interests of those men. Despite the fact that such actions were the duty of all 'good' wives and mothers, Cerretani implicitly linked all of the Medici women, in this instance, with the 'female' vices — of which Alfonsina, as 'ruler' of Florence some two years later, was solely accused — namely, ambition and avarice.[5]

Such negative attitudes continued on into the pontificate of the second Medici pope Giulio de' Medici (Clement VII). He had had a long-term friendship with Alfonsina Orsini who said of him that '... he willingly goes along with others, ... so as not to displease'.[6] But Giulio later enjoyed a fraught relationship with her daughter Clarice, because he tried to defraud her of her inheritance from Alfonsina.[7] Nonetheless, in January 1527, her antipathy towards Clement VII did not prevent Clarice from trying to persuade him to provide the ransom for her husband Filippo Strozzi who was being held captive by Spanish troops in Naples.[8] The Mantuan ambassador, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, complained bitterly about Clarice whom he believed: 'with tears, sighs and laments is in the ear of His Holiness in order to procure ... the liberation of her husband, so that the poor pontiff is assailed on every side not unlike a ship in the midst of the sea buffeted by contrary winds'.[9] She was being condemned for doing exactly what was expected of every loyal and dutiful wife, that is, to try to assist her husband in any way she could at a time of crisis. Gonzaga and Cerretani viewed the Medici women as financial burdens for Leo and Clement and as creators of disorder and financial ruin for the Curia. The Medici women's activities in Rome, then, were yet another example of the no win, paradoxical situation in which women often found themselves when their active support of male relatives took them beyond the hearth. A woman's appropriate devotion to familial interest in the private domestic sphere became fractious partisanship and greed when exercised in the public arena. Despite such contemporary disquiet, however, both Medici popes did accept the presence of their female relatives at court and, as we shall see, sought often to accede to their requests for various forms of papal patronage.

Great Expectations: Pope Leo X and the Florentines

The presence at the court of Pope Leo X of his three sisters, Lucrezia, Maddalena, and Contessina as well as his sister in law, Alfonsina, and her daughter Clarice, highlights both continuities and significant changes in the exercise of power and influence by women of the Medici family. Following the election of a Medici pope, their influence was no longer restricted to the physical confines of Florence and its territories. They could now seek to use their position as members of the Medici family to advance the cause of their relatives, friends and clients in both Florence and at the papal court — where they were, in effect, the mistresses of an all-male household. Although, as we have seen, this made them vulnerable to

criticism, it also enabled them to further advance Medici interests as well as to create opportunities for themselves to exercise power and influence in a courtly environment.

However the patronage process was a gendered one. While the Medici men could hope for administrative, political, financial, military, or clerical appointments for either themselves or their relatives, clients or friends the women could, with few exceptions, only lobby on behalf of other men. As always, they sought to secure through intercession with a powerful male relative, benefits for their husbands, sons, friends or clients.The ability of Alfonsina, her daughter and her sisters in law successfully to use their access to the pope and his court to aid their male relatives and clients was crucial to their eventual success at the Curia.

'Medici, Medici', Each a Relative of the Pope

In March 1513 the Florentines had great expectations of profiting from papal patronage because the new pontiff was one of them. Piero Parenti wrote in his *Istorie fiorentine* that the election 'was considered to be the best news that this city has ever had'.[10] Bartolommeo Cerretani expressed a similar viewpoint in his *Ricordi*, declaring that it was 'the best news this city has ever had...'. He then noted that this news led to four days of feasting, bonfires, celebratory parades of floats (*trionfi*) the release of prisoners and other general celebrations.[11] The apothecary Luca Landucci described the celebrations in similar terms, noting that so great was the joy that everyone appeared at their windows 'even the women'.[12] Bartolommeo Masi in his lengthy account of the festivities, which he said lasted for three days, included all the above-mentioned forms of celebration and added that festivities took place at the Medici palace as well as at the homes of their relatives, the Rucellai and Salviati.[13] Masi described, for example, the distribution of money and goods to the crowd outside the Medici Palace by Giuliano, Giulio, Lorenzo, and 'their sisters' namely, Contessina and Lucrezia.[14] He concluded: '...truly it seems as if the whole world is rejoicing over it'.[15] On a more personal note, Filippo di Filipo di Matteo Strozzi told his brother Lorenzo 'that we must judge ourselves lucky to be born in this century'.[16]

Such joy was evident because the election of a pope not only brought prestige to his native city, but also opened up new opportunities for his fellow citizens to obtain papal patronage. Francesco Vettori, himself a Medici intimate and an ambassador to the papal court, wrote to his friend Niccolò Machiavelli in late March 1513, concerning the likely benefits for Florentines of the election of a Medici pope. 'Pope Leo was elected, a matter for the city [of Florence] ... and in particular for its citizens, from which must be derived great honour and profit...'.[17] Sometime later in his *Sommario della storia d'Italia*, he further noted: 'And because the Florentines are dedicated to commerce and to gain, they had all thought that they must draw much profit from this pontificate'.[18]

The notion that a connection to the pope should bring Florentines 'honour and profit' was not new.[19] A sonnet attributed to the writer Aretino satirised the Florentines who descended on Rome in anticipation of jobs, favours, and significant financial gain: 'And they travel from Florence shouting, "Medici,

Medici", each a relative of the pope'.[20] Accordingly, the election of Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici as pope engendered great expectations of wealth and preferment among the Florentines.[21] The Venetian ambassador believed that the Florentines, especially Leo X's relatives, did, in fact, receive preferential treatment. He complained in June 1520 that they were hated at court because the Florentines, including Leo's relatives, had bankrupted the pope.[22] Such views of the Florentines were not confined to Leo's pontificate. A similar comment was made concerning Pope Clement VII in January 1527 by Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga in a letter to his brother the Marquis of Mantua: 'The pope would not be in such fear, if it were not for these Florentines...'.[23] In light of this perception that the Florentines generally, and the Medici in particular, were especially rapacious, it is not surprising that after Clement's death in 1534 reforms were instituted that were designed to put an end to abuses within the Church. They enjoyed some success as no other family thereafter succeeded in having two of its number elected to the throne of St Peter. Limits were placed also on the advantage to be enjoyed by the pope's family so as to ensure an adequate treasury for his successor.[24]

What benefits, then, could be expected at the papal court for those connected to the Curia in some way? The clergy obviously had many opportunities to obtain significant benefits from papal patronage; but those available to the laity, while fewer in number, were no less lucrative. The men involved in providing finance to the papacy — especially the Depositor-General, who was the pope's personal banker — or in the administration of the Papal States, could make significant financial gains.[25] Those who were made rulers of States under the pope's jurisdiction could also achieve social and political gain.[26] Papal nepotism was rife from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, relatives of the pope being given preferment in both ecclesiastical and lay offices.[27] Pope Sixtus, for example, gave a cardinal's hat to his nephew, the future Pope Julius II (1503-1513).[28] The period of tenure of Giovanni de' Medici as pope both saw the continuation and the rapid expansion of this trend.[29]

As other popes had done before him, Pope Leo X certainly favoured those from his native city for appointment to offices within the papal household and the Curia.[30] But simply being a Florentine was not enough to ensure Leo's favour. Many of the men who were elevated to the rank of cardinal by the pope were either Medici relatives or friends who had assisted his elevation. They included: Innocenzo Cibo, Giulio de' Medici, Lorenzo Pucci, Franciotto Orsini, Giovanni Salviati, Niccolò Ridolfi, and Luigi de' Rossi. Cardinal Francesco Soderini, who supported the election of Giovanni de' Medici as pope, was repaid by the promise of a marriage alliance for one of his relatives with a member of the Medici family and by the recall from exile of his brother Piero Soderini.[31] Other Medici friends and servants such as Silvio Passerini, also received favours; as papal datarius, he held the key office within the papal household responsible for the distribution of offices and benefices. Another example is Goro Gheri, who was made Swiss papal nuncio, after serving the Medici in Florence for several years.[32] Friendship and service on their own, however, were no guarantee of papal favour. Even such staunch Medici allies as Francesco Vettori found it difficult to break into the inner circle of those who had direct access to the pope, and he finally decided that 'it

seems [there is] more to lose than to gain'.[33] Those without a Medici surname or *parentado* had far less hope of success or profit from a Medici pontificate than many Florentines had expected.

The frustrations of Florentines and many others at their lack of advancement at the Curia were probably exacerbated by the financial crises of Leo's pontificate that did not escape public notice. Pope Julius II, who left his successor a healthy treasury, unlike other Renaissance popes did not favour family members and had a small number of the laity at his court.[34] But Leo — who upon his ascension was reported to have said to his younger brother Giuliano de' Medici: 'Let us enjoy the Papacy, since God has given it to us'[35] — was reputed to be a spendthrift, extravagant, someone who enjoyed 'the good life', and was also supposedly over-generous to relatives and friends.[36] Consequently, he exhausted Pope Julius II's savings within two years.[37] In January 1514, Alfonsina Orsini told her son Lorenzo that: 'People are gossiping here that he [Leo] has been pope for less than a year, and even though he fell heir to a rich papacy, he still has to borrow against his future incomes to get enough money to spend a mere fifteen days away from Rome'.[38] The expenses of the pope's family and his court were so great, Francesco Vettori informed his brother Piero, that the papacy could not provide for more than the most basic of these costs.[39]

Pope Leo X also had a huge household and Curia to maintain. In an official list of the papal court and household, compiled by the pope's Florentine major-domo Alessandro Neroni, dated May 1st 1514, there was a household staff (*famiglia*) of 683, namely 244 men holding high offices, 174 special officials and 265 servants.[40] This list does not include the artists, humanists, military officers, diplomatic officials and even a court jester on Pope Leo X's payroll.[41] The total cost per annum was 26,500 ducats.[42] Therefore, the pope was always short of funds and relied heavily on money lent to him by the various banks in Rome, some 30 of which were Florentine.[43] In addition, the pope raised money by the sale of 2000 venal offices, many of which were held in plurality, and also by selling cardinals' hats.[44]According to the Venetian diarist Marino Sanuto, Jacopo Salviati paid an undisclosed amount of money for his son Giovanni's cardinal's hat.[45] Leo X also relied on income derived from the Papal States.[46] Obviously those men who were politically sympathetic to the Medici, were relatives (by blood or through marriage) and were wealthy, stood the best chance of reaping financial and honorific rewards from this pontiff.[47]

Supporting Kin

Cardinal Giovanni's election to the papal throne some six months after the Medici were formally restored to Florence as its chief family, had profound implications for the Medici family and the manner of their 'rule' of that city as well as for the interrelationship between Florence and the papacy. According to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, Leo X described Florence and Rome as 'these two limbs of the one body'.[48] The two cities, therefore, not only had like interests; they were indistinguishable.

However, the two regimes were by no means equal in status. Rome, not Florence, was now the centre of Medici power. This gave the Medici an increased power base with the possibility of acquiring seigneurial status. It also meant that most of the Medici family were in Rome soon after Giovanni's election and remained there — except for Lorenzo, Jacopo Salviati and Giulio de' Medici all of whom had returned to Florence by August 1513, effectively to govern the city in the pope's name.[49] Alfonsina Orsini, Contessina Ridolfi, Lucrezia Salviati, and Maddelena Cibo were concerned as was appropriate for 'good' wives and mothers, to support and advance the interests of their male kin in both Florence and Rome. Now, based in Rome, away from the confines of a republican system of government in Florence and the strictures it placed on women's 'public' activity, and without their male kin on hand to oversee their activities, the Medici women were effectively on their own. This fact gave them far greater scope for independent action than would have been possible in Florence.

Contessina Ridolfi's family certainly profited from her relationship with the pope. Her husband Piero Ridolfi, a prominent banker, was appointed Governor of Spoleto from 1514 to 1516 and also occupied the office of the head of the republic of Florence (the Gonfaloniere of Justice) in 1515.[50] And Contessina's son Niccolò, received a cardinal's hat in 1517.[51] She was also able to convince Leo X in August 1514 to give her 600 ducats for her son Luigi's wardrobe, despite the fact that he could not afford to do so.[52] The pope also provided Contessina with a pension of 285 ducats in January 1516 to enable her to live decently.[53] The Datary, which had taken on the function of the pope's private treasury, provided these pensions, the majority of which were granted to women.[54] This was the only financial benefit a woman could hope to gain from the papacy at this time.[55]

Contessina had wed into a prominent Florentine family, but, like other Medici, she wished her children to marry titled nobility from the seigneurial courts. Paolo Vettori was told to forget any hope of a marriage between one of his sons and one of Contessina's daughters for this reason.[56] In February 1514 she achieved her goal, when the pope approved and provided the dowry of 12,000 ducats for the marriage of Contessina's daughter, Emilia, to the Lord of Piombino.[57] According to Marino Sanuto, the marriage took place in 'the Pope's chambers' on the 22nd of August 1514, in the presence of the pope, seven cardinals, Alfonsina, Contessina, Lucrezia, and Maddalena.[58]

Pope Leo X made Maddalena's son, Innocenzo Cibo, a cardinal in 1513 at the age of 22,[59] and she and her husband were given the right of Roman citizenship in 1515.[60] Francesco also received noble titles, and all of Maddalena's children's marriages were with noble, courtly families.[61] In 1515 her second son, Lorenzo, married Riccarda Malaspina heiress to the duchy of Massa and Carrara.[62] In the same year Leo X made her eldest daughter's husband, Giovan Maria da Varano of Camerino, a duke and da Varano also received Sinigaglia and the prefectship of Rome several years later.[63] Maddalena's second daughter, Ippolita, married Roberto di Sanseverino, Count of Caiazzo, and the pope gave him Colorno, a territory in Parma.[64] Maddalena also received a pension from the pope.[65]

Lucrezia's position at the papal court was slightly different from that of her two sisters, because her husband, Jacopo Salviati, was an influential man within the

Medicean regime in his own right. He was a very wealthy, politically astute and able person, who at the time of Leo X's election was the Florentine ambassador to Rome.[66] Jacopo tried to aid the pope financially by paying off some of his loans.[67] In 1514 Leo X had to pawn the papal tiara, the most expensive object in the papal treasury (being worth 44,000 ducats), to pay debts including money owed to Jacopo. Lucrezia gave the tiara to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici to look after, with the understanding that it would be returned to her whenever she wished.[68] But Jacopo still owed much of his success at the papal court itself to the fact that he was married to one of the pope's sisters. He was awarded the lucrative salt monopoly in the Papal States in the Romagna, together with the administration of the treasury in December 1514.[69] This contract was awarded to Jacopo on far more favourable terms than those given to its previous incumbents, the Genoese Sauli, and he made an average of 15,000 ducats in profit per year.[70] He was also made a Commissioner of Tithe in late 1516.[71] In addition, Jacopo occupied several high political offices in Florence, including that of the Gonfaloniere of Justice for one year in 1514.[72]

Jacopo and Lucrezia's eldest son, Giovanni Salviati, was made a proto-notary at an early age, Bishop of Fermo in 1516 and a cardinal in 1517.[73] Such honours benefited not only Giovanni himself, but also the whole family. It was for this reason that Goro Gheri referred to Jacopo as having received 'a fine benefice' in a letter to Alfonsina of November 1516.[74] Competition was so fierce among the various Medici relatives at Pope Leo X's court that, despite the obvious benefits they received from the pope, Lucrezia and her husband were annoyed that Giovanni did not receive his cardinal's hat until 1517, while Maddalena's son, Innocenzo, who was younger, had obtained one in 1513.[75]

The Salviati marriages were no less high-status than those of their Medici relatives. Lorenzo Salviati married Costanza Conti in 1514. The Conti were one of the most prestigious families of the Roman nobility, and this alliance contributed to the entrenchment of the 'mercantile' Salviati within the Roman aristocracy.[76] The Salviati further 'enobled' themselves through other marriage alliances. Two children, for example, married into the noble Pallavicini family. The advantage of marrying his daughter Caterina to Piero Salviati, a nephew of the pope, was not lost on Roberto Pallavicini. In return for a dowry of 12,700 ducats, among other things Lucrezia was to persuade Leo X to provide him with 'an honourable governorship'; and when the Florentine government wanted to hire mercenaries, Roberto Pallavicini was to be given a troop of 50 men at arms and 100 archers.[77] Pallavicini's request of Lucrezia is indicative of the influence that she, herself, was seen to be able to wield at the papal court.

Competition and Conflicts at Court

Alfonsina Orsini's activities at the papal court, in a fashion similar to those of her sisters in law, were geared to furthering the interests of the men in the Medici family: namely her son, Lorenzo, and son in law, Filippo Strozzi. In October 1513, Lorenzo wrote from Florence to his mother asking her to obtain money from the pope to enable him to pay his debts.[78] In December, Alfonsina told Lanfredino Lanfredini that: '... truly, I do not attend to anything here but to arrange for His

Holiness to give me an allowance for [Lorenzo]....'[79] Indeed her surviving accounts from approximately November 1512 until January 1514 indicate that Alfonsina provided her son with ready cash.[80] Alfonsina advised her son in January 1514 not to commit to anything until the money from Leo arrived.[81] A few weeks later, she finally managed to convince the pope to allocate the income of a vacant papal office to Lorenzo as an allowance.[82] Alfonsina wrote to her son assuring him that 'I am doing everything I can about the money our Lordship has promised us ...' to ensure it arrived speedily.[83] (In fact, Lorenzo wanted the money so that he would be able to enjoy Carnival festivities.[84]) On one occasion, Alfonsina did ask the pope for something which was of personal benefit to her, namely, the return of ancestral Orsini lands and property in Rome that Pope Julius had appropriated, and which belonged to her by right of inheritance.[85] But ultimately, this request also benefited her son Lorenzo, who would have further gain from his mother's increased wealth. It is not surprising, then, that in a letter of June 1514, concerning yet another effort to obtain a further amount of money for her son, Alfonsina replied angrily to his accusations that she cared more about possessions than she did about him. If that were true, she argued: 'eleven years ago [when Piero died], when you were a poor little boy, I would have sought to leave you and striven to find some place were there were possessions and all the other things that so many other women have sought'.[86] Alfonsina then proceeded to discuss her efforts to obtain additional money for Lorenzo and advised him to ignore those who doubted her.[87] She was presenting herself here as a model unselfish 'good' mother, who had sacrificed everything for her son, and therefore merited respect, as well as supreme confidence in her abilities, actions, and advice.

Another major concern of Alfonsina's was an appropriate marriage for Lorenzo. Various possible spouses were suggested. Leo X originally proposed Piero Soderini's niece as payment to the Soderini for helping him become pope, but Alfonsina would not agree.[88] She aimed higher, in accord with her desire to ensure that Lorenzo's political and financial fortunes would be advanced by a suitable marriage into a noble, and possibly royal, house. Negotiations were begun with the Duchess of Bari to marry her daughter to Lorenzo, but Alfonsina abandoned the idea when, after six months, nothing had been resolved. The possibility of a *parentado* with a Spanish princess such as 'one from the House of Cardona, niece of the king [of Spain]', who would provide a 12,000 ducat dowry and an estate in Rome, was also discussed for well over of a year.[89] But nothing came of these negotiations either. Lorenzo eventually married in 1518, Madelaine de la Tour d'Auvergne, niece of the French King Francis I, a match which supported both Alfonsina's and Lorenzo's political ambitions at the time.[90]

Alfonsina was, however, frustrated by another proposed Medici marriage in February 1514. Leo X decided to arrange a marriage between a daughter of his sister, Contessina Ridolfi, and the Lord of Piombino, and he provided the 12,000 ducat dowry himself.[91] This directly conflicted with Alfonsina's and her son's wish for Lorenzo to become Lord of Piombino.[92] Alfonsina informed her son in early February 'that here people have changed their minds and attitudes concerning marriage alliances...'.[93]This proposed union was much discussed in their correspondence of February and March 1514.[94] Alfonsina expressed her disgust at

the indecision of the pope and the Ridolfi over this marriage since two days earlier, she wrote on March 3rd 1514, it had been postponed and now it was to proceed. Alfonsina no longer wished to write to Lorenzo about it since 'it stinks in my nostrils'.[95]

This incident was only one of many that illustrate the fierce competition and conflicts between Medici relatives (male and female) for papal offices and favours for their male relatives. Familial connections had both the capacity to unite and divide the Medici women depending on the circumstances. Alfonsina Orsini and Lucrezia Salviati, for example, were sisters in law, who had been raised in very different environments — that is, in a seigneurial court and a republic respectively — and despite Jacopo and Lucrezia's close connections to the chief adherents of the anti-Medicean republic of 1494-1512, Alfonsina and Lucrezia, at a time of crisis for the Medici in general, had been united in their desire to see the re-establishment of the Medici in Florence and worked towards this goal. Now, in a period of Medici prosperity, the competing interests of their men folk divided the women of the Medici family.

Filippo Strozzi, who wanted to seek the lucrative office of papal Depositor-General as soon as he had heard about Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici's election, was only awarded the position after Alfonsina lobbied the pope for it for over a year.[96] She had to battle on two fronts, as Filippo explained to Lorenzo de' Medici in a letter of 2 May, 1514: First, with Lucrezia who wanted her husband to get the position 'because she wants to remove Jacopo from there [Florence]'[97] and, second, with Leo X who was reluctant to take the office away from its incumbents — the Genoese Sauli: '... Madonna [Alfonsina] has spoken of it again to Our Lordship [Pope Leo X] explaining to him our situation ... and the desire to have certainty as to when His Holiness wishes to take it out of the hands of the Sauli and transfer it to ours'.[98] Filippo's request met with success in the spring of 1514, as a result of Alfonsina's strenuous efforts on his behalf.[99] He also tried to acquire a portion of the revenues from the salt tax of the papal province of the Marches. Both issues were finally settled in his favour in the summer of 1514, when Filippo reported that the pope had promised him that the office of Depositor-General would be his in November.[100] Jacopo and Lucrezia then sought the position of treasurer of the Romagna as compensation.[101] Shortly afterwards, however, Alfonsina had to redouble her efforts when Giuliano tried to get the pope to change his mind in favour of Jacopo Salviati. However, she managed to thwart this action and Filippo was appointed Depositor-General in June 1515.[102]

Alfonsina did not endeavour to obtain this position purely to benefit her son in law. She wanted Filippo to use his access to papal depositary funds to supplement her son's income. She told Lorenzo in November 1513, that both he and Filippo would receive the office of the Depository: 'that is, he will exercise it for you and for him'.[103] Alfonsina, therefore, wanted the Depository to be their private treasury.[104] In the meantime, she advised Lorenzo that she would continue to be his advocate at the papal court.[105] But Alfonsina was also pragmatic, advising her son to be satisfied for the present with his monthly stipend from the pope: 'And believe me 4,000 florins income from Rome are worth more than 10,000 elsewhere because they are stable'.[106] It is not surprising, then, that Alfonsina wanted to move closer to

the papal palace, because she went there daily and her present abode was a mile away.[107]

This incident illustrates the heightened tensions at the papal court as the various members of the Medici family battled each other to obtain the maximum benefits of papal patronage. Family squabbles were no longer private affairs, instead becoming the subject of court gossip. In October 1513, for example, Lorenzo and Jacopo Salviati fought over a marriage that Lorenzo was trying to arrange between the Salviati and Alamanni families, which Jacopo unsuccessfully opposed. Alfonsina tried to find out what it was all about, not knowing the veracity or otherwise of Lucrezia's accusation that Lorenzo was forcing marriages on the citizens of the free city of Florence.[108]

The situation became steadily worse. In February 1514, Lucrezia was in dispute with the pope over his failure to give her husband the Priorate of Capua. She was desperate to get Jacopo out of Florence to Rome and away from the disrespect, so Lucrezia thought, which Lorenzo had shown to him. According to Alfonsina's account in a letter to her son, gossip had it that Lucrezia, who supposedly was used to having her own way, had become very upset and made a scene, accusing the pope of trying to do her harm. According to Alfonsina, Lucrezia then apparently railed at Maddalena: 'she spoke outrageously to her saying certain, numerous things, which [Lucrezia said] Monna Maddalena had said to her'. She also was said to have accused Alfonsina of mocking her.[109] Alfonsina and Maddalena were told this in private by the pope. He asked them to watch what was said to Lucrezia, particularly in light of the quarrel that Contessina and Maddalena had had, which the whole court, and even foreigners, knew about. Alfonsina summed up her feelings about her sister in law to Lorenzo in the following way: 'And in truth, she [Lucrezia] has not been taken seriously by the Pope [and] the Cardinal [Giulio] ... and by anyone else here, even the foreigners; and no one has any regard for her'.[110]

About a year later, Lucrezia clashed with Alfonsina over her plan to make Lorenzo Captain-General of Florence. Benedetto Buondelmonti told Filippo Strozzi that Lucrezia had informed him she opposed this move and blamed Alfonsina for it. 'Oh can you not see that this is the ruin of the city? Have you not considered how much authority the incumbent would have? This would not have pleased nor will it please the Pope, but it has been encouraged by Madonna Alfonsina...'[111] Giovanni da Poppi, Lorenzo's chancellor, told him in a letter of June 1515: 'Madonna Lucretia ... exclaimed to the heavens regarding Your Lordship taking command of the army [as Captain General of Florence] saying that it had been an ill advised thing to do'.[112] She also bitterly opposed Alfonsina's desire to have Lorenzo made Duke of Urbino in 1516.[113] Alfonsina, however, was successful on both occasions.

The dispute between Lucrezia and Alfonsina was not merely one of personal dislike. It was also primarily based on competing political ideologies. As described by Alfonsina, the Medici were split into two opposing 'factions'. On one side was Lucrezia Salviati, Contessina Ridolfi, and Giuliano de' Medici. On the other was Alfonsina Orsini, Lorenzo de' Medici, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, Maddalena Cibo and Francesco Cibo.[114] Jacopo Salviati and Lucrezia, together with Contessina Ridolfi, supported an oligarchic system of government in which the

Medici exercised considerable influence but not absolute power.[115] Alfonsina and her 'faction' worked towards increasing Medici control of government. Pope Leo X held Jacopo in high esteem and, in addition, his senior position in the Florentine government made him difficult to remove. As early as February 1514, Lorenzo told his mother that he would not be disappointed if Jacopo was recalled to Rome.[116] However, it was not until 1518 that Lorenzo was finally able to remove him from his circle of advisors, whereupon Jacopo went to Rome and did not return until after Lorenzo's death in 1519.[117] The battle between these two sisters in law at the papal court was based on the desire of each woman to defend and further their political goals, which of necessity involved promoting the interests of their male relatives. It is possible, therefore, that Lucrezia's and, probably, Contessina's support for Jacopo's cause was less the result of each woman's personal ideological convictions than it was for the more pragmatic desire to support their husbands and sons in their ongoing fight against Alfonsina and Lorenzo's seigneurial ambitions.

This conflict suggests that the women of the Medici family did not act to support their own individual interests, and they certainly did not work together with a sense of their own distinct interests as women. Instead, Alfonsina, Contessina, Lucrezia, and Maddalena supported their male relatives' competing political ambitions. As we have noted this was a traditional female role, but, unlike their female forebears in the Medici family, they were not expected to remain in the background, removed from the main political action. Ironically, in the male preserve of the Curia as female relatives of the pope, they created opportunities for themselves in this courtly environment through their legitimate defence of male interests to become influential, and sometimes controversial, political figures in their own right — something which they could not yet have hoped to do in Florence.

Supporting Medici Friends

The existence of dual Medicean regimes in Florence and Rome meant that women in the Medici family were called upon to support a wide circle of people, including those who were not Medici relatives. The patronage of clients by both Medici men and women was by no means new, as we have seen. In fact, it was an essential mechanism for maintaining the Medici's hold on their power.[118] But there were now two centres of Medici power, so that favours and requests for assistance to relatives, friends, or clients flowed backwards and forwards between Florence and Rome. The requests made by, or asked of, the women of the Medici family in Rome were not unusual; in fact, they were identical to those that all Medici received. But it is their very typicality that demonstrates the influential position that the women of the family held. They were not only patrons in their own right; they were also skilful operators within a competitive patronage process. These were women who had a common understanding of how this process worked and, more importantly, how to turn it to their advantage and that of their clients.

Those wanting favours from the Medici had several avenues to pursue. Some were able to approach Lorenzo directly; while many more relied on a go-between. Alfonsina, Contessina and Maddalena, and even Alfonsina's daughter Clarice Strozzi were called upon to perform as intercessors and advocates. Apart from the traditional association of intercession with females, they were asked because they were based in Rome and therefore more easily accessible to supplicants based there.

Lanfredino Lanfredini was one of the most influential men in the Medici regime in Florence apart from Lorenzo and Jacopo Salviati, with whom he was closely allied.[119] Only a handful of letters to him from the Medici women survives; however, they indicate the level of esteem in which he must have been held.[120] It was to Lanfredini that Alfonsina had written regarding rumours about the Salviati-Alamanni marriage alliance discussed earlier. Lucrezia and Maddalena wrote requesting favours. Lucrezia asked that he perform a 'pious work' by ensuring that 'Zanobi Bartolini should take for a wife a daughter of Giovanni Pandolfini ...'; not simply because she was a relative, Lucrezia assured him, but because of her character.[121] On another occasion, she asked Lanfredini to help a client retrieve some money he had deposited with a government office in which he held a position.[122] Maddalena took similar advantage when she asked Lanfredini to help a client of 'our House'.[123] More frequently, however, Alfonsina and Maddalena would write in recommendation of clients to Lorenzo.

Maddalena Cibo's first surviving letter to Lorenzo, written in September 1513 after he became head of the regime in Florence, asked him to grant a safe-conduct to a miller who was in debt to several people who had threatened him. She assured her nephew that this man fully intended to pay all his debts and was worthy of their help.[124] Maddalena also recommended a poor man with a number of daughters who could not afford the costs of a legal dispute. Therefore, Lorenzo was asked to arrange for the *Otto di Guardia* to end proceedings.[125] She recommended another client for a judicial post because of his abilities and previous experience in the field.[126]

Maddalena was also a mediator for those who had fallen foul of the Florentine authorities. The appeal to justice for worthy, poor recipients of Medici favours was, as usual, a recurring theme in Maddalena's and the other women's correspondence. For example, she told Lorenzo that he should come to the aid of some poor girls she knew: 'Although I know there is no need to recommend Justice to you, ... you should grant justice to two poor orphaned girls ... since the above mentioned poor orphans do not have anyone to defend their rights...'.[127] Those in exile were also particularly worthy recipients of Maddalena's mercy. 'A certain Martino di Giovanni from Gassano has recommended himself to me.... [H]e says he has been banned from there [Florence].... He hopes that through my recommendation to be able to obtain full grace, which I pray is possible...'.[128]

The need for Lorenzo to fulfil these requests for repatriation applied especially to supporters of the Medici. She asked her nephew to withdraw a three-year sentence of exile against Ser Angelo da Montepulciano for 'quite thoughtless words ... since he and his family have always been faithful to our House'.[129] Those who had been loyal to the Medici for generations were especially worthy of assistance.

Lorenzo was asked to ensure a man in debtors' prison would be released to return to his starving family because his family had been loyal to the Medici since her father's time, and, she reminded her nephew, this man had demonstrated his own devotion to the Medici when he himself had opened the gate of the Borgo San Lorenzo in the Medici's ancestral district, as Lorenzo entered Florence in 1512.[130] It is interesting to note that a poor widow, Mona Nanna, who was herself described as 'slave of the House', had come to see Maddalena about this matter.[131] Lorenzo was being subtly reminded of the Medici's obligation to return the favour.

Maddalena did not always directly intervene on behalf of supplicants. Sometimes Alfonsina was asked to discuss Maddalena's requests with her son. Alfonsina recommended to Lorenzo a certain Antonio di Matteo Galigano, presently a tax official, 'by order of the Magnificent Juliano [Giuliano] de' Medici'. Antonio was also 'a "creature" of Madonna Maddalena', who needed to be reconfirmed as an official of the Public Debt (the *Monte*) every January.[132] Alfonsina's influence with her son occasionally helped Maddalena to assist her clients. In a letter to his mother, Lorenzo said that the man she and Maddalena had enthusiastically recommended for a judicial post was of doubtful quality, but that 'for love of Your Ladyship', he would try and find an honourable office for him and, he later adds, would endeavour to satisfy Maddalena as well.[133] The complexity and interlocking character of these networks is illustrated by Maddalena's request of Alfonsina to help a girl from the Pazzi family involved in a dispute. In turn, Alfonsina asked her son to write to the pope about it.[134]

Lorenzo was asked sometimes to interfere directly in electoral processes in Florence. Contessina Ridolfi asked her nephew to ensure that a man she called 'our great friend', who wished to be elected as a judge in the court of the *podestà*, could be successful. 'Your Magnificence should make him number one and have [him] elected to the [office of] the said Judges'.[135] On Contessina's behalf, Alfonsina advised her son to make sure one Albertaccio Corsini was elected to the *Otto di Guardia*. She reminded him that: '...he is a man of good family and has always been of our House. Being able to serve him would be good and it will please me and her [Contessina Ridolfi] and it is not good to refuse it for a minor reason'.[136]

Clarice Strozzi's youth, her frequently poor health, and the influential position of both Alfonsina and Filippo at the Curia all explain why she was not active there.[137] Her few surviving letters of recommendation to her brother Lorenzo de' Medici however, indicate her usefulness as a conduit to the Medici regime in Florence. These letters were concerned with the procurement of vacant clerical offices for clients. Clarice recommended, for example, the son of a loyal Medici 'servant', in November 1513, for a vacant chaplainship.[138] Several years later, she asked Lorenzo when next he visited Rome to recommend to the Curia a certain man for a benefice that was about to be vacated because of the impending death of the incumbent. In appealing to her brother, Clarice stressed how important it was to her personally for this man to obtain the benefice.[139]

But Clarice was not dependent on Lorenzo to assist clients. She was able to use her direct access to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who was especially friendly with Filippo Strozzi, as well as to the pope, to gain the chaplainship of the hospital of San Michele for a Vallombrosan monk. This was achieved 'through my

intercession', she explained to Lorenzo, whom she asked to expedite matters.[140] Clarice also successfully requested from Filippo's loyal friend and executor of papal financial policy, Francesco del Nero, that he obtain the benefice of San Jacopo for her son, Piero, in May 1518.[141] She also instructed him as a matter of charity, occasionally to ignore debts to certain friends and clients of the Strozzi.[142]

It is thus somewhat ironic that relations between Clarice and Francesco, whose expenses she often paid, were sometimes strained between 1515 and 1518 because of Clarice's outrage at both her husband's affair with the famed courtesan, Camilla Pisano, with whom Francesco corresponded, and at Francesco's and Filippo's nocturnal visits to a Dominican convent.[143] Clarice used her friendship with the Observant friars at San Marco and certain nuns to put a stop to these escapades. Francesco informed Filippo that: 'The instruments of Clarice are the friars of San Marco ... [and] Sister Angiolina and certain other nuns'.[144] She also used this connection to alert both the Cardinal Protector and the Master-General of the order to this scandal so that action could be taken in Rome. Clarice was also sure to write to Cardinal Giulio and Alfonsina about this matter.[145] She thus skilfully utilised both Dominican and papal court networks to assert her own authority over del Nero as well as to act against her husband's infidelity. In doing so, Clarice demonstrated her ability, despite her youth, and Filippo's and Francesco's powerful positions in Rome, to negotiate successfully the patronage process in order to take decisive action to defend and protect her right, as Filippo's wife, to be treated with due respect by her spouse and his employees.

Educating a Young Ruler

Alfonsina explained a delay in writing to her son in November 1513 because of 'the many visits of men and women ...' she had received.[146] These demands on her time were reflected in the stream of letters Alfonsina wrote to Lorenzo while living in Rome from the autumn of 1513 to the summer of 1515. They were chiefly concerned with Medici relatives' and clients' requests for patronage. Alfonsina, as one of the most important and influential members of the Medici family (apart from the pope) at the papal court, was at the centre of its patronage network. Her networks intersected with those of other family members, as we have seen, but they were far wider in scope than those of her sisters in law or daughter, because she was the mother of the head of the Medici regime in Florence.

Alfonsina's letters to Lorenzo have similar themes and modes of expression to those he received from Clarice, Contessina, and Maddalena, particularly regarding the necessity of supporting Medici friends, and also those most in need of charity and mercy. However, these letters are worthy of study in their own right, as they reflect Alfonsina's dual role in the Medici regime. She was an influential patron, a power broker, and, above all, mother of its heir. Therefore, it is possible to see the purpose of Alfonsina's correspondence with her son, at least in part, as being that of a matriarch wishing to educate subtly a young ruler in the successful maintenance of his support base and the political values that underpinned it.

Alfonsina received letters from her natal family asking for offices for their clients. She prevailed upon Lorenzo to assist them because to do so would honour her and her parents' memory.

> The bearer of this letter is Lord Antonio Sanseverino, my second cousin, who is very dear to me because he is from my mother's side, and he must be so to you for love of your grandmother and me and because of his virtues.... Therefore, see him willingly and hear graciously what he tells you and honour him for love of me....[147]

People who were loyal clients of both the Orsini and the Medici definitely deserved to be granted favours. Therefore, Alfonsina recommended one man to Lorenzo because he was a 'very faithful servant of our house and a great friend of the Orsini faction'.[148] In a similar spirit, Alfonsina passed on requests to her son from Giuliano and Cardinal Giulio who wanted certain clients to be given the positions they desired.[149] Cardinal Giulio had insisted in his letter to her that Bernardo Adimari be elected to the *Otto di Guardia* 'in any way'. Alfonsina, who had seen this man herself, told Lorenzo: 'Therefore (as I have told you), please him as much as you can'.[150]

Long-standing loyalty and service were to be rewarded. Those clients of the Medici whom Alfonsina described as 'ours' (*cosa nostra*) often came from families that had served the Medici for at least a generation. Giovanni Fracassini was a member of one such family. Some years earlier, Francesco Fracassini had been a loyal factor for the Medici at their villas of Careggi and Cafaggiolo.[151] Alfonsina, when recommending Giovanni be made eligible for political office, emphasised Fracassini's and his family's friendship and loyalty to the Medici as well as their servitude. 'I recommend him to you as one of ours'.[152] Piero dello Scrado, a butcher, 'has been always a good servant of our house', and consequently is recommended in a like manner.[153] Another was simply described as 'our familiar'.[154]

The support and friendship of individuals and families from the Florentine ruling group was crucial to the success of the Medici regime. Therefore, a familiar refrain in Alfonsina's correspondence was that those who were good friends of the Medici should have their requests granted. As early as November 1513, she advised Lorenzo that:

> Simone Bartolommeo and Francesco d'Antonio di Piero Serragli, citizens of [Florence], men of good family and true friends of our House, wish to hold office in the city as befits their status and since there is soon to be an electoral scrutiny, I recommend them to you as our friends.[155]

In March 1514, she recommended one Camillo de' Crescenti to her son because he was 'a young man of good family and a worthy man, and because his House have always been our great friends'.[156] It may well have been the same 'our Lord Camillo' who wrote to Alfonsina requesting that his servant's wish to be allowed to return home from the wars should be granted.[157] She told Lorenzo that she had promised 'our old friend', Poggino, a painter, a position in the Medici palace several months earlier, of which he had recently reminded her, and so she wished

Lorenzo to give him the first vacancy to arise.[158] Other old friends and supporters, such as Giovanni d'Andrea di Lando and Maestro Sancto da Prato, also received approval from Alfonsina for their requests.[159] Particularly important friends, such as Lanfredino Lanfredini, deserved personal intervention, and so Alfonsina said she would speak to the pope about getting him better terms on the purchase of papal offices than he had previously received.[160]

Friendship with or support from Lorenzo's father Piero, or grandfather Lorenzo carried extra weight with Alfonsina because it honoured their memories and provided an example for Lorenzo to follow. Andrea Dazzi — who had been ill and now wished to return to the Florentine University (the *Studio*) — was recommended for a Greek and Latin lectureship because of his longstanding friendship with the Medici. Lorenzo's mother took care to remind Lorenzo that his father and grandfather 'had sought to honour such men and to surround themselves with them, for the honour of their city'.[161] Another man's nephew was to be assisted to escape scandal because of his uncle's service to both the pope and to Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici.[162] And Gerio d'Arezzo, who had been recommended by, among others, both Giuliano de' Medici and an Orsini relative, was to be helped with problems he had with a benefice, Alfonsina said, because he had been a Medici friend 'especially with your father of blessed memory with whom he was very friendly'.[163]

Alfonsina's recommendations of the clergy and nuns to Lorenzo had the dual benefit of supporting Medici friends as well as fulfilling one's duty to be charitable towards the religious. She wrote on behalf of Francesco Frescobaldi because he was 'a man of the church [and] a friend of the [Medici] House' and his cause was just.[164] On another occasion she wrote to her son, asking him to grant a Spanish friar the chaplainship he desired, because he was a Medici friend and she did not want to go back on her word.[165] Her sympathy and respect for clergy was often enough reason to grant requests. Giordano del Milanese, who had been recommended by the Archbishop of Tivoli, wanted to withdraw money from the *Monte* that he was owed by another man, without litigation. Alfonsina wished Lorenzo to ensure this would happen 'for love of the Archbishop and me...'.[166]

Alfonsina's piety, her support for Medici friends and the clergy in general, were all combined in her advocacy of the 'hospital of la Scala' that looked after orphaned children. Bernardo Accolti had written requesting that the institution not be taxed. Alfonsina agreed that it was inappropriate to do so. Furthermore, she supported the request because the man was a Medici friend and his brother had supported the election of the pope in conclave.[167]

Nuns, too, would receive favour. Alfonsina told Lorenzo, for example, that the nuns of Santa Appollonia should be exempted from paying customs duties.[168] She also asked her son to arrange that the daughters of Matteo di Gabriello from Pistoia not be thrown out of the convent in which they lived, because it was against their wishes and those of their relatives. Alfonsina stressed that this should be done '*on my order* and that of the Magnificent Juliano [my emphasis]'.[169] This statement of her authority to make decisions, alongside the men of the Medici family, foreshadowed the powerful position she was later to hold in Florence.[170]

Alfonsina's experience of the Medici in exile made her particularly sympathetic to the plight of exiles who appealed for clemency. She recommended a man who had suffered exile and, while others who had made similar mistakes had been recalled, he had not been 'for having spoken against the regime [and] because he did not have anyone who had recommended him ... it was not difficult for me to write to you about this ..., because he was poor and needed by his family'.[171] The reason for her sympathies is made explicit in a letter concerning certain Sienese exiles that were prisoners of the Florentines by order of the pope. In July 1514, Alfonsina specifically asked Lorenzo to let them alone despite his designs on Siena. 'You know that we too have been exiled and searched for as many friends as possible, and to return home we did everything...'.[172] Instead, she advised her son to free them and secretly to encourage them.[173] Lorenzo ignored her advice, perhaps unwisely, since his plans to takeover Siena failed.[174]

Alfonsina was an influential patron and advocate for Medici supporters in Florence and could influence government there in her own right. Ser Bernardo Fiamminghi, who hailed from the small town of San Miniato, was granted the right by the Florentine government to pay tax within the city itself, a major step towards citizenship,[175] most probably because he was 'at present chancellor of Madonna Alfonsina de' Medici'.[176] In September 1514, the electoral officials (the *accoppiatori*) qualified him for notarial offices as if he had legitimately obtained them.[177] In 1515 Fiamminghi was appointed to the secretaryship of the office responsible for drafting laws relating to subject territories, while in 1516, the Doctors' Guild asked Alfonsina to appoint their chancellor and so she chose Ser Bernardo.[178] She, in turn, could write to Fiamminghi in Florence, telling him that 'you should go to the Monte officials on my behalf', to ensure that 'Bernardo Giambulari, our friend', be exempted from paying tax this year.[179]

Obviously, Alfonsina's efforts to assist those in Florence were not always immediately successful. She wrote to Lorenzo regarding the election of two particular men to the Florentine *Signoria* in March 1514, telling him it would embarrass her if he refused. Her son replied that he had promised this office to others and could not change his mind.[180] It also took nearly two years for Alfonsina to ensure the recall from exile of Francesco Pugliese, an ardent Savonarolan, who had been expelled for ten years in September 1513, apparently for making an insulting remark about Lorenzo. In turn, Lorenzo argued that very little could be done and was critical of his mother's judgement on the matter. However, the exile decree was revoked finally in December 1515.[181] Clearly, Alfonsina occasionally did not have her bidding acted upon because of competing demands on the Medici. (This was not uncommon, as even the most skilful of Medici patrons, such as Alfonsina's father in law, Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, were sometimes unsuccessful.) But it is perhaps not surprising that Pugliese's exile decree was not revoked until she, as we shall see in the next chapter, effectively 'ruled' Florence, thereby further enabling Alfonsina, as a woman in the Medici family, to break new ground.

All in the Family: At the Court of Pope Clement VII

Pope Clement VII enjoyed a positive relationship with his cousin Lucrezia Salviati and her daughter, Maria Salviati. Both women, as we shall see, consciously reminded the pope and other men of the Medici that they were all of one family as they strove to gain the benefits of papal patronage for their male relatives.

Lucrezia Salviati's primary sphere of influence within the Medici regime was at the papal court in Rome. As Pope Leo X's only surviving sibling, for example, she was among those at his deathbed in December 1521.[182] The Salviati family's relationship with the Medici regime in Florence during the 1520s and 1530s was at best strained, mainly because of Jacopo and Lucrezia's opposition to its increasingly seigneurial style.[183] The importance of the papal connection to the Salviati is highlighted by the fact that during the brief pontificate of Leo's successor, the Dutch pontiff Adrian VI (1522-1523), the Salviati bank in Rome incurred heavy financial losses, as did many other Italian banks in the city, because of a loss of patronage.[184]

The election of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici as Pope Clement VII in November 1523 saw an immediate upturn in the Salviati's fortunes in Rome. Jacopo Salviati was a member of the pontiff's immediate circle, and he was soon appointed papal legate to Modena and Reggio.[185] In a letter of December 1524, to her eldest son Cardinal Giovanni, Lucrezia emphasised the pope's close relationship with her husband, especially Jacopo's own loyalty to the pontiff. She warned Giovanni that her husband's sense of duty to Clement VII could even override parental feeling. 'But I remind you well, to be cautious in writing because he [Jacopo] shows everything to His Holiness without exception'.[186]

Jacopo's status as a close advisor of Clement, however, did not imply his, or indeed Lucrezia's, unquestioning agreement with the pope on all matters. Both opposed him in 1533 with regards to the decision to marry Caterina de' Medici, the daughter of the late Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, to Henri, Duke of Orléans. The grounds for their opposition were that such a union went against the Medicean tradition of marrying at least their eldest daughters to Florentines, which had occurred in the case of Jacopo's and Lucrezia's own marriage.[187] Clement trusted Jacopo enough, however, to give him responsibility for making arrangements for Caterina's journey to France.[188] In this instance, the interests of the Medici family, and the wishes of a pope, would be put ahead of Jacopo's (and Lucrezia's) own personal beliefs.

'The Real Boss of the Palace'

Lucrezia's main preoccupation during Clement's pontificate was the management of the household of her son Cardinal Giovanni especially during his absence from Rome as Papal Legate to Bologna in 1524 and 1525. Giovanni's status as a cardinal and prince of the Catholic Church required an appropriate display of magnificence and liberality and a household averaging 120 staff to match.[189] Lucrezia's management ability was considerable. In November 1524, for example, Giovanni's majordomo, Juan Hortigosa, informed the cardinal that: 'Household

matters are going well', even though his mother had made unspecified reform.[190] As Cardinal Giovanni's modern biographer Pierre Hurtubise suggests she acted: 'as the real boss of the Palace'.[191] Given the absence of female rivals at a cardinals' court, Lucrezia could use traditional domestic functions as a tool for the exercise of power and influence in an all-male and highly political arena with full authority to do so. Indeed, it became common during the course of the sixteenth century for families connected to the Curia to be headed by the ecclesiastic, who exercised control in his family by using the art of persuasion in a collaborative relationship with the women, and in particular with the most senior female in his family.[192]

Lucrezia's duties and sphere of influence extended even further. She was responsible for the administration of her son's benefices. Filippo Nerli, Giovanni's brother in law, advised him in February 1525 that he should first ascertain his mother's wishes regarding a matter to do with an abbey that was one of his benefices, so that he could then decide what he wanted to do.[193] The acquisition and effective management of benefices was a major source of a cardinal's wealth and prestige, and thus this task was crucial to Giovanni's success.[194] This fact made the undertaking of such a duty by Lucrezia in her son's absence even more significant, given that a woman could not hold an ecclesiastical benefice. It highlights her position of influence in an arena that was the almost exclusive preserve of male clerics and a few select laymen.

Lucrezia made it clear to Giovanni shortly before he left for Spain in May 1525 that she would ensure that the details regarding his acquisition of a bishopric in Ferrara would be finalised. In a letter to him of the 22nd of May, Lucrezia wrote: 'Concerning the Bishopric of Ferrara, Your Lordship should leave the matter to me, ... I am satisfied to rent it for over 4000 ducats a year and it is well secured...'.[195] She then asked Giovanni to arrange for a procurator, and with Jacopo's consent, noted, 'I will do the rest'.[196] As a Florentine woman she could not legally sign a contract without a male legal guardian (*mundualdus*), and as her spouse and head of the family, Jacopo always had to be consulted; nonetheless Lucrezia was the one in charge.[197] A few weeks later, she was not slow to use her position and her authority over Giovanni — both as his mother and as the administrator of his benefices — to make Giovanni relinquish two of his own benefices in favour of her younger son, Jacopino.[198] Lucrezia also was involved in negotiations regarding the acquisition of a benefice that she felt should be ceded to another man, a certain Cesare. 'I have succeeded in the task of having Messer Pagolo d' Arezzo, assign his father's benefices to Cesare, as is his duty.... I know of nothing else that I can do to benefit Cesare in this matter except to press him.[199] Her management responsibilities also included trying to ensure that an order of Giovanni's that was ignored would soon be obeyed.[200] Lucrezia was also asked to do favours by her son, such as assisting a Salviati client, Bernardo di Maestro Giorgio. She wrote: 'Concerning Bernardo, I will not fail to do what he needs when the time comes...'.[201] Lucrezia told Giovanni in June 1525 that in relation to the two abbeys that he wished to unite into one to give to Bernardo: 'Tomorrow morning, I will speak ... with His Holiness'.[202] Lucrezia's access to the pope further underlines her own significant influence as 'boss' of Giovanni's palace.

More often, however, the situation was reversed and Lucrezia was a conduit and a source of recommendation for those seeking assistance from Giovanni to acquire benefices or other clerical offices. As always, those who were relatives, friends, and dutiful clients of the Medici or Salviati families would be the ones most likely to be recommended.

> Messer Donato de' Bardi of those from Bernia [Vernio], has told me several times, that he wishes to stay with Your Most Reverend Lordship, and although I replied that you are overloaded with servants for now, still he seems young to me, qualified and ... I thought to recommend him to Your Most Reverend Lordship.[203]

This Bardi youth, a distant relative, was someone she would have felt obligated to assist. A servant of the pope was highly recommended to Giovanni by his mother, simply because he was 'a familiar of His Holiness'.[204] In March 1525 Lucrezia wrote to Giovanni, saying: 'I understand there to be certain vacant benefices here in Rome, ... and that these said benefices are to be reserved for you ...'; she wished him to give them to Claudio and Gagliardino, two loyal servants of the Salviati for several years.[205] Lucrezia emphasised that they deserved them and were destitute.[206] On another occasion, she supported the request of 'Zaccharia, servant of M. Jacopo ... a good and much loved servant', who wished to be granted a vacant benefice of Giovanni's.[207] Another Salviati client wished to become one of the cardinal's proto-notaries and was recommended by Lucrezia to Giovanni.[208] In the course of an audience with Clement VII, she asked her son to lend support to her own client, the abbess of San Quintino in Parma, whose nuns (contrary to the pope's belief) did not wish to remain separated from her.[209] It was common and highly appropriate for women in the Medici family to support nuns, as we have seen, and this is a further indicator of how far afield Lucrezia's patronage and influence could spread, and how important her relationship to the pontiff was to those in need.

Lucrezia was concerned that Giovanni maintain his honour as a papal legate to Bologna and she suggested that he take someone with him to Spain as an aide: 'However, it is necessary that Your Lordship think about [taking with you] a qualified man of good family who will do you honour'.[210] Some two weeks later, she told him not to take too large an entourage with him when he travelled as 'it would not bring you honour or any good at all, but [would cause] great disorder and bother sooner'.[211] Some months earlier, in December 1524, she became concerned that as a result of the lack of diligence of one of their employees, two men had escaped from prison, which did not please the pope.[212] Lucrezia further warned her son that he must take charge and put an end to these escapes.[213] A week later she was still anxious about the issue as there had been further escapes, and consequently both Lucrezia and Jacopo were concerned 'for your honour and profit'.[214]

Broader familial concerns also occupied Lucrezia's correspondence with Giovanni. For example, the problem of recovering the dowry of Giovanni's recently widowed sister, Elena, from the noble Pallavicino family so that it could be given to her new husband, Jacopo d'Appiano, was more than simply a private family matter because of the political import of such alliances to the Medici and

Salviati families, including the pope.[215] Lucrezia makes clear the importance of Clement's role in these matters. 'Every time one cannot do other than be content and accommodate oneself to that which God and His Holiness order and dispose'.[216]

In her letters to her elder son, Lucrezia's position as a mother enables her even to advise and educate a cardinal. She tells him to do the pope's bidding and always to interpret his actions in a positive manner.[217] Lucrezia's shrewd advice to Giovanni on how to handle his brother, Lorenzo's, inflated feelings of self importance,[218] as well as her directives to another son, Alamanno, concerning his wayward behaviour,[219] reveal something of how Lucrezia was able to act so decisively as 'boss' in the male environment of a cardinal's court, while still working within the acceptable bounds of the maternal sphere of responsibility. As a consequence of the earlier deaths of her two younger sisters and just recently of Alfonsina, by February 1520 Lucrezia lacked female rivals at the papal court. She was then effectively acting within a familial arena, which thanks to the increasingly seigneurial character of the Medici regime, had significantly augmented its power and field of endeavour, thus enabling her to exercise authority in a cardinal's court with impunity.

Relations with the Medici Regime

The return of the Medici to Florence after some three years in exile in August 1530, with the aid of the Imperial army of Emperor Charles V, heralded the beginning of another period of Salviati influence in Florence and Rome as intimates of the Medici regime. Lucrezia received congratulatory letters from Medici friends and relatives rejoicing in the family's return to their native city. 'I rejoice with you as much as I can with the present letter', wrote Rafaello Velluti.[220] One Salviati relative, Piero di Leonardo, wrote a congratulatory letter to Lucrezia that emphasised her own and her husband's obligation to benefit their friends and relatives now that the Medici had returned to power in Florence:

> My most honourable Madonna Lucrezia, etc. 'This [letter] is to congratulate Your Magnificence on the victory had by this city.... I will say only that for all the activity, nothing is attended to except for saying: *"Medici, Medici, and bread"*.... We, your relatives and friends, await to hear nothing except what Your Magnificence intends concerning coming here, as we await it with the greatest desire, both to see you, and because *you are able to benefit your servants and friends*. Because those that were previously in government, each one of them has relatives and interests of their own as is reasonable. Consequently, Magnificent Lady, I have written a [letter] to Your Magnificent Jacopo recommending myself to His Lordship. I asked him and so I ask you to ask him that where he has to consult with other citizens about the honours and offices of the city that he doesn't forget me ... because I need [it] more than ever' [my emphasis].[221]

The Medici thus represented prosperity to their clients, literally invoked in the popular cry, described here, which linked their return to the supply of the basic staple of bread.

Family members and loyal servants did not fail to use Lucrezia's connection with the papal court. Her nephew, Giovan Francesco Gonzaga, in his letter congratulating her on the return of the Medici, also wished Lucrezia to recommend him to the pope.[222] Not surprisingly, other supplicants, many of whom were female, also requested that Lucrezia appeal to the pope on their behalf. One woman wrote asking for help for her impoverished son in law and concluded by saying: 'I ask that you recommend him and me to His Holiness'.[223] Another wrote requesting that she appeal to Clement VII to have her husband made eligible for election to the office of Gonfaloniere of Justice of Florence.[224] Angela, Marchioness of Panzano, described Lucrezia as: 'Most honoured as a Mother' and herself as 'a good and obedient daughter', when requesting that Lucrezia arrange for her son to receive an office.[225] She urged her to apply herself as if she was doing it for 'your own sons', and asked that she be recommended to the pope.[226] Angela was here invoking the language of fictive kinship, which as we have previously observed was a salient characteristic of letters from clients to the Medici.

Apart from her familial connection, Lucrezia's influence within the Medici principate after 1530 also derived from her extensive property holdings in Pisa, Rome and Florence. These holdings would have served to ensure a Medici and Salviati presence in the areas where the property was found, thereby furthering and expanding both families' connections in those cities. Some of this property was granted to her as the only surviving heir of Pope Leo X after Duke Alessandro's death in 1537.[227] She had begun to acquire property holdings in Rome much earlier, however, with the aim of reinforcing both the Medici and Salviati families' positions there.[228] She and her sister, Maddalena, each bought a 'vegetable garden' in Rome in June 1515.[229] In the same year, Lucrezia facilitated a land exchange in Pisa for the Medici under the Salviati name.[230] She also owned a vineyard, two houses, land in the Roman countryside, and possessions in Assisi, and the regions of Val di Pesa and Val di Siena as well as Medici property at Poggio a Caiano.[231] Lucrezia later bequeathed all of her named properties and possessions to her sons Giovanni, Lorenzo and Alamanno and all her other unnamed possessions were distributed to the sons of Alamanno, Lorenzo and her daughter, Francesca.[232]

Lucrezia's activities are harder to trace after 1532, when the republican constitution was formally abolished and Alessandro de' Medici was created a duke, but this fact together with Jacopo's death in September 1533 did not lead to a reduction in Lucrezia's involvement in the Medici regime.[233] Indeed, in 1534 Alessandro exempted Lucrezia's children from his decree of banishment from Florence of Medici relatives with republican sympathies, out of respect for her.[234] The death of Clement VII in 1534, together with both her own and Giovanni's distrust of Duke Alessandro, nonetheless, would have weakened her link to the regime.[235]

However, Lucrezia's influence with the Medici regime was reaffirmed with the accession of her grandson, Cosimo, as duke. He wrote a letter of condolence to Alamanno Salviati on his grandmother's passing in November 1553: 'I have heard of the death of Lady Lucrezia ... my Grandmother with much sadness...'.[236] Benedetto Varchi was particularly fulsome in his praise of her, calling Lucrezia 'the most worthy and most venerable lady that perhaps one could find in any city at

any time'.[237] This tribute followed the generally positive views of her that we have already seen were expressed by other sixteenth-century chroniclers, such as Niccolò Valori and Paolo Giovio. But Varchi's praise of Lucrezia also was forthcoming because it gave him the opportunity to laud her as the grandmother of his patron, Cosimo I, whom Varchi could then, in turn, praise for commissioning his *Storia fiorentina*.[238] A brief genealogy of Duke Cosimo not only began, as we have noted, with Lucrezia Tornabuoni it also ended with 'Lucrezia [Salviati] married to Jacopo Salviati, [who was] mother of the Lady Maria, and grandmother of the most serene Grand Duke Cosimo I'.[239] Lucrezia Salviati's position within the Medici regime in Florence after 1537 thus derived from her status as grandmother of its *Signore* while, until 1534 at least, her sphere of influence was centred around familial connections at the papal court. Her daughter, Maria Salviati, however, was able to bridge the chasm between the two regimes by using all her familial connections to benefit both husband and son.

Maria Salviati: For the Good of Cosimo

Jacopo's and Lucrezia's decision in January 1513 to betroth their fourteen-year-old daughter, Maria, to their distant relative Giovanni de' Medici — known as Giovanni delle Bande Nere on account of the black armbands he wore throughout his career as a famed mercenary soldier — was considered by at least one patrician letter writer of the day to have created a marriage alliance 'of great quality'.[240] Giovanni was the son of Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, a descendent of Cosimo 'the Elder"s younger brother Lorenzo and the famous ruler of Imola, Caterina Sforza.[241] After moving to Florence in about 1501, the widowed Sforza became a close friend of Jacopo Salviati, who lent her money, and became, after Sforza's death in 1509, guardian of her son and executor of her will.[242] Jacopo and Lucrezia Salviati then raised Giovanni, who was a rather tempestuous and violent young man.[243] The marriage was advantageous for the Salviati not only because it linked the family to the noble Sforza family of Milan, but also perhaps more importantly, because it re-established ties between the two previously estranged lines of the Medici family.[244] Goro Gheri considered the occasion of the marriage of sufficient import to mention its taking place the previous evening, in a letter to Alfonsina Orsini dated the 17th of November 1516.[245]

When her husband was exiled by the Florentine government in early 1518, after being involved in a violent altercation with the men of the Lord of Piombino, Maria, who had been sent to a convent by Giovanni, used her connections with the Medici regime to seek aid for her errant spouse.[246] Francesco Susaio, her majordomo, reported from Rome that:

> Last evening, I carried [... your] letter to Madonna Alfonsina, and with her was Messer Goro [Gheri]. She examined carefully the said letter. Madonna replied: 'You will say to Maria that I am very pleased ... that she has not fallen into melancholy'. And she said many loving words ... in order to demonstrate that she loves Your Ladyship most cordially.[247]

Maria then told Giovanni: 'I presented the letters to Madonna Alfonsina. I found Madonna [Alfonsina] very well disposed towards Your Lordship'.[248] She sent a letter also to Cardinal Cibo in Pisa at the same time, and as well was pleased to note Duke Lorenzo's favourable response to her request for assistance.[249]

Maria continued to seek assistance from her family for her husband even after Pope Leo X politically rehabilitated Giovanni, some months after the exile decree was issued, by giving him command of men-at-arms in order to re-take Parma from the French.[250] In March 1520, for example, Giovanni Salviati assured his sister that: 'Rest assured that your affairs and Giovanni's are as close to my heart as my own and as many times as I see the opportunity, I will recommend you to His Holiness [Pope Leo X] as I have always done until now'.[251] In December 1523, shortly after his election, she appealed to Pope Clement VII to relieve her consort of his debts:

> Most blessed father ... with most humble reverence I remind you it would not be hard for you to relieve my lord consort from all the interest and deposits which burden him; ... because if it [the assistance] does not arrive from Your Holiness, here there is no way to be able to free him from it.[252]

A few months later, in March 1524, after two visits with the pope, Maria was able to report to her husband Giovanni that: 'Concerning the debits and deposits ... (which, according to His Beatitude, exceeds the sum of 6000 ducats) he says he is happy at present to relieve you of the burden'.[253] This issue of the availability of financial assistance from Clement VII continued to preoccupy both of them for some time after the initial offer. In June 1524, Giovanni informed his wife that he was waiting to be advised by the papal datary about money to pay for his lodgings.[254]

After Giovanni died of wounds incurred in a battle of December 1526, Maria found herself in straitened circumstances. She would have thought one anonymous letter especially reassuring because it informed her that: 'His Holiness ... feels not a little annoyance and sadness in the adverse matter [of Giovanni's death]' and Maria was also told by the letter writer that the pope had instructed a Medici agent to discuss her needs with him.[255]

In widowhood, Maria directed her energies towards maximising opportunities for her son Cosimo, who was born in June 1519, much as she had done for his father. All decisions she made regarding Cosimo were geared towards ensuring his future as a member of the Medici regime.

Maria's commitment to Cosimo's well being was so all encompassing that it even superseded other familial loyalties. She was willing to risk her father Jacopo's wrath by accusing him of not doing enough to assist her or her orphaned son. In January 1527, Jacopo tried to assure Maria that he was as devoted to Cosimo as if he were his own son.[256] A few days later, he told his daughter that her brother, Giovanni, then in France, 'advised us that he has done his duty with His Most Reverend Majesty [of France] for Cosimo'.[257] Apparently this did not dispel Maria's concerns, because she still complained bitterly that Jacopo was not doing enough to assist Cosimo: 'And if [Y]our [M]agnificence abandons me and this poor orphan,

and you leave us thus in the hand of fortune, I guarantee you, it will be one of the most miserable things ever done'.[258] Jacopo replied furiously: 'Therefore do not disconcert yourself so, and think about how to manage yourself with that virtue and prudence that is appropriate to your station and as you have always done'.[259] In Jacopo's view, his daughter's behaviour was both unseemly and inappropriate. In Maria's eyes, however, her actions were appropriate to the straitened circumstances in which both she and Cosimo found themselves. This outburst against her father indicates how deeply committed she was to pursuing her son's interests, even placing them above filial respect and duty. This supreme devotion to her son above all else is further illustrated in May 1531 when she refused requests by the pope and by her family to remarry. She wrote to her brother Cardinal Giovanni, giving her reasons for the refusal:

> As soon as that blessed soul of my lord consort had gone, in that instant, I decided to live always with my son for many reasons.... [A]nd for one very special [reason], I considered that my son, having been born of such especially fortunate lineage, was not going to be abandoned by me. I would be able to be of much greater use to him by staying with him than by leaving him.[260]

In this instance, Maria's maternal duty to remain with her son and to assist him as he grew outweighed her familial responsibilities. Maria wrote to the pope and to her parents as well as to Giovanni regarding her decision not to remarry. She asked her brother to ensure that they all saw her two preceding letters on this matter, and, most importantly, Maria requested that he support her and Cosimo in his discussions with Clement VII on this issue.[261]

Such interest in the possibility of Maria's remarriage and in Cosimo's welfare by Clement is not surprising. Both Medici popes were vitally interested in his upbringing, possibly seeing his birth as crucial to the legitimate continuation (and possibly revitalisation) of the Medici family's lineage. Maria ensured that Leo was informed of her son's birth on June 11 1519 almost immediately after it happened, inviting him to be the child's godfather 'along with all the College of Cardinals'.[262] The pontiff accepted the offer and named the baby in memory of his celebrated ancestor Cosimo de' Medici, 'the Elder'.[263] Maria began the process of bringing her young son to the attention of Pope Clement VII almost immediately after his election in late 1523. In December, in a postscript to her letter concerning Giovanni's financial woes, probably written in her own hand, she asked the pope to provide her infant son with a gold chain worth four to five ducats as well as a medal for him 'when you have the money'.[264] Some two months later, she informed her husband joyfully of the obvious affection the pope held for their son.[265] Maria also managed to convince Clement to allow her to move Cosimo to Rome in 1524, with the intention of enabling him to remain in the public eye.[266] In a letter of 1527, written after the Sack of Rome in May, Maria commiserated with Clement VII on his misfortunes. Although she acknowledged that his situation was much worse than hers, she concluded by saying that he should not forget 'this our poor son...'.[267]

Maria continued to recommend Cosimo to the pope even after the Medici established a hereditary principate in Florence in 1532. She did so even in the face of possible rivals for the pontiff's affection and attention, namely Clement's own natural son and the Florentine regime's head, Duke Alessandro de' Medici, whose own friendship with Cosimo would have pleased his mother.[268] The duke enjoyed his young cousin's company. They went hunting together and Cosimo was part of Alessandro's entourage to Bologna in late 1532, where he was introduced to Emperor Charles V.[269] In a letter from Bologna in December, Cosimo's tutor, Pierfrancesco Riccio, was careful to stress the affection Cosimo received from both the pope and Duke Alessandro: 'Yesterday evening ... His Holiness ... showed him great affection ... and he is shown very great affection by His Excellency and by all the court'.[270] Discussions about a possible wife for Cosimo in 1532 and 1533 involved consultations with the pope, Duke Alessandro, Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, and Cardinal Giovanni Salviati.[271] In December 1532, Riccio told Maria that he was awaiting a reply regarding the possibility of a marriage alliance from both Clement and Alessandro de' Medici.[272] The duke decided that it was not yet the appropriate time for Cosimo to marry, but Riccio assured her: 'The attitude of His Excellency towards your son and Your Ladyship could not be better'.[273] In a letter to Clement in January 1533, Maria couched her constant demands of the pope and his court on behalf of Cosimo in terms of her maternal duty to try to advance her son's interests: 'Holy Father. Although I know that Cos[i]mo, my son, has remembered himself to Your Holiness; also for my satisfaction and *maternal duty*, ... reverently I recommend him to you.... I place myself at the mercy [*clementia*] of Your Holiness [my emphasis]...'.[274]

Her request for favours brought with them an obligation to fulfil the pope's wishes. She was reminded of this in January 1533 after expressing reluctance at the idea of accompanying the young Caterina de' Medici to France for her wedding to the Duke of Orléans, because of the costs she and her son would incur. Maria was advised by Riccio, and also by her father, to accede to Clement's wishes because of all that he had done for her and equally, Jacopo stressed: 'because this is necessary for Cosimo'.[275] Maria knew only too well that being part of the papal family could be both a blessing and a burden.

Maria Salviati's involvement in the events following Duke Alessandro's assassination on January 6 1537, is a final illustration of how successful were her strategies to further her son's interests with the chief members of the Medici regime and yet not incur displeasure from contemporaries for involving herself in the political arena. These events confirmed the end of a process that had begun in 1532, that is to say a century of Medicean *de facto* control of republican Florence was now definitely over, succeeded by their ruling the city and its territories as hereditary *signori*. Several chroniclers record that following Alessandro's violent death, Maria Salviati participated in the discussions (the *pratiche*) with senior members of the Medici regime — amongst them: Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, Lorenzo Salviati, Francesco Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori — concerning the type of regime over which the next Medici ruler should preside.[276] 'In the Salviati house many meetings took place which were attended by Madonna Maria, ... [Cardinal Giovanni Salviati] and the first citizens of the Regime'.[277]

This type of meeting was similar in form to the *Consulte e Pratiche* meetings that were regularly held in the *Palazzo della Signoria* where the leading citizens of Florence would meet to advise the *Signoria* on matters of government policy. The main difference in this instance, of course, was the presence of a woman. Maria was able to do so precisely because this meeting was held in a private house and included Salviati family members. But the presence of politically powerful men, and the meeting's crucial importance, renders her appearance there extremely significant. Who was to succeed Alessandro was a vexed question. A Medici relative, Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo, and some others proposed that Alessandro's natural son Giulio should succeed his father.[278] But Giulio was only four-years-old and illegitimate, while Cosimo — who was almost eighteen, legitimate, nobly born and the son of a famous mercenary soldier — was by far the more popular choice.[279] The Salviati were divided on the question of whether Cosimo should be made a duke. Maria's brothers Giovanni, Lorenzo and Alamanno as well as several others did not wish to elect a 'new lord'.[280] In turn, she did not want her son to become duke without the support of leading citizens (thereby risking Alessandro's fate) and so strove to persuade others to her point of view. This was to elect Cosimo, and, in addition, to give him control of key fortresses in order to defend his regime.[281] Maria was successful in her undertaking as an intercessor with opposing groups because she acted in a traditional manner as a mother seeking to further the interests of her son, by mediating between opposing groups and persuading others to follow her suggestion. However, Maria's presence at this crucial meeting, and her success in ensuring Cosimo's election, demonstrate clearly that even in 1537, when the Medici no longer had even to appear to work within a republican framework, the most effective way for a woman of the Medici family to exercise power and influence was to premise her interference in the political arena on a duty to protect, defend and advance the interests of her menfolk. It was Maria Salviati's persuasive abilities with leaders of the Medici regime, as well as her emphasis on her maternal concern for her son, that enabled Cosimo to be created a duke and later to consolidate his power, thereby enabling himself and his male heirs to rule Florence and Tuscany for a further two centuries.

Conclusions

Being part of the pope's family was what legitimated Lucrezia's and Maria's activities at the court of Clement VII. Lucrezia Salviati discovered to her cost that a change of pontiff could in fact be very dangerous for even the female members of the previous incumbent's family. In 1538, Pope Paul III ordered Lucrezia Salviati to vacate the Medici Palace in Rome (now Palazzo Madama), where she had been living for several years, and when she refused, he had her forcibly removed.[282] Benedetto Varchi recorded in his *Storia fiorentina* that the effect of this incident 'was displeasing to everyone, and contradicted by no one'.[283] The pope ordered Lucrezia's removal ostensibly because of a dispute between himself and Duke Cosimo over the right of Margaret of Austria, then married to his nephew, Ottavio Farnese, to inherit Medici property. This was itself part of an attempt to reclaim her

dowry after the assassination of her previous husband, Duke Alessandro de' Medici, in early 1537.[284] (Relations between Pope Paul and Duke Cosimo were also strained because of the duke's treatment of Florentine exiles.[285]) Lucrezia initiated an intensive legal battle with Margaret of Austria in an attempt to regain possession of the palace, but was unsuccessful. She remained in Rome, sometimes living in her son Cardinal Giovanni's palace (Palazzo delle Rovere), where she died in November 1553, some two weeks after her eldest son's own death.[286]

This battle between Margaret of Austria and Lucrezia Salviati underscores the importance of familial connection as the primary means of Lucrezia's access to power. This influence derived primarily from Salviati connections with the Medici and the Roman Curia. During the pontificates of the two Medici popes, Leo X and Clement VII, she, her husband Jacopo, Cardinal Giovanni, Maria, and the Salviati family in general, enjoyed a high degree of power, prestige, and influence with the papacy. But the election in 1534 of Pope Paul III from the noble Farnese family left both Lucrezia and her family vulnerable to the machinations of an anti-Medicean pontiff.

Any discussion of Clement VII's pontificate, his court and his relationship with other Medici is incomplete without an examination of how the women of the family — particularly his female Salviati relatives — managed so successfully to negotiate a space for themselves in an arena where contemporaries so often declared that women were not welcome. Lucrezia Salviati's activities were integral to the successful operation of her son's court. And Maria's promotion of Cosimo's interests in Rome and then in Florence following Duke Alessandro's assassination, ultimately ensured the future of the Medici family's rule of Florence and later Tuscany as a principate.

All the women members of the Medici family were successful at the Curia during the pontificates of Popes Leo X and Clement VII because they adapted their familial roles and responsibilities in the domestic arena to the demands and protocols of the papal court. The Medici women emphasised their authority to do so because of their familial responsibilities, thereby legitimating their presence in an all-male arena and creating an opportunity to act for themselves.

Whether the Medici women were consciously aware of how far they were pushing the boundaries of the traditional female sphere is unclear. As we would say in modern parlance, they acted strategically with the effect that they succeeded in redefining to their advantage how they, and the women from other elite families who would later follow in their footsteps, could exercise power, influence and authority in a traditionally all-male arena without fear of censure or pre-emptive criticism.[287]

Notes

[1] On courtesans in papal Rome, see A. Romano (ed.) *Lettere di cortigane del Rinascimento* (Rome: Salerno, 1990). One female dignitary who visited the papal court was Isabella D'Este, Duchess of Mantua, and Pope Leo X entertained her by staging a

magnificent hunt in her honour in January 1515. See J. Kruse, 'Hunting, Magnificence and the Court of Leo X', *Renaissance Studies* 7 (3) (1993), pp. 243-257, at p. 252.

[2] C. Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope* (Oxford & Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 168, 182-183.

[3] Shaw (1993), p. 168. Cf. the similar criticism of Lucrezia Tornabuoni's behaviour when visiting the papal court in 1467 in chapter 1 above.

[4] Cerretani (1993b), p. 320. 'Eravi tre sorelle co' figl[i]oli e la chognata, c[i]oè la madre di Lorenzo, [Alfonsina Orsini], e tutti atendevano a chiedere e prochurare a entrate 'benifitii et capelli. Era in chorte molti amici e parentti a provisione in modo che ... d'un papato richcho [sic] l'avevano fatto povero'.

[5] For a discussion of the theme of powerful women and the link between them and avarice, see below chapter 6. See also the discussion therein on representations of Alfonsina as ambitious and avaricious.

[6] This comment was made in a letter to her son of 9/2/1514. It is published in Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 991-993, at p. 992. The original source is ASF MAP 114, 51. (All archival references are to the ASF unless otherwise stated.)
'... volontieri si accomoda dove vede che vanno quest'altri, ... per non dispiacere'.

[7] ASP Tomo II: Salviati di Roma, busta 61, fasc. 18, contains a copy of Alfonsina's will dated 6/2/1520. An additional copy is contained in UCLA, Department of Special Collections, Orsini, Box 240, 15. Both copies contain the legal preamble in Latin and the Italian testament dictated by Alfonsina. See also Lefevre (1975), pp. 129-130, which summarises Alfonsina's property and testamentary bequests. The terms of Alfonsina's will are discussed more fully in chapter 6 below. For Giulio de' Medici's defrauding Clarice Strozzi of her inheritance after he became Pope Leo X's universal heir in 1521, see R. Devonshire-Jones, *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant* (London: Althone Press, 1972), p. 147.

[8] On Filippo's captivity and eventual release after the payment of a ransom in April 1527, see Nardi (1858), v. 2 p. 124; Segni (1857), pp. 7, 14; Roth (1925), p. 43.

[9] Cited in Pastor (1950), v. 9 p. 502. '...con lacrime, suspiri et lamenti sta alle horecchie di S. S^{tà} procurando ... la liberatione del marito, de modo che il povero pontifice è combattuto da ogni canto non altramente che una nave in mezzo il mare agitata da contrarii venti'.

[10] BNF Fondo Principale II IV, 171, 85r. P. Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine', '...fu riputata la miglor novella che havessi mai questa città'.

[11] Cerretani (1993a), p. 301. '...nuove a questa ciptà le migliori che l'avessi mai.'

[12] Landucci (1983), p. 336. 'insino alle donne ....' The full account is on pp. 335-337.

[13] B. Masi, *Ricordanze di Bartolommeo Masi, calderaio fiorentino, dal 1478 al 1526* (ed.) C. Corrazzini, (Florence: Sansoni, 1906), pp. 119-122, esp. pp. 121-122.

[14] Masi (1906), p. 121. 'loro sorelle'.

[15] Masi (1906), p.122. 'veramente pare che se ne sia rallegrato tutto el mondo ....' See for a discussion of the public ritual of these celebrations, Trexler (1980), pp. 494-498.

[16] Cited in M.M Bullard, 'Mercatores Florentini Romanam Curiam Sequentes in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* **6** (1) 1976, p. 51. '...che ci dobbiamo giudicare felici per esser nati in questo seculo'. The source is C.S. III, 108, 2, 17/3/1513.

[17] Machiavelli (1971), pp. 1130-1131, letter 199, (30/3/1513), quotation at p. 1130. '...[F]u creato papa Leone, chosa per la città [Florence] ... et in particulare pe' cittadini d'essa, da dovere essere honorevole et utile'.

[18] F. Vettori, 'Sommario della istoria d' Italia (1511-1527)', in Vettori (1972), pp. 133-246, at p. 152. 'E perché li Fiorentini sono dediti alla mercatura et al guadagno, tutti pensavano dovere trarre profitto assai di questo pontificato'.

[19] See M.M. Bullard, 'Raising Capital and Funding the Pope's Debt', in *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of E.F. Rice*, ed. J. Monfasani and R.G. Misto (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 23-32. Bullard (1994b). Both articles are reprinted in her collected essays, (1994c), chapters 5 & 7 respectively.

[20] Cited in Bullard (1976), pp. 52-53, quotation at p. 52n.7. 'Di Firenze, del papa ognun parente,/ E vengono gridando palle, palle'.

[21] For a detailed discussion of the practise of personal and familial patronage by the pope, see P. Partner, *The Pope's Men: The Papal Civil Service in the Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), esp. ch. 2. See for an examination of the papal court and bureaucracy of one renaissance pope, Shaw (1993), ch. 6.

[22] Bullard (1976), p. 53.

[23] Pastor (1950), v. 9 p. 502. 'Il Papa non staria in tanto timore, se non fosseron questi Florentini ....'

[24] W. Reinhard, 'Papal Power and Family Strategy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650* ed. R.G. Asch & A.M. Birke (London: Oxford University Press & German Historical Institute, 1991), pp. 329-356, at pp. 329-330. On Church reform, see B. McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals, Reform and the Church as Property, 1492-1563* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

[25] Bullard (1976).

[26] See below, pp. 129-130.

[27] On papal nepotism, see E. Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978), pp. 33-38; McClung Hallman (1985) ch.4.

[28] Shaw (1993).

[29] Partner (1990), p. 211; Pastor (1950), v. 8 pp. 104-105. Cf. Francesco Vettori's criticism of this system to Niccolò Machiavelli in Machiavelli (1971), pp. 1130-1131.

[30] See in reference to earlier popes' preferment of those from their *patria*, Lee (1978), p. 37; Shaw (1993), p. 165.

[31] Masi (1906), p.122; Lowe (1993a).

[32] Partner (1990), p. 212; Butters (1985), pp. 211-216; K.J.P. Lowe, 'Towards an Understanding of Goro Gheri's Views on Amicizia in Early Sixteenth Century Medicean Florence,' in Denley & Elam (1988), pp. 91-106.

[33] Cited in Bullard (1976), p. 53n.9 'mi pare più perdere che guadagnare'.

[34] Shaw (1993), pp. 168, 182.

[35] Cited in M. Firpo, 'The Cardinal', in *Renaissance Characters* ed. E. Garin (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 46-97, quotation at p. 73.

[36] Kruse (1993) disputes the conventional historical view of Leo X as a spendthrift and pleasure-seeking glutton, arguing convincingly that the lifestyle he led was a necessary part of his display of the princely magnificence expected of a pope.

[37] Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 91, who cites Sanuto, v. 20, col. 341: See also Bullard (1980), p. 121.

[38] Published in Tommasini (1883- 1911), v. 2(2), pp. 988-989, quotation at p. 988. 'n'è stato alcuna mormoratione, dicendo le persone, che [Leo] ancora non è stato uno anno papa, et ha trovato un papato ricco, che per volere andare per xv dì fuori, s'ha a torre denari dalle entrate che hanno ad venire'. The English translation is from Bullard (1980), p. 121, who cites the archival source MAP 114, 41, 18/1/1514. Cf. Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 99, citing Francesco Vettori's *Sommario della storia d'Italia dal 1511 al 1527*: 'a stone could more easily fly up into the air of itself than Leo could keep possession of a thousand ducats'.

[39] Cited in Tommasini, (1883- 1911), v. 2(1) p. 80n.1.

[40] A. Ferrajoli, *Il ruolo della corte di Leone X: (1514-1516)* ed. V. De Caprio (Rome: Bulzoni 1984), pp. 5-33, which contains a list of all those at Leo X's court. On Alessandro Neroni, see *ibid.* pp. 181-206.
[41] Pastor (1950), v. 8 pp. 105-107.
[42] Ferrajoli (1984), p. 189.
[43] On the Florentine banking community under the Medici popes, see Bullard (1976; 1980; 1991a; 1994c, ch.5).
[44] Partner (1990), pp. 38, 212. Bullard (1980), 125 cites Sanuto, v. 24 cols 451–453, which also refers to Leo's sale of cardinals' hats.
[45] See the citation from Sanuto, v. 24 cols 451-453 in Bullard (1980), p. 125.
[46] On papal finances, see Bullard (1976; 1980, pp. 121ff.; 1991a; 1994c, ch.5); Partner (1990), pp. 209-213.
[47] Bullard (1976), p. 67.
[48] MAP 117, 109, c.1^{v} 2/7/1515. '... questi due membri in solo corpo'.
[49] Cerretani (1993b), pp. 307, 309.
[50] McClung Hallman (1985), p. 138 on Ridolfi as a banker. For his governorship of Spoleto, see Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 40. On Piero Ridolfi as Gonfaloniere of Justice in late 1515, see L. Polizzotto, 'The Making of a Saint: The Canonization of St. Antonino, 1516-1523, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* **22** (3) (1992) pp. 353-381, at p. 363.
[51] Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 40.
[52] Cited in Bullard (1980), p. 121. The source is a letter from Filippo Strozzi to Lorenzo de' Medici, MAP 108, 122, c. 1^{r}, 30/8/1514.
[53] E. Rodocanachi, *La première renaissance: Rome au temps de Jules II et de Léon X* (Paris: Hachette, 1912), p. 99.
[54] McClung Hallman (1985), p. 147.
[55] It was not until 1547 that Pope Paul III granted Bernadina Capodifaro the right to inherit half the vacant offices of her nephew, Giulio Mignanelli. See McClung Hallman (1985), pp. 132-133.
[56] Butters (1985), p. 217.
[57] Alfonsina informed Lorenzo of this in a letter dated 16/2/1514, published in Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2), p. 1008. The archival reference is MAP 114, 57. See above p. 131 in reference to Alfonsina's desire for her son to become Lord of Piombino. Contessina, herself, informed Lorenzo of this impending marriage about a month later. (MAP 137, 631, 24/3/1514). Filippo Strozzi wrote to Lorenzo de' Medici, the day after the wedding, informing him that the marriage ceremony had taken place, but had not been consummated, because Emilia had contracted a fever. MAP 108, 127, 23/8/1514, c. 2^{r}.
[58] Sanuto (1969), v. 18 col. 470. 'sala dil Pontifice'.
[59] Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 109.
[60] Rodochanachi (1912), p. 284.
[61] F. Petrucci, 'Cibo, Francesco', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* v. 25 (Rome: Istiituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1981), pp. 244-245.
[62] Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 109.
[63] Pastor (1950), v.8 p. 109.
[64] Pastor (1950), v.8 p. 109. See Visceglia (1998), p. 110 on the branch of the Sanseverino family who were the Counts of Caiazzo.
[65] Rodochanachi (1912), p. 110.
[66] On Jacopo Salviati, see Hurtubise (1985).
[67] Hurtubise (1985), p. 142n.
[68] S. Reiss, 'Cardinal Giulio de' Medici as a Patron of Art, 1513-1523', (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton, Princeton, NJ, 1992), v. 1 p. 165. I am grateful to Sheryl Reiss for allowing me to cite her thesis.

[69] P. Hurtubise, 'Archives notariles et archives familiales: le cas des archives Salviati', in P. Brezzi and E. Lee (eds), *Sources of Social History: Acts of Private Lives in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), pp. 153-167 at p. 156.
[70] Hurtubise (1984); Hurtubise (1985), p. 141.
[71] Hurtubise (1985), p. 142.
[72] Hurtubise (1984), p. 140.
[73] Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 109.
[74] Copialettere, I, 147^{v} (28/11/1516). 'uno bello benefitio'.
[75] Nerli (1728), p. 125; Hurtubise (1985), p. 140.
[76] I. Fosi & M.A. Visceglia, 'Marriage and Politics in the Papal Court in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Dean & Lowe (1998), pp. 197-224, at pp. 206, 210.
[77] Cited in Butters (1985), p. 238. The archival reference is C.S. I, 334, 40^{r-v}. '... uno governo honorevole'.
[78] The date of Alfonsina's return to Rome is mentioned in A. Giorgetti, 'Lorenzo de'Medici, Duca d'Urbino e Jacopo V d'Appiano', *Archivio Storico Italiano* ser. **4** v. 8 (1881), pp. 222-238; 305-314, at p. 226. Lorenzo's letters to his mother are published in Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2), pp. 984-985, dated 2/11/1513 and 18/11/1513 respectively.
[79] BNF, Fondo Principale, II V 22 [Carteggio Lanfredini] 48^{r}, 10/12/1513. '... veramente, Io non attendo qui ad altro che dare opera che la Sanctità de Nostra Signore me ordini qualche assegniamento per [Lorenzo]'.
[80] C.S. III, 123, 287^{r}-288^{r}.
[81] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2), p. 988, 18/1/1514.
[82] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2 (2), p. 991, 9/2/1514.
[83] Tommasini (1883-1911),v. 2(2), p. 1007, 16/2/1514. 'circa alli danari che Nostro Signore ce promisse, io ne fo ogni opera ...'.
[84] C.S. I, 3, c.37^{r}, 28/1/1513/14. (Lorenzo's minute book).
[85] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 982, 8/11/1513.
[86] MAP 114, 130, 1^{r}, 16/6/1514. 'undici anni fa, che tu eri piccino povero, haveria cerco di lasciarti et saremi ingegnata di trovare qualche loco dove fussi stato roba et dell'altre cose come cercano molte altre'.
[87] MAP 114, 130, 1^{r-v}.
[88] Nerli (1728), p. 124. Soderini's niece was married to Contessina's son Luigi, instead, which was a much less important match. Alfonsina was invited to attend the wedding feast in January 1517, but she declined. Lowe (1993a), pp. 97-98.
[89] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2), pp. 981-982, 8/11/1513, for Alfonsina's discussion of the breakdown of negotiations with the Duchess of Bari, and the possibility of an alliance with the house of Cardona. Francesco Guicciardini informed his brother, Luigi, of the possibility of this alliance more than a year later. F. Guicciardini, *Le lettere* ed. P. Jodogne, 7 vols to date (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per L'età Moderna e Contemporeanea, 1986-[1999]), v. 2 p. 18, 3/1/1514/5. 'una di Casa Cardona, nipote del re'.
[90] For a discussion of the Medici decision in 1515 to support the French King in his battle with the Spanish, see below, chapter 6 .
[91] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 1008, 16/2/1514.
[92] This whole issue is discussed by Giorgetti (1881).
[93] MAP 114, 49, 4/2/1514. 'che qui sono mutati li animi et le pratiche circa parentadi'.
[94] Alfonsina to Lorenzo: MAP 114, 49, 4/2/1514; MAP 114, 63, 3/3/1514; MAP 114, 65, 3/3/1514; Lorenzo to Alfonsina: C.S. I, 3, c. 39^{v} 10/2/1513/4; C.S. I, 3, cc. 40^{v}-41^{r}, 14/2/1513/4; MAP 141, 4^{v}, 4/3/1513/4; Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) pp. 990, 999.
[95] MAP 114, 65, 3/3/1514. 'me ne puza la bocca'.

[96] Filippo mentions the office in a letter to his brother Lorenzo, informing him of Leo X's election. C.S. III, 108, 2, 17/3/1512/3.
[97] MAP, 108, 138. 'perché volendo lei levare Jacopo di costì [Florence]'. The whole situation is discussed in detail in Bullard (1980), ch. 4, esp. pp. 77ff.
[98] Cited in Bullard (1980), p. 77. 'Madonna [Alfonsina] ne parlì [sic] di nuovo a Nostro Signore [Pope Leo X] mostrandoli noi essere ... et desiderare havere certezza quando Sua Santità la voglia levare di mano a Sauli e transferirla in nostra'.
[99] Bullard (1980), p. 85.
[100] Bullard (1980), pp. 85-86.
[101] MAP 108, 126, 18/8/1514.
[102] Bullard (1980), p. 101.
[103] Printed in Tommasini, v. 2(2) pp. 982-983. 'cioè che Filippo la exerciteria per te et per lui'.
[104] On Alfonsina's and Filippo's use of the Depository in such a manner, see Bullard (1980), p. 138.
[105] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 983.
[106] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 983. 'Et prestami fede, che sono meglio in Terra di Roma 4,000 fiorini d'entrata che altrove 10,000 perchè questi sono fermi'. I am using Melissa Bullard's translation from her Bullard (1980), p. 85, which cites the original letter and therefore I am using her transcription of 4,000 and 10,000 florins, rather than Tommasini's of 400 and 1000 florins.
[107] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 983.
[108] BNF, Fondo Principale, [Carteggio Lanfredini], II V, 22, fol.48^{r}, 10/12/1513. For the context and Jacopo's opposition to the Salviati-Alamanni alliance, see Butters (1985), p. 237.
[109] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 992. 'li ha decto villania et molte particular cose dixe, che M^{na} Maddalena li haveva decte'.
[110] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 993. 'Et in verità Lei [Lucrezia] n'è stata tenuta d'un poco cervello dal Papa, dal Cardinale, ... et da ciascuno che vi si trovò, et anche v'era forestieri; et non hebbe riguardo nessuno'.
[111] Cited in A. Giorgetti, 'Lorenzo de' Medici Capitano Generale della repubblica fiorentina', *Archivio Storico Italiano* ser 4 v. 9 (1883), pp. 195-215; 311-320 at p. 203 n. 2. 'Or non vedi che questo è la rovina della città? [N]on chonsideri tu tanta autorità quello che la importa?...[Q]uesto non essere mai piaciuto nè piacere al Papa, ma che stimolato da Mad[o]nna Alfonsina ...'.
[112] Cited in Polizzotto (1994), p. 253 n. 62. 'Madonna Lucretia ... exclama al cielo per havere vostra Signoria prese le arme [as Captain General of Florence] dicendo che è stato cosa mal consigliata'.
[113] See below, chapter 6
[114] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 993.
[115] For a discussion on Jacopo Salviati and his place in the Medicean regime, see Polizzotto (1994), pp. 251-254.
[116] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 994, 14/2/1514.
[117] Polizzotto (1994), p. 253.
[118] On the issue of the Medici's use of patronage networks, with appropriate bibliography, see Kent (1993), pp. 279-313; Butters (1985), pp. 11ff. Cf. Stephens (1983), ch. 1, esp. p. 12, who disputes the notion that patronage was central to Medici power.
[119] Polizzotto (1994), p. 251.
[120] They are contained in BNF, Fondo Principale, [Carteggio Lanfredini] II V 22, folios 140 and 163. Two other letters from Lucrezia Salviati listed in the index to the correspondence are no longer extant.

[121] BNF, Fondo Principale, [Carteggio Lanfredini] II V 22, 81[r], 10/1/1514/5, 'opera pia ... Zanobi Bartolini toglia per donna una figliuola di Giovanni Pandolfini'.
[122] BNF, Fondo Principale, [Carteggio Lanfredini] II V 22, 109[r], 22/1/1516/7.
[123] BNF, Fondo Principale, [Carteggio Lanfredini] II V 22, 104[r], 19/5/1516. 'Casa nostra'.
[124] MAP 108,80, 20/9/1513.
[125] MAP 106, 46, 21/5/1515.
[126] MAP 105, 74, 29/6/1514.
[127] MAP 114, 33, 23/12/1513. 'Benché so non bisogna rachomandarvi la Justitia ... quella dia favore della Justitia a dua povere fanciulle, orfanelle.... per non havere le predicte povere orfanelle chi difendesi le loro ragioni ...'.
[128] MAP 106, 47, 6/7/1515. '[a]d me s'è rachomandato uno cer[t]o Martino di Giovanni da Gassano ... dice havere havuto bando di chostà [Firenze].... Spera mediante le mia rachomandatione potere optenere ogni gratia per la qualcosa priego quella che se possibile è ...'.
[129] MAP 106, 44, n.d. '...parole assai leggieri ... per essere llui e li soi sempre stati fidelissimi ad la nostra Casa'.
[130] MAP 106, 43, 2/4/1514.
[131] MAP 106, 43, 2/4/1514. 'schiava di Casa'.
[132] MAP 114, 5, 18/11/1513. '...per ordine del Magnifico Juliano de' Medici ...' cosa d[ella] madonna Magdalena'.
[133] MAP 141, 10[v], 18/3/1514/5. 'per amore della Signoria Vostra'. Cf. Alfonsina's strong letter of recommendation on the same issue. MAP 137, 643, 25/8/1514.
[134] MAP 114, 71, 9/3/1514.
[135] MAP 105, 73, 1/7/1514. 'nostro amicissimo ....' Vostra Magnificenzia il facessi preponere nel numero et eleggere di detti Gudici'.
[136] MAP 114, 71, 9/3/1514. '...egli è homo da bene et stato sempre della Casa. Potendonelo servire sarà bene et faràne piacere ad me et lei [Contessina Ridolfi], et non è bene farla sdegnare per piccola cosa'.
[137] Gheri refers often in his letters of 1515 and 1516 to the state of Clarice's health. See his Copialettere, I.
[138] MAP 114, 28, 25/11/1513. 'servitor'.
[139] Published in C. Guasti & G. Milanesi (eds) *Le carte Strozziane del R. Archivio di Stato in Firenze: inventario: serie prima* 2 vols (Florence: Galilaeana, 1884-1891), v. 1 pp. 41-42. The letter was dated 14/3/1518/9.
[140] MAP 108,75, 28/7/1514. 'per intercessione mia'.
[141] C.S. III, 49, 54, 15/5/1518; C.S. III, 49, 55, 19/5/1518; C.S. III, 49, 53, 21/5/1518. On Francesco del Nero and his role, see M.M. Bullard, 'The Power of Middlemen', in Bullard (1994c), pp. 215-233, at pp. 227-228.
[142] C.S. III, 49, 60, 14,2/1523; C.S. III, 49, 62, 27/3/1523.
[143] Francesco del Nero's letters to Camilla Pisano are printed in Romano (1990). Clarice is referred to specifically on pp. 29, 41, 50, 71, 74, 79, 113. M.M. Bullard discusses this issue in her 'Filippo Strozzi il Giovane, l'uomo e le sue lettere', in *Palazzo Strozzi metà millennio: 1489-1989* ed. D. Lamberini (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1991), pp. 30-37, at pp. 34-35. Letters from a woman named Lucrezia, most probably a courtesan, to Francesco del Nero are found in Signoria, Dieci, ... Leg., Com., Miss. Resp. Busta 72. A letter from del Nero to this Lucrezia is printed in Romano (1990), pp. 136-137, letter 47, n.d.
[144] Cited in Bullard (1991a), p. 35n.29. 'Gli instrumenti della Clarice sono frati di San Marco ... [et] Suor Angiolina et certe altre monache'. The source is C.S. III, 49, 13[r], 3/5/1517.
[145] Bullard (1991a), p . 35 and nn.
[146] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 981. '...le molte visitatione di donne et d'huomini'.
[147] MAP 114, 123, 8/6/1514. 'Lo exhibitore di questa sarà el Signore Antonio Sanseverino, mio secondo cugino, el quale quanto mi sia caro per essere da canto di mia madre et quanto a te

debbia essere per amore della avola tua et mio et per le virtù sua.... Adunque ... vedilo volentieri et odi gratiosamente quello ti dice, et honorarlo per amore mio ...'.

[148] MAP 114, 109, 18/5/1514. 'fidelissimo servitore di casa nostra et amicissimo della factione Ursina'. See also, MAP 114, 143, 1/8/1514.

[149] MAP 114, 67, 4/3/1514 (Giuliano); MAP 114, 84, 28/3/1514. (Giulio).

[150] MAP 114, 84, 28/3/1514 '...per ogni modo. Per tanto quanto che tu possa (come te ho decto), compiacinelo [sic]'.

[151] See above chapters 1 and 2 for references to Francesco Fracassini.

[152] MAP 114, 1, 30/1/1513/4. '[T]e lo reccomandolo [sic] come cosa nostra'.

[153] MAP, 114, 9, 13/4/1513. 'è stato sempre buon servitore della casa nostra ...'.

[154] MAP 114, 111, 19/5/1514. 'nostro familiare'.

[155] MAP 114, 22, 4/11/1513. 'Simone Barthlommeo et Francesco d'Antonio di Piero Serragli, ciptadini di [Firenze], huomini da bene et amici veramente di casa nostra, desiderando essere in hoffici della ciptà come richerca il grado loro et havendosi a fare di proximo l'ambursatione [sic]; te li reccomando [sic] come amici nostri'.

[156] MAP 114, 76, 16/3/1514. '... giovane da bene et valente homo, et per essere la casa sua sempre stata nostra amicissima'.

[157] MAP 114,126,11/6/1514. 'Signore Camillo nostro'.

[158] MAP 114,156, 2/9/1514. 'nostro amicho vecchio'.

[159] MAP 114,29, 1/12/1513 and MAP 114,21, 6/6/1514. Cf. MAP 114,55, 13/2/1514, and MAP 114, 117, 29/5/1514 for similar statements.

[160] MAP 114,63, 3/3/1514.

[161] MAP 116, 349, 8/10/1514. '...cercavano di honorare ... simili homini più che potevano et haverli apresso di loro, per honorare la loro ciptà'.

[162] MAP 116, 365, 11/10/1514.

[163] MAP 114, 100, 9/5/1514. '...maxime della buona memoria di tuo padre del quale fu amicissimo'.

[164] MAP 114,30, 6/12/1513. 'homo di chiesa ... [and] amico di casa'.

[165] MAP 114,32, 19/12/1513.

[166] MAP 114,128,14/6/1514. '... per amore dello Arcivescovo et mio.'

[167] MAP 114,83, 28/3/1514 and MAP 114,98, 6/5/1514. 'spedale della Scala'.

[168] MAP 114, 85, 18/3/1514.

[169] MAP 114,90, 5/4/1514. 'per ordine mio et del Magnifico Juliano'.

[170] See below, Chapter 6.

[171] MAP 137, 637, 14/6/1514. 'per havere sparlato dello stato .... per non havere chi lo raccomandassi ... non mi sono gravata scriverti a questa'.

[172] MAP 137,638, 2/7/1514. 'Sai che ancora noi siamo stati fuori et habbiamo cerco havere più amici che c'è stato possibile, et per tornare in casa nostra habbiamo facto ogni cosa'.

[173] MAP 137,638, 2/7/1514.

[174] For the background to this issue, see Giorgetti (1883), p. 198.

[175] Stephens (1983), p. 87 n.

[176] Balìe, 43 (16/9/1512-18/1/1526), c.151^{v}, c.154^{r}. '... al presente cancelliere di madonna Alfonsina de' Medici'.

[177] Tratte, 22 (new no.), 42^{v}-43^{r}, cited in Stephens (1983), p. 141.

[178] Stephens (1983), p. 142.

[179] C.S. III, 185, c. 135, 5/5/1514. 'voi andiate agli officiali del Monte per parte mia'. 'Bernardo Giambulari, amico nostro'.

[180] Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2), pp. 988-989; Lorenzo's reply is in C.S. I, 3, 35^{v}.

[181] Alfonsina's letters mentioning Pugliese are MAP 114, 53,11/2/1514; Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2), p. 1008, 16/2/1514; MAP 114, 79, 1/3/1514; MAP 114, 82, 23/3/1514. Lorenzo's replies are: C.S. I, 3, 143^{v}, 15/2/1513/4; C.S. I, 3, 44^{v}-45^{v} 20/2/1513/4; MAP 141,

40, 4/3/1514. The uncontested petition for recall is in Balìe, 43, (16/9/1512-18/1/1526), 198[r]. For the background to this issue, see Polizzotto (1994), pp. 263-264.

[182] Fulin (1969), v. 32, col. 235.

[183] On the Salviati relationship to the Medici regime, see Hurtubise (1985); Polizzotto (1994), ch. 6.

[184] Hurtubise (1985), p. 155. On the position of bankers to the papal court, see references cited above at n. 43.

[185] Hurtubise (1985), p. 161, citing Sanuto, v. 35 col. 320.

[186] C. S. I, 152, 413, 20/12/1524. 'Ma ben gli ricordo a esser cauta nello scrivere perché lui [Jacopo] mostra tutto alla Santità di Nostro Signore sanza rispetto alcuno'.

[187] See above chapter 1 with reference to the reasons for Jacopo and Lucrezia Salviati's marriage.

[188] Hurtubise (1985), p. 165.

[189] On cardinals and magnificence, see McClung Hallman (1985). On cardinals' lifestyles, see Firpo (1991); L.M.C. Byatt, 'The Concept of Hospitality in a Cardinal's Household in Renaissance Rome', *Renaissance Studies* **2**(2) (1988), pp. 312-320; G. Fragnito, 'Cardinals Courts in Sixteenth Century Rome', *Journal of Modern History* **65** (1) (1993), pp. 26-56, with extensive bibliography. For a discussion of hunting as part of cardinals' and popes' display of princely magnificence and liberality, see Kruse (1993). For an example of a Florentine cardinal's lifestyle and career at this time, see Lowe (1993a), esp. ch. 4 and Part 4. On Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, see Reiss (1992). For the size of Cardinal Giovanni Salviati's household, see P. Hurtubise, 'La 'familia' del Cardinale Giovanni Salviati, 1517-1553,' in *'Familia' del principe e famiglia aristocratia* (ed.) C. Mozzarelli, v. 2 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988), pp. 589-609, at p. 589.

[190] C.S. I, 151, 35[v], 24/11/1524. 'Le cose di casa passano bene'.

[191] Hurtubise (1988), p. 590. 'Lucrezia ... si presenta come la vera padrona del Palazzo'.

[192] Fosi & Visceglia (1998), pp. 197-224, esp. p. 210.

[193] C.S. I, 154, 8[v], 1/2/1525.

[194] For information on Giovanni's benefices, see McClung-Hallman (1985), esp. pp. 43, 55.

[195] C.S. I, 157, 231[v], 22/5/1525. 'Del Vescovado di Ferrara, Vostra Signoria ne lasci il pensier a me ... me basta l'animo d'affitarlo sopra quattromila ducati l'anno et ben siguri ...'. This text is also published in Hurtubise (1985), p. 342 n. 133.

[196] C.S. I, 157, 231[v], 22/5/1525. 'io farò el restante'.

[197] On the necessity for Florentine women to have a *mundualdus* when engaging in any legal act, see Kuehn (1991), pp. 212-237.

[198] Hurtubise (1985), p. 148 n. 49. The source is C.S. I, 158, 148[v], 9/6/1525.

[199] C.S. I, 158, 149, 9/6/1525. 'Io ho fatto l'offitio efficacemente con Messer Pagolo d'Arezzo perché facci parte a Cesare delli benefitii di suo padre, come gli è debito.... Né altro so che mi poter fare a benefitio di Cesare in questo caso se non di solecitarlo'.

[200] C.S., I, 153, 8, 1/1/1525.

[201] C.S. I, 155, 123, 8/3/1525. 'A Bernardo, non mancherò del quello li fia del bisognio quando sarà tempo ...'

[202] C.S. I, 158, 148, 9/6/1525. 'Parlerò domatina... con Nostro Signore'.

[203] C.S. I, 152, 497, 28/12/1524. 'Messer Donato de' Bardi di quei da Bernia [sic] [Vernio], me ha detto più volte che desideraria stare con Vostra Signoria Reverendissima, et benché io li habbi resposto, che Lei, per hora è assai gravata de famiglia, pure parendomi giovene, qualficato et... me è parso raccomandarlo a Vostra Signoria Reverendissima'.

[204] C.S. I, 153, 195, 12/1/1525. 'familiar[e] del Nostro Signore'.

[205] C. S. I, 155, 66, 8/3/1525. 'Intendo esser vacati certi benefitioli qui in Roma, ... et per esser detti benefitii riservati a Lei ...'.

[206] C. S. I, 155, 66, 8/3/1525.

[207] C.S. I, 157, 333, 29/5/1525, 'Zacharia, servitor di messer. Jacopo ... è buon et amorevole servitore'.
[208] C.S. I, 156, 81, 5/4/1525.
[209] C.S. I, 158, 135^{r-v}, 9/6/1525.
[210] C.S. I, 157, 231^{v}, 22/5/1525. 'Però è necessario che Vostra Signoria pensi ad un huomo da bene et qualificato che li faccia honore'.
[211] C.S. I, 158, 59, 5/6/1525. 'non può causargli honore né bene alcuno, ma più presto disordine et fastidio grande'.
[212] C.S. I, 152, 497, 28/12/1524.
[213] C.S. I, 152, 497, 28/12/1524.
[214] C.S. I, 153, 133, 7/1/1525, 'per l'honore et per l'utile suo'.
[215] On the discussions regarding this marriage, see C.S. I, 157, c. 1, 1/5/1525; c.18, 3/5/1525; c.23, 3/5/1525; 231, 22/5/1525.
[216] C.S. I, 157, c. 1^{v}, 1/5/1525. 'Tutta volta non si può far altro se non contentarsi et accomodarsi a quel che Dio et la Santità di Nostra Signore ordina et dispone'.
[217] C.S. I, 155, 123, 8/3/1525.
[218] Hurtubise (1985), p. 235 n. 9. The source is C.S. I, 151, 68, 11/11/1524.
[219] C. S. I, 335, 206,11/11/1525 and 216, 19/4/1526.
[220] C.S. I, 335, 80, 22/8/1530. '[R]alegro quanto posso con voi colla presenta lettera'.
[221] C.S. I, 335, 82^{r}, 24/8/1530. 'Madonna Lucretia mia honorandissima etc. Questa per rallegrarvi con Vostra Magnificentia delle cose successe della vectoria [sic] hauta di questa ciptà.... Sol dirò che per tucta l'ac[ti]vita non s'attende se non a dire *"Palle, Palle, et pane"*.... Noi, parenti et amici vostri, stiamo a[t]tenti per udire se nulla di Vostra Magnificentia s'intende della venuta di qua che l'aspectiamo con voglia grandissima, sì per vedere quella et sì perché *possiate beneficare e' vostri servidori et amici.* Perché quelli che di già sono al governo, ogni huomo ha delli parenti et spetial[i]tà, come è ragione. Per tanto Magnifica Madonna io ho scripto una [lettera] al Magnifico Jacopo vostro raccomandandomi a Sua Signoria, preghandolo et così pregho voi lo preghiate che nelli honori et utili della ciptà, dove ha a convenire altri ciptadini che non mi dimentichi,... perché ho di bisogno pur havessi mai'.
[222] C.S. I, 335, 126, 8/9/1530.
[223] C.S. I, 335, 83^{r-v}, 24/8/1530. 'Priego Quella che racomandi lui et me a Sua Santità', quotation at 83^{v}.
[224] C.S. I, 335, 226, 14/7/1531.
[225] C.S. I, 335, 117, 5/9/1530. 'Quanto Madre honorandissima ... bona et obediente filiolla'.
[226] C.S. I, 335, 117, 5/9/1530. 'li soi filolli propri'.
[227] See above pp.150-151.
[228] Hurtubise (1985), p. 270.
[229] ASP Tomo II, Salviati di Roma, Busta 58, fasc. 4. 'horto'. Hurtubise (1985), p. 270, says that this was a vineyard.
[230] ASP Tomo II, Salviati di Roma, Busta 58, fasc. 16.
[231] Hurtubise (1985), p. 270 lists her Roman properties.
[232] For her complete list of assets and their disposition, see her will of 23/4/1545. ASP Tomo II, Salviati di Roma, Busta 61, fasc. 16. (Italian Summary). This file also contains earlier redactions of her will.
[233] Jacopo's death is recorded in Fulin (1969), v. 58, col. 677.
[234] Segni (1857), p. 276.
[235] On Lucrezia's distrust of Alessandro, see Hurtubise (1985), p. 194.
[236] Cited in Hurtubise (1985), p. 247. 'Ho inteso la morte della Signoria Lucretia,... mia Avola co[n] molto dispiacere ...'.
[237] Varchi (1963), v. 1 p. 386. 'la più degna e la più venerabile matrona, che forse giammai per nessun tempo in alcuna città si trovasse'.

[238] Varchi (1963), v. 1 p. 387.
[239] MAP 99, c.1, n.d. '...Lucrezia [Salviati] maritata a Jacopo Salviati, madre della Signoria Maria, et avola del Serenissimo Gran. Duca Cosimo Primo'. The full document is quoted in chapter 2 above.
[240] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 1 p. 324, letter 87, 8/1/1513. 'di molta qualità'. The letter is to Francesco Guicciardini from his brother, Jacopo.
[241] The standard biography in English of Caterina Sforza is Breisach (1967).
[242] Butters (1985), p. 65.
[243] For Lucrezia's deep concern about Giovanni's rather wild ways as a youth, see her letters to the parish priest, Francesco Fortunati in Fortuna & Lunghetti (1977), p. 178 and in P. Gauthiez, 'Nuovi documenti intorno a Giovanni de' Medici detto delle Bande Nere,' *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Ser **5**, vols. 30-31 (1902-1903), pp. 71-107, 97-126 at pp. 85-86 (letter 24, 14/10/1514). See also Gheri's letter to Lorenzo, expressing extreme concern at Giovanni's behaviour in *ibid.* pp. 96-97 (letter 49, 9/1/1517/8). See Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 367-395 on Giovanni's life and character, esp. p. 370 for Giovanni's exile for two years in 1510 for violent behaviour at the age of 12, which was reduced to one year's confinement to the Medici villas as a result of Jacopo Salviati's influence with the Piero Soderini, the Gonfaloniere for Life.
[244] On this line of the Medici family, see Brown (1992), pp. 73-102.
[245] MAP 142, 320, 17/11/1516. The extract from this letter concerning the marriage is printed in Gauthiez (1902), p. 88.
[246] For the dispute between Giovanni and the Lord of Piombino's men, the subsequent decree of exile against him and Medici reactions to it, see Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 pp. 376-377 and the correspondence in Gauthiez (1902), pp. 98-107 and in G. Milanesi, 'Lettere inedite e testamento di Giovanni de' Medici detto delle Bande Nere con altri di Maria e Iacopo Salviati,' *Archivio Storico Italiano* vols **7** (2) (1858), pp. 3-48; **8** (1) (1858), pp. 3-40; **9** (1) (1859), pp. 3-29; **9** (2) (1859), pp. 109-147 respectively. See now for Maria's confinement to a convent by Giovanni, *ibid.* (1858), pp. 43-47.
[247] Gauthiez (1902), p. 100, 23/2/1518. 'Io portai hiersera la lettera a Madonna Alfonsina, et seco era Messer Goro [Gheri]. Et examinata molto ben decta lettera, Madonna rispoxe: "Dirai a la Maria che i''ò caro ... che la non si pigli malenconia. Et dixe molte parole amorevole ... cum dimostrare che ama la Signoria Vostra cordialmente'.
[248] Milanesi (1858), p. 43 (letter 38, 28/2/1517/8). 'Presentai le lettere a Madonna Alfonsina .... Trovai madonna assai bene disposta in verso Vostra Signoria ...'.
[249] Milanesi (1858), p. 43 (letter 38, 28/2/1517/8).
[250] A reference to his mission from the pope is in Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 372. See too the time line of Giovanni's life provided by Milanesi **7** (2) (1858), pp. 9ff, with reference to these events at p. 10.
[251] MAP 85, 406, 6/3/1520. 'Siate certa che le cose vostre et di Giovanni sono al c[u]ore quanto le mia proprie, et tante volte quante vedrò la occasione le raccomanderò alla Santità di Nostro Signore come sempre ho facto insino a hora'.
[252] Milanesi (1859), p. 18 (5/12/1523). 'Beatissime Pater...con ogni humile reverentia le ricordo, non le sia grave levare el mio signor consorte da tanti interessi et depositi quanti si trova adosso;... perché se da Vostra Santità non viene, qui non è modo alchuno da potersene liberare'.
[253] Milanesi (1859), p. 26 (9/3/1524). 'Circa e' debiti et depositi...(quali, secondo dixe Sua Beatitudine, passano la somma de sei mila ducati), dixe essere contenta di presente levarvevi da dosso'.
[254] MAP 85, 441, 6/6/1524. Cf. Maria's letters to employees regarding the pope's vague financial assurances. Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 469.
[255] MAP 85, 543, 4/12/1526. Nostro Signore ... prese non picholo fastidio et dispiacere del adverso caso...'.

[256] MAP 85, 562, 5/1/1527.
[257] MAP 85, 563, 10/1/1527. 'ce avisa havere fatto l'uffitio con la Maesta del Revererendissimo [di Francia] per Cosimo ...'.
[258] MAP 85, 497,19/1/1526/7. 'Io mi trovo qui senza alchuno conforto...et se [V]ostra [M]agnificentia abbandona me et questo povero pupillo, et lasciaci così in mano di fortuna, la certificò ne sarrà uno di più dolente di cosa facessi mai'.
[259] MAP 85, 562$^{v\ bis}$, 1/2/1527. 'Però non vi sconfoctati tanto et pensate di governarvi con quella virtù et prudentia che si conviene alla qualità vostra et che havete fatto sempre'.
[260] Published in C. Guasti, 'Alcuni fatti delle prima giovinezza di Cosimo I de' Medici', *Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani* **2** (1858), pp. 3-64, 295-320 at p. 28 (3/5/1531). '[S]ubito che quella benedecta anima del signor mio consorte venne mancho, in quell'instante io mi proposi vivere sempre col mio figliolo per molte cause.... [E]t per una molto speciale, considerato che 'l mio figliolo per essere nato maximamente di quelle felice ossa, non era da essere abbandonato da me. [M]olto più possendogli giovare io stando con lui, che lasciandolo'.
[261] Published in Guasti (1858), pp. 28-29.
[262] The letter informing the pope of Cosimo's birth is published in Cox-Rearick (1984), p. 296. '... con tutto el Collegio de' Cardinali', with commentary and translation at p. 50.
[263] Leo's naming of Cosimo and his reason for it is cited in Cox-Rearick (1984), p. 50 and in G. Langdon, 'Pontormo and Medici Lineages: Maria Salviati, Alessandro, Giulia and Giulio de' Medici', *RACAR* **19** (1992), pp. 20-40 at p. 35 n. 40.
[264] MAP 106, 55^{v}, 5/12/1523. 'quando voii a[v]ute dinari'. Milanesi did not publish this postscript, as cited in n. 245 above.
[265] Milanesi (1859), p. 25, letter 131, 28/2/1524.
[266] Langdon (1992), p. 34n.34.
[267] MAP 137, 950, (n.d./n.m./1527). 'questo nostro povero figliuolo ...'.
[268] Langdon (1992), convincingly reviews the evidence that Alessandro was Giulio de' Medici's son, rather than the son of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, which is how Maria referred to Alessandro in a letter to her husband cited in Pieraccini (1986), v.1 p. 468.
[269] Hale (1977), p. 127 (hunting); M. Sbrilli, 'Alcune lettere inedite di Maria Salviati Medici a Bernardo della Tassinara', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* **25** (4) (1995), pp. 1459-1473, at p. 1465 (Charles V).
[270] Guasti (1858), p. 51, 11/12/1532. 'Hiersera... Sua Santità... gli fece gran carezze... et è forte accarezzato da Sua Excellentia [Alessandro] et da tutta la corte'.
[271] Guasti (1858), pp. 53-57, 309-310.
[272] Guasti (1858), p. 54 (17/2/1532).
[273] Guasti (1858), p. 57 (27/12/1532). 'L'animo di Sua Excellentia verso di suo figliolo et Vostra Signoria non può essere migliore'.
[274] Guasti (1858), p. 64, letter 29 (16/1/1532/3). 'Padre sancto. Bench'io sappia che Cosmo mio figliolo per sé stesso si ricorda alla Santità Vostra; pur per mia sodisfactione, et debito materno,... reverentemente glelo recomando;... rimectendomi alla clementia Vostra Santità ...'.
[275] Guasti (1858), p. 59, letter 22 (3/12/1532/3) for Riccio's advice. Jacopo's letter is printed in full in Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 474. 'perchè così è il bisogno di Cosimo'. Maria appears as a spectator at the wedding in a Vasari fresco of 1556-59 in the Sala di Clemente VII in the Palazzo Vecchio. Langdon (1992), p. 32 n. 3.
[276] See the chronicle accounts by Nerli (1728), p. 291; Nardi (1858), v. 2 pp. 291-292; Segni (1857), pp. 334-335. For a list of some of the men involved, see Devonshire Jones (1972), p. 278. See for further information on Vettori's involvement and his pragmatic attitude to Cosimo being elected, Vettori (1972), p. 333; M. Simonetta, 'Francesco Vettori, Francesco Guicciardini and Cosimo I: The Prince after Machiavelli', in Eisenbichler (2000), pp. 1-8, at pp. 1-2.

[277] Segni (1857), p. 334. 'In casa Salviati si ferono molte consulte dove inteveniva madonna Maria [...Cardinal Giovanni Salviati] e gli cittadini primi dello stato'.
[278] Segni (1857), p. 323.
[279] Segni (1857), pp. 324ff.
[280] Segni (1857), p. 334. 'nuovo signore'.
[281] Nardi (1858), v. 2 p. 292; Hurtubise (1985), p. 205.
[282] Varchi (1963), v. 2 pp. 646-647. For another version of the story, see Tosi (1913), pp. 147-152, at p. 148n.1, citing an account of the incident by Jacopo di Alamanno di Jacopo Salviati as told to him by his father. According to Tosi, the source is ASF Carte Dei, 44 Famiglia Salviati.
[283] Varchi (1963), v. 2 p. 647. 'increscendone a ognuno, e non contraddicendo persona'.
[284] On the dispute over Margaret's rights of ownership of certain Medici properties, see Lefevre (1986), pp. 70, 105-106, 151-154 & 320.
[285] Pastor (1950), v. 11 pp. 318-319.
[286] P. Hurtubise, 'L'implantation d'une famille florentine à Rome au début du XVI[e] siècle: les Salviati', in *Roma capitale (1447-1527)* ed. S. Genisi (Pisa: Pacini, 1994), pp. 253-271 at p. 258, with reference to Lucrezia's forced removal to Cardinal Giovanni's abode in 1538 as well as her presence there in 1553. This information is also referred to in Hurtubise (1988), p. 593 n. 26. ASP Tomo II: Salviati di Roma, Busta 58, fasc. 23, contains several legal documents from notaries on behalf of both Lucrezia and Margaret, dating from 1538 onwards, relating to this matter. They include witness statements supporting Lucrezia, correspondence from the pope to both women, and legal correspondence between Lucrezia and Margaret, via the notaries concerned.
[287] For example, on the role of women as mediators within papal families in seventeenth-century Rome, see R. Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca* (Rome & Bari: Laterza, 1990), pp. 32, 60-71. An example of a difficult relationship between a mother and her sons in a papal family in eighteenth-century Rome, is C. Castiglione, 'Accounting for Affection: Battles Between Aristocratic Mothers and Sons in Eighteenth-Century Rome', *Journal of Family History* **25** (4) (2000), pp. 405-431.

CHAPTER SIX

The 'Problem' of a Female Ruler

Alfonsina's Orsini's effective 'rule' of Florence from the summer of 1515 until after the death of her son Lorenzo di Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, in May 1519 was unique in the history of Florence before it became a principate in 1532. The exceptional character of Alfonsina's personal power and formal authority, that is, the opportunity for a woman to govern, is evidence in itself of the increasingly princely nature of the Medici regime, even as it conformed to and worked within a republican framework. Her authority made Alfonsina a focus for disaffection and resistance for those opposed to the increasingly seigneurial nature of the Medici regime. To the republican Florentines, the rule of a woman was particularly galling because it was a powerful metaphor for the loss of their liberty. Thus critiques of the Medici regime — before and after her death on 7 February 1520 — often, although not exclusively, centred on Alfonsina and her perceived self-interest, which was characterised as detrimental to the public good. These were part of the criticism of the more generally perceived greed and abuses of the Medici regime itself. The character of, and reactions to, Alfonsina's power and authority, were therefore both an index of political change and symbolic of the increasing dislike, indeed hatred, of Medicean seigneurial rule. The representations of her by contemporaries point strongly towards the perceived nature of Medici rule itself, and the particular difficulties a woman faced when attempting to govern.[1]

The 'Problem' with Female Rule

Part of the answer as to why Alfonsina Orsini was so despised lies in how the Florentines, like other Western Europeans, regarded a woman ruler. They viewed male rule as orderly, legitimate, and correct, while female rule was perceived as the opposite: disorderly, illegitimate, and dangerous.[2] Women who ruled were seen to have contravened and threatened both the natural and social order. They were perceived as a threat because their position was outside the prevailing social structure and therefore not subject to social controls. While men's association with the public sphere brought them honour and prestige, to be designated a 'public woman' was to be called a whore.

6.1 Francesco Allegrini, *Alfonsina Orsini, after Giuseppe Allegrini*, Chronologica series *simulacororum regiae familiae Mediceae*, Florence, 1761, no plate nos, courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin

The accession of a woman to the position of ruler — whether it was informally in a republic or officially in a seigneurial court or monarchy — *always* took place because of the absence of a legitimate male heir. This could occur because the previous ruler did not have a male heir, or the rightful heir was too young to rule, temporarily absent, or incapacitated. Occasionally, a woman could rule alongside her husband or son, in an unofficial capacity. She was granted the opportunity to rule, therefore, by being the daughter, sister, wife, or mother of the legitimate male ruler. A woman's ability to govern in her own right was always contingent upon there being no legitimate adult male heir available. The opportunity to rule also tended to depend upon the support and tolerance of powerful male supporters and/or relatives of the female ruler. Bianca Maria Visconti Sforza, for example, became regent for her son, the young Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan, in 1466 after the death of his father. But by late 1467, Bianca Maria lost the support she had previously had as regent for her son, as the duke had managed to isolate his mother from most of the decision-making processes of government despite not yet having attained his legal majority. He declared in a letter to her of late December 1467 that from the New Year all ducal correspondence would be sent out 'solely in our name'.[3] In 1480, Lodovico Sforza managed to wrest control from Bona Sforza and act as the effective head of state of Milan, while acting as regent for his young nephew, the titular duke. Bona's extraordinary power and influence at the Milanese court was acknowledged in April of that year (prior to the time Lodovico Sforza wrested it from her) by the Florentine ambassador to Milan, who seemed in a letter to Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici almost to regret that she would not change her mind in a 'womanly' way.[4]

Acceptable models of female power focussed on the intercessory and unofficial nature of that power.[5] Women who ascended the throne because of the temporary or permanent absence of a suitable (and preferred) male heir — as occurred in England, France, the Netherlands and the Low Countries in the sixteenth century[6] — had to appropriate acceptable female models of behaviour for themselves to justify their rule. Queen Catherine de' Medici of France, for example, while acting as regent for her young son, projected an image of herself as a devoted wife, widow and mother based on the antique figure of Artemesia, the chaste but powerful widow, justifying her right to govern on the basis of being the mother of the ruler.[7] By contrast, the unmarried and childless Queen Elizabeth I of England strove to portray herself as androgynous, and was reputed to have said of herself: 'I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king', and often chose to represent herself as both 'prince' and 'king' or 'king and queen'.[8] Others during her reign described the Queen in a manner that emphasised her exceptional status among women and simultaneously gendered her male. William Camden described Elizabeth as '...a Virgin of manly courage' and she was also posthumously described as 'more than a man, and in truth less than a woman'.[9] This emphasis on the exceptional, unwomanly, character of Elizabeth ensured that the position of other women was not altered. By subverting the social order through assuming the mantle of sovereign, women rulers conflated gender images, to justify, maintain, and stabilise their rule.

Women of power have been depicted as either, in Susan Dixon's words, 'domineering dowagers or scheming concubines'.[10] The fear of powerful women had long been endemic in the political rhetoric concerning the exercise of legitimate political power and authority prior to the Renaissance. Wives of kings in the middle ages — who, for example, were often described in the negative terms identified by Dixon — were also likely to be personified as 'evil geniuses'.[11] And they were especially unwelcome when foreign brides because of their perceived divided loyalties and strange customs.[12]

Two examples, nearly contemporary to our period, namely, Margaret of Anjou (1429-1482) wife of King Henry VI of England, and Catherine de' Medici of France, nearly a century later, should illustrate the longevity and pervasiveness of this fear.[13] Their detractors personified both women as evil foreigners. Margaret's husband was viewed as weak and inept, and she was roundly criticised for participating in the political intrigues of her day, instead of assuming the role of a charitable and unassuming queen consort, who did not meddle in political affairs.[14] Catherine de' Medici, who was deemed responsible for the St Bartholomew Day Massacre of 1572, was pejoratively characterised as the 'Wicked Queen', a 'dangerous foreigner, evil woman ... political manipulator [...and] a monstrous mother' as well as a 'manlike woman'.[15] Contemporary proscription of women's active participation in the public sphere assumed that women rulers were innately evil and would, in John Knox's words, inaugurate a 'monstrous regimen'.[16]

Alfonsina Orsini as 'Ruler' of Florence in 1515

When her son, Lorenzo, head of the Medici family in Florence, departed the city for Lombardy to fight against the French in his capacity as captain-general of Florentine troops in the summer of 1515, Alfonsina Orsini, in effect, 'ruled' in her son's stead.[17] She was, however, never formally appointed as officially she was proscribed from holding public office because of her gender. Her son in law, Filippo Strozzi, described her management of the Florentine regime in the following way, in a letter to Lorenzo of August 1515:

> Her Ladyship is always busy writing to Rome or over there [to you in Lombardy] or giving an audience, consequently, the house is always full; and such numbers of visitors has brought the Regime respect, encouraged friends, and made enemies afraid. She performs this office well, which would be impossible for another woman, and easy for only a few men.[18]

Filippo, in fact, was constructing Alfonsina as a Virago — a woman with the spirit and capacity of a man — a term that in contemporary eyes was high praise for a woman, and one that had earlier been used to describe the famous Caterina Sforza.[19] Filippo positively gendered his mother in law male, emphasising her exceptional, 'manly', nature and circumstances, thereby legitimising Alfonsina's

'rule' without radically altering the existing *status quo*. It was the only plausible way he could explain to contemporaries Alfonsina's apparent capacity to govern successfully despite her gender. By describing his mother in law in such a manner, Filippo acted as other male advisers and apologists for particular female rulers later in the century would do such as those who supported Queen Elizabeth I of England.[20]

Filippo's description also provides a clue as to the nature of Medici government at this time. The house to which he refers was the Medici palace. The private residence of the Medici had become the locus of government, virtually displacing the governmental palace.[21] This meant that the 'private' female sphere of the household had fully merged with the male 'public' sphere of politics, creating the situation that enabled Alfonsina to govern. Prior to her arrival, and after her departure, Lorenzo or, more usually, his appointed deputy, would make major decisions in the privacy of the Medici palace, sometimes with the aid of a small circle of advisors who would meet there to discuss government business and policy.[22]

Alfonsina also met with officials in the privacy of her residence to discuss matters of government.[23] She seems to have been more skilled in the area of interpersonal contact than her son, if Filippo's comment is used as a guide. Lorenzo, many complained, disregarded this face-to-face contact with clients and friends.[24] Political influence and control were most successfully exercised, by those who were able to attract the largest number of supporters and supplicants; thereby ensuring that their house was always full of those wanting an audience.

However, Florence was not yet a principate and the Medici still worked with the republican institutions of government, particularly its myriad of councils which usually had short periods of office. Of course, Medici patronage was vitally important for men wishing to obtain an office for themselves, their relatives or friends. The Medici and their friends had long manipulated the electoral scrutinies to ensure that men loyal to the family obtained office.[25] But during this second period of Medici government, their involvement in the process was more direct and overt. Alfonsina, for example, not only asked her son or other men in the family to arrange for offices and favours to be given to certain nominated people — the usual way that the women of the family had dispensed patronage previously[26] — she directly influenced and sometimes interfered with the deliberations of government councils.[27]

'By Order of Magnificent Lady Alfonsina'

The records of the deliberations between August 1515 and May 1516 of the specially appointed committee responsible for the management of Florence's fiscal policy, known as the Committee of the Seventeen Reformers, provide several examples of Alfonsina's intervention.[28] In the margin next to one entry of August 1515, a scribe had written: 'By commission of the most Illustrious Lady Alfonsina'.[29] 'In another instance, the scribe recorded that: 'It is agreed that Francesco di Filippo Cappelli is the one elected and appointed the purveyor of the

Sea Consuls and purveyor of the gabelle [taxes] at Pisa ... for a year....' Again, in the margin, was written: 'by order of Magnificent Lady Alfonsina ....'[30]

Alfonsina was able to issue orders concerning matters of major criminal and political importance. She ordered, for example, that certain men be released from fines imposed for serious crimes.[31] On behalf of the pope, Alfonsina had the sentence of outlawry originally passed by the Eight on Security (the *Otto di Guardia*) in 1495 upon Leo's doctor, Lodovico di ser Niccolao da San Miniato, formally rescinded by the Seventeen Reformers.[32] 'At the insistence of Lady Alfonsina', Berto di Pasquino's death sentence was annulled, and other men were also absolved of serious crimes.[33] A man convicted of illegally exporting salt was released from prison, 'with the commission had from Madonna Alfonsina'.[34]

Alfonsina was also able to issue instructions concerning taxation, office holding, and property matters. A Medici relative, for example, was granted the right to be in charge of collecting gabelle taxes in Pietrasanta.[35] 'By the commission of Lady Alfonsina', in April 1516, the officials responsible for the management of lakes were to become the officials in charge of weights and measures.[36] On her order, Matteo d'Antonio Adimari had his payment of taxation transferred from the town of Poggibonsi to the city of Florence.[37] On a more mundane level, Alfonsina had the rent on a property confirmed by the Tower Officials, who were responsible for the assets of exiles.[38]

In every instance, variations on the phrase 'by the commission of Lady Alfonsina' appear in these documents.[39] Although she could not officially sit on the committees that made these decisions because of her gender, Alfonsina could exercise power, unofficially, that had the force of official command. She could obviously initiate governmental legislation and some decisions depended on her approval.

Alfonsina's involvement in government administration extended beyond the Commission of Seventeen Reformers to that of the equally powerful Foreign Affairs Committee (the *Otto di Pratica*). She wrote to Lorenzo in September 1515 telling him not to worry about 'the affair of Cado', because the man had given her an appropriate letter of reference 'and this morning I have arranged that he will show it to the *Otto di Pratica* ... and he will be treated gently...'. [40] The *Otto di Pratica* decided that they would not bother to write to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici after he left for Bologna in early September 1515, 'in as much as all important matters have been referred on a daily basis to Madonna Alfonsina' and they assumed that she would write to Giulio himself about relevant issues.[41] This instruction testifies to their faith in her abilities.

Pope Leo X had enough confidence in Alfonsina's abilities to instruct her via one of Lorenzo's secretaries, Baldasare Turini, 'to have our Bernardo Bini "seen" [deemed eligible] for the office of the Gonfaloniere of Justice in this election, as this will do him a great favour'.[42] This was not the only occasion that she was involved in deciding who would be suitable for office. Alfonsina and her son both were to approve the list of those to be elected to the *Otto di Guardia* in December 1515: 'We remind you that the [elections] for the *Otto di Guardia* have to be done now and I am sending you a list of those we have decided upon...'. She warned Lorenzo to

be careful about his choices as this group had previously argued amongst themselves, 'and every little thing had to be resolved by us'.[43]

The business of governing Florence necessarily involved receiving and acting upon requests from Medici supporters for assistance. As indicated in Filippo Strozzi's comments to Lorenzo about his mother, Alfonsina was particularly skilled in this area. It was Lorenzo who had to be prompted about his duties and obligation to keep promises. The nuns of San Domenico, in Pisa, for example, reminded him that he had promised to assist them in regaining an exemption from customs duties as 'the letters of your Magnificent Mother' had requested. They informed Lorenzo that the Medici of earlier generations, 'your magnificent ancestors', had always granted the convent this exemption, but it was withdrawn when the Medici family were exiled.[44] Alfonsina informed her son in one letter that a certain Medici client should be supported in an ecclesiastical dispute in Castello and his enemies must be ignored, because 'he loves our house like the good friend of it that he is ...'.[45] All Medici supplicants would, of course, have realised the value of approaching Lorenzo through his mother, whether they were, for example, musicians wanting a job;[46] or a man who wanted a homicide properly investigated.[47] Although Alfonsina's intercessory role in these instances was similar to that of women of the family both in earlier generations and at the time, she differed from them in that she took direct action without even first consulting with her son. For example, in the case of the man who wanted a homicide investigated, she first arranged with the *Otto di Guardia* herself to write to the chief magistrate (the *podestà*) of the town where the murder took place, before asking Lorenzo, who had previously also written a letter, to write again to the *podestà*.[48] Alfonsina not only sought to advise her son as to his duties, she led by example.

The Conduct of a War

Alfonsina's capacity to exercise power and influence within Florence was based upon her ability to analyse and to learn from personal experience as well as upon her political astuteness. Her chief concern during these months in Florence was the war in Lombardy between the Spanish, who were aided by Swiss mercenaries, and the French. Pope Leo X was trying to defend papal territories against French incursion and it was for this reason that Lorenzo, as captain-general of the Florentine troops, was fighting against the French in Lombardy in alliance with the Spanish in order to protect Milan and its subject cities.[49] Alfonsina immediately realised the implications of the situation for her son, Florence, the Medicean regime and the papacy. On the 16th of August, she wrote to Lorenzo lamenting the fact that no-one several months earlier had tried to stop the French advance, saying: 'Lorenzo, I blush with shame ...' every time she thought about it.[50] These were strong words, illustrating Alfonsina's superior understanding of the political implications of the current situation. She was aware that the campaign was ineptly handled, and that the honour of the family name and the Medici's future as rulers of Florence depended upon an honourable and successful outcome to the war for the pope and his allies. Alfonsina was quick to realise that failure to make a treaty

with the French would have disastrous consequences for the Medici family, especially given the pro-French attitude of many Florentines, including their opponents. Therefore, she told her son 'to consider well that the King [of France] is in Italy with 80,000 troops and that this city [Florence] is most devoted to the crown of France. And also I remind you that because Piero was determined and opinionated, we were exiled for 19 years...'. [51] She was equally concerned that a French servant of a Medici partisan had written a letter accusing the Medici of being anti-French.[52]

Alfonsina's interest and concern ensured that she was directly involved in the decision-making process, with the *Otto di Pratica* and ambassadors, regarding signing an accord with the French king. She was asked by the pope to nominate three men who could be ambassadors to the French court. Piero Ardinghelli, a papal secretary, wrote to Alfonsina on the 22nd of August, saying that the *Otto di Pratica* had refused to send ambassadors at this stage because some had been appointed a few months earlier. He concluded by affirming his own and the pope's belief in her ability to handle the present delicate situation. 'Your Ladyship is most prudent, and understanding Our Lordship's judgement you will manage everything in good order. I, by order of His Holiness, have written the present [letter] to you ... and it seems appropriate to advise Your Ladyship ... that the King has spies in Florence'.[53]

In Lorenzo's absence Alfonsina was the pope's unofficial representative in Florence, and, in accordance with the Medici's increasingly seigneurial style, made decisions during this crisis independently of government bodies within Florence without her authority to do so being questioned. Alfonsina, for example, decided what information the *Otto di Pratica* would receive from Lorenzo, telling her son that she had had one of his letters rewritten 'and deleted those parts which did not seem to me to be appropriate to show them [the *Otto di Pratica*], and this morning I will show it to these citizens'.[54] She continued on by telling Lorenzo that 'I will do what His Holiness has commanded concerning it'; that is, she would have this meeting with the *Otto di Pratica* and explain the pope's wishes.[55] Alfonsina then suggested the names of men who would be loyal to the pope and the Medici, adding that Lorenzo should send an ambassador to the king in his own name to show his loyalty to the crown.[56] The *Otto di Pratica* wrote at once to the pope, telling him that they were more than happy to agree to his wishes, because 'the Magnificent Lady Alfonsina has shown [us] a letter written to her by Piero Ardinghelli by order of your Holiness'.[57] The Committee then sent letters to Giuliano de' Medici, Jacopo Salviati, and Alfonsina, informing them of their agreement with the decision to send Cardinal Luigi Rossi, a Medici relative, as ambassador to the king of France.[58]

The political and military crisis did not end there, however. Alfonsina was distressed to hear, through Lorenzo, news from their ally the duke of Milan that Swiss troops had deserted because the Spanish had not paid them.[59] Alfonsina proceeded to provide her son with an analysis of the implications of the situation for them, arguing that, given the actions of the Spanish, one could only conclude 'that there must be an agreement amongst them, and that they had wanted to lead His Holiness to this situation of extreme necessity'.[60] She was also concerned at

Lorenzo's suggestion that he return Modena and Reggio to the duke of Ferrara, as, in her view, 'this would give your enemies a great advantage'.[61] The next day, Alfonsina told him that she had spent two days analysing a letter to her from Francesco Vettori concerning possible conditions for a treaty between the pope and the French. She thought that what Vettori had told her would satisfy the *Otto di Pratica* but disagreed with their suggestion that the Council of Seventy be reconstituted, preferring to see how matters developed between the Swiss and the pope.[62]

This type of detailed analysis continued over the next month while negotiations with the French took place. Alfonsina replied briefly to her son's letter of August the 31st 'because I was busy', but, after having written to the papal legate herself she was happy with the way matters were progressing.[63] Alfonsina tried to curb Lorenzo's youthful impetuosity. She warned him against taking recent criticism of the Medici lightly: 'Do not make a joke of it, as now is a time when little attention is paid to anything', suggesting that precautions be taken against the man who was spreading the criticism, but in a manner that would prevent scandal.[64] Her warnings also concerned the fickleness of the Swiss, with Alfonsina taking action in this instance by sending messengers with proposed treaty clauses to the French king.[65]

Alfonsina's opinions extended to an analysis of the clauses of the treaty itself. She told Cardinal Giulio de' Medici that she had been informed of its contents by letters from both Francesco Vettori and Lorenzo's chancellor, Ser Giovanni da Poppi, and they said that 'they will send me the details'.[66] She believed that the treaty was generally very good, but was worried about the crucial issue of the protection of Tuscany by the French king and the return of Naples. In typically blunt fashion, Alfonsina declared: 'Since everything is done [by the French King] in order to extract cash ... we have better means of raising the money and in a greater quantity than these our neighbours.... But the important thing is Naples, which even I would not ever cede'.[67] In a letter to Lorenzo, she expressed even greater reservations over the treaty's terms concerning the cities of Parma and Piacenza, many people having convinced her that the pope did not have to ratify it. Her prime concern was protecting the Medici and the stability of the family's regime, so, not unsurprisingly, she was pleased with one clause that guaranteed 'the protection of the Medici house with the maintenance of the Regime etc'. [68] Alfonsina turned opinion into action. 'I have arranged for the Magnificent Giuliano to send ... Giovanni Vespucci to His Lordship to comfort him about it and to ask His Holiness about it ... And so I have ordered the *Otto di Pratica* to write a good long letter to His Holiness about this matter'.[69] She was highly pleased at the conclusion of treaty negotiations in late October 1515, but at once expressed her displeasure at the suggestion that the final signing should take place in Bologna rather than Florence. Alfonsina's prime motive was the opportunity the visit of a king and pope would create to glorify the Medici. She told Lorenzo: '[A]nd I know of no greater honour or glory that you would be able to have in the world than to see a King of France in your house ...'.[70]

Alfonsina was central to the process of managing the progress of the war. Her management of this crisis went far beyond what any other woman in Florence would have been allowed to do in the public realm. She was in this sense a Virago,

able to undertake this task because of her exceptional status as mother of an absent ruler, able to act in a male realm with full authority because of the exigencies of the situation without radically altering the existing gender order.

'Above the Common Condition of Your Sex': Preparations for a Papal Visit

Pope Leo X recognised the God-given, exceptional nature of Alfonsina's abilities in a papal brief issued in early November 1515, which made her responsible for preparations for his triumphal entry into Florence, that would take place before he signed the treaty with King Francis I in Bologna.[71] 'We do not think that your nobility lacks advice, for we have known your prudence and capacity by which the most High has adorned you above the common condition of your sex'. He urged her to apply 'every effort and industry, strength of mind and of spirit, which is great ...' to ensure that he and his entourage would be provided for adequately, as befitted his princely status.[72] This task was of major proportions, one that the document implied was beyond the capacity of ordinary women, but not, it seems, beyond Alfonsina's. Here, as Filippo Strozzi had done earlier, the pope praised his sister in law's abilities by emphasising her 'manly' attributes and how exceptional her talents were in a woman, thereby effectively describing Alfonsina, in all but name, as a Virago.

However, this brief was a mere formality. Some three weeks earlier, Alfonsina anticipated the pope's arrival in Florence, including the need to prepare rooms in the Medici Palace adequately, and to seek funds to finance the costs.[73] The day before the brief was issued, she wrote to Lorenzo, telling him that she had received several letters from Leo to indicate his arrival and there was no need to send messengers to him.[74] Lorenzo may in fact have been jealous of his mother's commission, piqued at being excluded from involvement in the preparations and all the decisions, since Alfonsina had to inform him that she had so much to do that she did not have time to consult him about every unimportant detail.[75]

These preparations were indeed on a grand scale. Apart from preparing rooms for the pontiff in the Medici Palace, which included the provision of appropriate decorations and furnishings, Alfonsina had to oversee the construction of triumphal arches and other displays in honour of the papal visit.[76] A chapel in San Lorenzo was also to be enlarged so that it might be used as the papal chapel for the visit. When the syndics of the church gave their permission for the money to be spent, they specifically singled Alfonsina out as 'our patron' from among the nameless 'many other men [sic] of good family' who would be pleased by the decision.[77] (While employees or clients may have called important and distinguished people *patrone* or patron, Alfonsina's specific naming is significant in this context.) She also took the opportunity to begin the installation of new stables near the Medici Palace for this visit.[78] For a woman to be given responsibility for secular building, of even a temporary nature, was rare indeed in Florence, which as we have already noted associated such patronage with male dynastic ambition. It was more commonly linked with women in courts, and testifies again to Alfonsina's activities being a pointer to an increasingly seigneurial style of rule by the Medici.[79]

Where did the money come from? The *Operai di Palazzo*, those responsible for the maintenance of the government palace, paid for the alterations allocating the money to Alfonsina's chancellor, Ser Bernardo Fiamminghi.[80] The *Otto di Pratica* also allocated money and men to the preparations for the papal visit.[81] Alfonsina had earlier said that 'when it is understood here [Florence] that the money is to be spent for the increased benefit of the Regime, the city or you yourself, [Lorenzo], there will not be any difficulty either in public or in private'.[82] Public interest had merged with and been subsumed within the private interests of the Medici for the purpose of their glorification and aggrandisement.

While Alfonsina thought the costs to be incurred for the papal visit were justified, most Florentines did not, according to Piero Parenti, and tried to avoid them, if possible, even though 'they were commanded by the Signoria and then by Madonna Alfonsina'.[83] Consequently, it is no surprise that when Leo X returned to Florence from Bologna in late November and decided to stay for three months, a number of posters were placed around the city attacking the pope, his brother in law, Piero Ridolfi, (who was Gonfaloniere of Justice) and Alfonsina.[84] The pope was labelled a buffoon and of Alfonsina it was said: 'Liberty is lost after this, Florence, for a woman of the Orsini blood rules alone'.[85] This attack on her, Piero Ridolfi, and the pope expressed Florentine frustration with Medici rule. According to its detractors, the family ruled as lords, depriving the city of its liberty and traditions. But as expressed in these posters, the specific criticism of Alfonsina is especially telling. Florentines specifically hated overlordship by non-Florentines and especially non-Florentine women! Alfonsina's 'rule' became a powerful metaphor for the loss of Florence's republican liberty. In a similar manner to her granddaughter Caterina de' Medici's later vilification when queen regent of France, Alfonsina was doubly condemned, depicted as 'other' because she was both foreign and female.[86] Here again, the image of female power as sinister and illegitimate emerged now personified in the figure of Alfonsina Orsini.

Alfonsina's 'Rule' from Beyond Florence

Alfonsina's involvement in government did not diminish with her son's return for Pope Leo X's visit, or, indeed, her removal to the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano in January 1516. In contrast to accepted convention, Alfonsina did not withdraw from public life, but remained a dominant force. She wrote to Federigho Strozzi in April, after receiving news from him about grain shortages in Florence and its surrounding district.

> I pray you to arrange for one or two men from the grain officials' office to come here to me tomorrow morning with full authority and decision making power and able to decide and do everything so that we may resolve the matter of the provision of the grain for this city and district.[87]

She had also written to Federigho instructing him to arrange that Bartolommeo d'Antonio di Bigio be elected to the vacant office of factor at a hospital.[88] Clearly,

Alfonsina was determined to remain involved in government decision-making processes even when outside Florence.

When both Lorenzo and then Lorenzo's mother returned to Rome in October 1516, Piero Parenti implicitly acknowledged the power that Alfonsina wielded. He noted that after she left, 'the power of government was left with Messer Goro [Gheri] of Pistoia ... head of the city and to whom all the leading men of the regime went'.[89] Goro Gheri, who had been a papal nuncio to Switzerland and then governor of Piacenza from 1513-1515 where he governed on behalf of Giuliano de' Medici, was a man devoted to his Medici patrons and was often despised by many Florentines because they resented the fact that they had to take their orders from someone who hailed from a town under Florentine rule.[90] Gheri acted as one of Lorenzo's chancellors and from autumn 1516 for more than a year, he governed Florence on both Lorenzo's and Alfonsina's behalf.[91] He kept up a regular correspondence with both of them, writing frequently, sometimes daily, to each.[92] But he remained very much a Medici deputy. Alfonsina and Lorenzo, as we shall see, made the final decisions, as they were both, despite their absence from the city, still the effective rulers of Florence.

A major part of Gheri's job as the Medici representative in Florence was to keep Alfonsina and other Medici in Rome up to date with happenings in that city and elsewhere, which included providing an analysis of events in light of their implications for the Medici and their regime. This, of course, had always been the task of Medici secretaries, who had in past years kept both men and women of the Medici family informed on important matters.[93] But Gheri's surviving correspondence to Alfonsina was more voluminous, consisting of some 90 letters, and more concerned with direct issues of political management than had occurred in letters to women members of the family previously. These letters also included copies of dispatches from government officials, other Medici secretaries, ambassadors and governors, which were either addressed to her or of interest.[94] Certainly, none of the earlier Medici women would have been so intimately and directly involved in affairs of State.

Reports on military issues loomed large in this correspondence. Of particular concern was the situation in the Papal States of the Romagna where the papal troops were fighting the Spanish in late 1516 to early 1517.[95] In reply to a series of letters written on the 23rd/24th of January, Alfonsina wrote that she was upset that 'the provisioning for over there [Romagna] is going very slowly'.[96] The other military situation of concern was the war of Urbino that was being fought over Lorenzo's usurpation of the title of the duchy in 1516.[97] Gheri told Alfonsina, for example, that he was concerned about the security of the regime and the need to ensure that Urbino and other subject towns had governors loyal to the Medici.[98] Alfonsina's concerns for her son's welfare were linked to the broader issue of the security of the Medici regime and the papacy. Therefore, Gheri's reports satisfied Alfonsina's need to know about these matters, both as a mother and as a ruler.

Florentine issues equally dominated Gheri's letters. He told Alfonsina about a dispute he was having with a certain cleric over the man's refusal to pay a tax that Gheri wished to collect. He ended the letter by saying: 'Your Ladyship is aware of the matter as it stands'.[99] But Gheri's overriding concern was for the security of the

regime and the problem of ensuring that Medici friends remained loyal and their enemies were weakened. In his eyes, there were only two types of people: those who were Medici friends, and those who were not.[100] It was for this reason that Gheri gave Alfonsina a detailed account of a dispute between Pierfrancesco de' Medici and Andrea Guidotti over who should open an inn in the town of Scarperia. Gheri sided with the Medici relative.[101] He wrote to her twice recommending the governorship of Urbino for Gherardo Bartolini 'because of his loyalty and that of all his house'.[102] Gheri firmly believed that 'in maintaining political power one needs to have friends ...'. [103]

The problem of which people should fill vacant offices was a perennial concern. Competition was fierce and Gheri sometimes found himself in an invidious situation where different members of the Medici family had each put up candidates for the same office. In such instances, he asked Alfonsina to make a decision as to what she wanted to happen. In December 1516, Lorenzo recommended Antonio d'Arrabata for Piero Ardinghelli's vacant office, but Filippo Strozzi and Ardinghelli himself both wanted a member of the Strozzi family to receive it. Gheri wrote: 'I ask Your Ladyship to advise me what [you] and His Excellency the Duke wish that I should do'.[104] At other times, Alfonsina was asked to make the choice herself between two equally worthy candidates for office.[105] On one occasion, Gheri wanted both Lorenzo and his mother to decide the recipient of a vacant cure in Ancona, 'so that the benefice should have its just deserts'.[106] His decision to write to both Alfonsina and her son about these matters is noteworthy. It testifies to Alfonsina's powerful position within the Medici regime alongside Lorenzo. Gheri was acknowledging here that *both* Alfonsina and Lorenzo held equally important positions as effective rulers of Florence.

It is no surprise, then, that Gheri quickly carried out Alfonsina's instructions. He told her that 'as Your Ladyship advised', he had arranged for Donato Quaratesi to be elected Castellan of the fort at Livorno instead of Jacopo Villani.[107] In another instance, Gheri noted that he would do what Alfonsina commissioned him to do in relation to a matter concerning the administrator of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova and Matteo Cini.[108] Occasionally Gheri could not do as she requested, because the Medici still abided by the letter of Florentine laws relating to elections, even if they flouted their spirit. Therefore certain favoured friends or relatives could not be elected to office if they had outstanding tax debts.[109] But Gheri was well aware of the power Alfonsina could command as were those she favoured. Giovanni Zanni paid 32 lire in fines to the *Otto di Guardia*, and 150 lire for the dowry 'of that girl ... And he knows that if it were not for the favour of Your Ladyship, his affairs would have gone differently'.[110]

While Florence was still ostensibly a republic governed by elected councils of suitably qualified men, in reality the Medici made all the important decisions and appointments. Alfonsina and Lorenzo were ruling effectively from Rome. They in fact approved the lists of those eligible for election to office, ensuring that Medici partisans were always elected, and were also sent lists of those elected for office for approval. 'This morning [2/12/1516] the Conservators [of the Laws] have been made, accordingly as your Ladyship returned [the list] of them newly signed'.[111] This practice was repeated on several occasions for various different offices.[112] 'In this

[letter] I am sending to Your Ladyship, a note of those designated for the new Signoria and for the Gonfaloniere of Company.... Your Ladyship will discuss it with His Excellency the Duke and return it to me annotated as to whom you want excluded...'.[113] (This situation contrasts sharply with that of the fifteenth century, for even so influential a woman as Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici's mother Lucrezia Tornabuoni, and possibly Lorenzo himself, would not have done this.) Alfonsina also, for example, annotated lists that Gheri had sent her of those who wished to receive safe conducts.[114] He had to write a letter to Alfonsina, on one occasion, asking for a list to be sent back as a scrutiny of eligible office bearers was about to commence and Gheri warned her that failure to do so would cause a scandal.[115] Florence was ruled from Rome, but the illusion of its being still a free city had to be maintained to ensure the regime's continued existence. It is obvious from this correspondence between Gheri and Alfonsina that she was a powerful member of that Medici regime. Indeed together with her son Lorenzo, Alfonsina was a major participant in that rule.

Alfonsina's authority was also evident in her dealings with other officials and influential men of the Medici regime. Her interest in Florentine affairs and a belief in the need to support Medici friends and clients there, continued unabated. She told Filippo Strozzi in February 1517 to ensure that 'our Baptista della Palla', who owed 300 ducats to the Florentine government's depository and had recently been asked for it, did not have to pay the money back. Alfonsina stressed the uniqueness of the situation and wanted Filippo to assist this man 'because of our command'.[116] The sons of Messer Pandolfo from Pesaro came to see her in January 1518, asking her to ensure that a legal dispute they were having with certain men from Pesaro would be heard in the Papal Rota rather than in Pesaro. She wrote to Lorenzo in Florence, saying: 'I, because of their long service and friendship, did not want to deny them', recommending them, and telling her son that these men wished him to sign a petition marked with his seal to guarantee that this would happen.[117] Several months later, she asked Francesco del Nero to expedite the payment of wages to a man in Livorno so that he would no longer have to stay in his present lodging.[118]

Francesco Guicciardini acknowledged the role Alfonsina and Lorenzo played in securing him the Governorship of Reggio in December 1516.[119] He also later thanked her for 'the good and loving duty that Your Illustrious Ladyship has performed on my behalf, in writing in my defence...'.[120] Guicciardini was willing to follow Alfonsina's orders, even if doing so meant repealing one of his own edicts. He told Gheri that he would allow Count Giovan Francesco della Mirandola to sell his wheat, which had been explicitly forbidden by Guicciardini for a year because of the high prices. 'I will concede it, knowing Madonna [Alfonsina]'s wish ... and I will make him aware that everything that is being done is by order of Her Ladyship...'.[121] Alfonsina's instructions were always scrupulously followed. When she wished to be provided with 300 cows, Guicciardini said that if the 300 ducats provided were not enough, he would make up the shortfall, and be ever diligent in finding these animals.[122] He wrote to the Conservators of Modena telling them that Alfonsina had written to him concerning Girolamo Beltrando saying: 'that she has arranged in Rome that the promise will be made ... in such a way as your ambassador will be instructed...'.[123] In turn, Guicciardini wrote back to her telling

her of the Conservators' agreement.[124] In June 1518, he assured Alfonsina of his continuing willingness to obey her orders. 'I will always do whatever you order me to do'.[125]

Guicciardini, in turn, required Alfonsina's cooperation to ensure that his own orders were carried out. His most difficult task was the collection of taxes in Modena and Reggio. Her influence at the papal court could be used to countermand what he most dreaded: people receiving tax exemptions from the papacy. He stated: 'I thought to write ... to Your Ladyship about it, in order to make you aware that it is necessary that you arrange in Rome for them [the tax exemptions] not to be retracted...'.[126] Some four months later, Guicciardini expressed frustration at problems with tax collection in Reggio. He thought that Cardinal Giulio de' Medici 'had ordered that they be left to Your Ladyship'; now he wanted assurances that this was the case so he could proceed.[127] Guicciardini, it seems, was anxious to stop Alfonsina from interfering unduly in his administration. By doing so, he acknowledged implicitly her extraordinary authority, power, and influence within the Medicean regime.

If Alfonsina derived this authority from her status as mother of a ruler, after Lorenzo died in May 1519 Alfonsina's role in government was significantly diminished. Her role as patron did not disappear, however. In early July, Alfonsina wrote from Grassina to Cardinal Giulio, who was now in Florence, in reply to his query about a man she had recommended previously for a vacant government office. Alfonsina acknowledged that she had done this 'a while ago', but added that this man had left one office after being promised another as an exchange, so he should now be given the office under discussion.[128] More important to her was the rescue of a servant, who was being questioned for being at one of the city gates when he was banned from entering the city. Alfonsina was eager to have this man released, telling Giulio that this was damaging her reputation because everyone knew that he was from her household.[129] She was still active in November, when Guicciardini told Alfonsina that he could not arrange for someone she recommended to obtain an office as requested. And he also reported progress on recovering a criminal fine, reassuring her that 'in this and in all other matters concerning Your Ladyship, I do not nor will I lack dutiful diligence'.[130] Francesco had been told by his brother in late July that it was rumoured that 'it is planned to remove this authority from Madonna [Alfonsina] and give it to the Cardinal ...'.[131] This rumour was indeed a recognition of Alfonsina's erstwhile powerful position as ruler, but it also pointed to its being dependent on her role as mother of a ruler. Once Lorenzo had died, that situation no longer applied and the mantle was removed, since female rule was illegitimate in its own right and could not be sustained.

Alfonsina's Contemporary Bad Press

Her contemporaries almost universally disliked Alfonsina Orsini. As we shall see, she was accused of avarice, of theft, of possessing a limitless ambition, of having a complete disregard for Florentine republican institutions, and of possessing a

desire to ensure that her son Lorenzo acquired some sort of lordship and a princely title to go with it. The sixteenth-century papal historian, Paolo Giovio, summed up the generally negative contemporary view of Alfonsina, stating that she was 'a woman truly [possessing] manly prudence but [was] avaricious and always quarrelling. She with blind ambition greatly desired to make her son great, to accumulate riches for him, and above all, to acquire somebody else's regime for him'.[132]

Contemporary representations of Alfonsina usually focussed on her ability to acquire a lot of money and possessions. For example, in reference to his mother in law's recent acquisition of five antique statues, Filippo Strozzi informed Lorenzo's secretary, Giovanni da Poppi, in September 1514, that Alfonsina was '... the most fortunate woman there ever was, since the money that has been given to her by [G]od has earned greater dividends because she has engaged in usurious lending'.[133] Filippo's rather ironic comment, which acknowledges Alfonsina's financial acumen, also points to the disquiet that was felt by even her most loyal supporters towards Alfonsina's seemingly ever increasing wealth and her methods of maintaining it.

Others were even more overt in their condemnation of Alfonsina's wealth and her use of it. At the time of Duke Lorenzo's wedding to the French princess, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, in September 1518, Bartolommeo Cerretani attributed the cessation of the wedding festivities — that had gone on for four days — to the 'great avarice of Madonna [Alfonsina]!'[134] In fact, the festivities were lavish and expensive. According to Cerretani, Alfonsina 'has given orders that he [the Duke] should be received honourably' upon his arrival in the city in late August.[135] The wedding celebrations consisted of three banquets held at the Medici Palace. A huge platform, hung with tapestries, was built upon which Alfonsina, Duchess Madeleine, and all the guests were seated.[136] During the course of the four days of celebration, public displays and celebrations took place similar to those that occurred on the feast day of Florence's patron saint, St John the Baptist, which could only have served to underscore the importance of this wedding as a significant event of State.[137] In addition, two comedies, including Niccolò Machiavelli's play, *Mandragola*, were performed.[138] Alfonsina was extremely happy with the wedding celebrations, telling Giovanni da Poppi, that:

> ...today was truly spent very joyfully. And God has provided us with very beautiful weather, and with such universal satisfaction that I am not able to tell you. And truly there have been so many people at windows, on roofs, on the streets, on the small platforms that were constructed in every place to enable the people to see, that you cannot ever imagine half of it etc.[139]

But her view was not shared. Cerretani recorded that the populace were unsatisfied at the end of the wedding festivities: 'I expect the reason was because of the poor orders of the person who was in charge'.[140] He further adds that the high costs of the wedding had left the Medici 'in very great disarray because they had taken on an intolerable expense'.[141] Whatever the truth of the matter, the perceptions of Alfonsina regarding the success of the wedding celebrations and of those who were

critical of her were radically different. It is not surprising, therefore, that Alfonsina was, as we shall see, also posthumously condemned by Bartolommeo Masi and Francesco Vettori for her avarice.

Why did the criticisms of Alfonsina specifically focus on her supposed avarice and ambition for Lorenzo? The same criticisms could equally have been levelled at Lorenzo himself, who, as we have seen, had continuously sought money from his mother as well as a high political or military office from the pope. But Lorenzo, as we shall see, was *not* criticised for his avarice. (Leo X, on the other hand, as we have noted, was viewed as extravagant and a spendthrift who had drained the papal treasury.) In fact, Alfonsina was the *only* member of the Medici family who was designated avaricious by contemporaries. It is important to note here that financial success and the will to acquire wealth and spend it liberally and magnificently without waste was perceived as desirable and God-given in male rulers, but the same qualities in female rulers, as we shall see, were condemned.[142]

Male Virtues as Female Vices: The Topos of the Avaricious Female Ruler

Well prior to Alfonsina's day, powerful women were at particular risk of being criticised for their personal behaviour in ways that powerful men were not. In early medieval Europe, male rulers' virtues of generosity, protection and rightful vengeance became vices of partiality, intrigue and vindictiveness in women rulers who faced the additional problem of regularly being accused of avarice.[143] Queens in the later middle ages were also ascribed a multitude of sins, including avarice. The Queen of France, Isabeau of Bavaria (1385-1422), was one example of a queen accused of avarice who was also said to have committed adultery, incest and treason. She was condemned for her purported ugliness, political aspirations and for being a 'bad' mother because she supposedly neglected her children. However the veracity of such characterisations has recently been called into serious question.[144] It is more useful to see the criticisms of rulers such as Isabeau of Bavaria — and indeed Alfonsina Orsini — as part of a continuing tradition of vilifying women of power who strove to move beyond the acceptable model of the charitable, unassuming queen.

In Renaissance Italy the few female rulers would be characterised as exceptional members of their sex by those humanists seeking their patronage. Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti was one such example. In his tract dedicated to Ginevra Bentivoglio of Bologna, written in the late fifteenth century, he referred to the spiteful gossip of women and 'the tenacity and avarice' of females that was 'innate and appropriate [for those] with a small soul', while at the same time also praising his patron.[145] Ginevra Bentivoglio herself was described posthumously by critics of the Bentivoglio regime as both 'a powerful woman but more than a female can be ...' and as '[i]mpious, malicious, *avaricious* and evil' [my emphasis]; thus her gender embodied all manner of vice.[146] A female ruler such as Alfonsina Orsini, therefore, would have been a particular cause for dismay because, in Florentine eyes, she was viewed as naturally avaricious and thus likely to bring ruin upon the republic.

'...Whose Life Everyone Mourned': Alfonsina Orsini's Posthumous Reputation

The reaction to Alfonsina's death in February 1520 is perhaps the best indicator of how she was viewed by contemporary observers. Filippo Strozzi, Alfonsina's son in law, suggested, in jest, the following epitaph: 'Alfonsina Orsini, whose death no one [mourned], whose life everyone mourned, and whose burial is most pleasant and salubrious to mankind'.[147] Even in jest, this comment was a most unpleasant one, particularly as we have seen that Alfonsina had worked long and hard to secure the lucrative position of papal Depositor-General, or papal banker, for Filippo from her brother in law, Pope Leo X. Again in jest, he pointed to the general lack of sorrow at her death: 'Here [in Rome] she has died without [anyone] shedding tears, because in short it is crazy to die during Carnival'.[148] The pope, too, expressed no grief, and did not wish to disrupt Carnival festivities to mourn his sister in law's passing.[149] Bartolommeo Masi's comments epitomised the general reaction to her death: She [Alfonsina] died with little grace, because she was not concerned with anything but accumulating money.... [H]er son died with little grace, she died with less'. At the same time, Masi also accused her of having taken a cache of money with her to Rome after Lorenzo died.[150]

After Alfonsina's death, rumours as to the actual extent of her wealth abounded. Giovanni Cambi records that: 'it was said that she had left a good sum of ready cash'.[151] A Venetian diarist was more specific, saying that she had left behind '...70,000 ducats and there were those who were saying much more'.[152] Alfonsina made Pope Leo X her universal heir and it was also said that she had left him 30,000 ducats in cash and 50,000 ducats in jewellery.[153] In reality, as her will makes clear, Alfonsina did not have as much money as was rumoured. She bequeathed all her property, jewellery, and about 10,000 ducats to Pope Leo, asking him to provide from it an unspecified gift to her granddaughter Caterina, and 6,000 ducats to her daughter Clarice, which was half the amount of her own dowry. She specifically made this bequest to her daughter 'because I would not wish her to be wronged'.[154] Alfonsina's property holdings were extensive. She owned a palace and other property in Rome and its environs, shops in Florence, dairy farms at Poggio a Caiano and Bientina in the Florentine countryside and property at Fucecchio, including its lake.[155] Alfonsina's disposition of her property was actually in accordance with the standard practice of patrilineal inheritance, where daughters sometimes received part of their mother's dowry and mirrored her own inheritance of property and cash from her mother Caterina di Sanseverino.[156] Ironically, Clarice and Caterina had to fight both male Medici heirs, and also the Commune of Florence during the period of Medici exile of 1527-1530, to retain property and money inherited from Alfonsina.[157] She was obviously a very wealthy woman, although not as rich as many had thought. Contemporaries exaggerated the extent of Alfonsina's wealth in order to confirm their own views of her as naturally avaricious among other things.

However despite the Florentines' dislike of Alfonsina, her position as the mother of the city's late ruler and her powerful position within the Medici regime, necessitated an appropriately grand and magnificent funeral. Masi noted that the requiem mass held for her in Florence was of great magnificence 'as is customary to hold when a Mass is said for some grand master'.[158] The term *gran maestro* was used commonly in the fifteenth century to describe powerful men throughout all of Italy.[159] Another account recorded that the requiem was held 'as had been done for the son'.[160]

Alfonsina was accused of exercising undue influence over her son. Lorenzo himself was generally no more popular than his mother, but the reasons for his unpopularity were different. The Medici regime, in general, was disliked by Florentines because of heavy taxation, the long absences of Lorenzo in Rome — leaving their city to be run by his hated deputy, Goro Gheri — and the fact that Florence would have to pay the cost of the pope's foreign policy, regardless of its benefit to the city.[161] According to contemporaries, the Medici were acting increasingly like the *signori* of Italian courts who did not separate what was of benefit to themselves and their families from their public policy and actions. Lorenzo was specifically criticised for his high-handed manner, his complete control over all government decision-making processes, his lack of consultation with leading citizens, including his failure to give audiences, and his alleged meddling in the marriage negotiations of citizens.[162] Filippo Nerli's criticisms sum up the general attitude to Lorenzo and his management of the Medici regime:

> [T]he citizens in the regime were secretly discontented, because Duke Lorenzo, wishing to give the government the form of a Principate, seemed to disdain to appear any longer in the magistracies and with the citizens as he used to, and gave few audiences, and these with reluctance, and attended less to the affairs of the city, making Messer Goro of Pistoia, his secretary, deal with and handle all public business ....[163]

Francesco Vettori who wrote a short posthumous account of Lorenzo's life, was one of the few who wrote favourably about him after his death in early May 1519.[164] And even Vettori was forced to admit that: '[Lorenzo] was not loved by the Florentines because it is impossible that people used to being free would love someone who commanded them'.[165] In a letter to his brother, Fra Francesco Gondi noted that the duke had few friends in Florence to make the funeral arrangements, and that he had to employ bodyguards after he returned to the city from France in September 1518 because it was rumoured that he had decided to make himself lord.[166] Francesco Guicciardini discounted these rumours, but instead accused Alfonsina of not allowing her son to make a will upon his deathbed, an act that angered many of Lorenzo's employees who viewed her as greedy because they thereby were prevented from receiving bequests.[167] (Interestingly, it was a long-held legal commonplace that in relation to the receipt of inheritances: 'The female sex is the most avaricious ... and more eager to receive than to give'.[168]) It is clear that criticisms of Lorenzo, unlike those directed at his mother, were focussed on his general failure to manage the regime in accordance with Florentine republican traditions of consulting with leading citizens, making himself available for

audiences and attending meetings of the city's magistracies when required rather than the more specific allegations of personal greed and avarice levelled at Alfonsina. There was no question of Lorenzo's right *per se* to be head of the Medici regime in Florence; it was to his princely manner that the Florentines objected.

Francesco Vettori, in fact, portrayed Alfonsina as an 'avaricious woman' who was hated more than her son.[169] The duke was characterised by Vettori as the 'good son', who bore his mother 'too great a reverence', and so dutifully obeyed her.[170] According to Vettori, it was not Lorenzo but rather Alfonsina who began to pester the pope about giving him the duchy of Urbino. '[A]nd Madonna Alfonsina began to nag the pope, [saying] that she should give her son a regime to govern. And she [Alfonsina] used words and tears so effectively that the pope was happy that Lorenzo should seek to remove Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, from his regime'.[171] Alfonsina's legitimate advocacy of her son's interests was depicted as being disorderly and disruptive for the pope, the railing of a nagging and whining woman, who would be placated only if her demands were met, thereby restoring order and peace.[172] Vettori also stated that after his marriage Lorenzo was to have met the pope in Rome to tell him that he wished to return the duchy of Urbino to the Church, and wanted to be a mere citizen of Florence. However, supposedly before this could happen, Alfonsina, hearing of her son's plans, wrote telling Lorenzo that she was near death. Vettori then continued on saying that Lorenzo left immediately for Florence, riding so hard to get there that he became ill and later died.[173]

Certainly, Alfonsina was eager for Lorenzo to acquire the duchy of Urbino, and told her son in November 1515, that she hoped that as a result of the recent accord between the King of France and the pope 'we will have some sort of regime and my sights are set on Urbino'.[174] (Alfonsina, indeed, gave Lorenzo over 7000 ducats to assist him in the war of Urbino in 1516.[175]) But it was highly unlikely that Lorenzo would have wanted later to give up the duchy, and his final illness did not occur in the manner described, as he returned to Florence in April 1519 for the birth of his daughter and died in May from tuberculosis and possibly syphilis.[176] Vettori turned Alfonsina's devotion to her son, her status as a 'good' mother, into that of a 'manipulative dowager' and 'monstrous mother', so that she, rather than Lorenzo, could take the blame for the unpopularity of Medici rule.[177]

On one occasion, a critic of Alfonsina was punished for being disrespectful towards her. In October 1517, a canon from the Medici's parish church of San Lorenzo was banned from entering the kitchen for two months — that is, denied the privilege of eating with the other canons — by the sacristan of the church for refusing to say Mass for Alfonsina at the Medici Palace. This punishment meant that the priest was effectively isolated from his community, suffering a form of internal exile.[178] This was done 'in order to demonstrate that our chapter has taken to heart such an ill-conceived action towards such a house [that is] the founder of our church'.[179] Critics of the Medici regime were generally punished far more severely than this — by facing banishment from the city or imprisonment, for example.[180] However, it is important to note that the priest concerned was chastised for his affront to the Medici family and regime, not specifically for any offence to

Alfonsina herself, who, as we have seen, was even slandered by her own son in law once she was dead.

Alfonsina did receive some praise, but only from the most loyal of Medici supporters. Goro Gheri was one such man. Gheri wrote the following to Alfonsina in March 1517, defending criticisms of her role in Lorenzo's forced acquisition of the duchy of Urbino and the current negotiations with the Spanish regarding the possibility of a marriage to the daughter of the Duchess of Cardona:

> Concerning [...Lorenzo] I understand what Your Ladyship says and the work that you have done has been very appropriate and necessary, and God will acknowledge Your Ladyship's reason. Because it is not done for reasons of *avarice or greed*, but for the defence of the Apostolic See and of the Regime [and] of your House [my emphasis].[181]

Alfonsina is depicted by Gheri here as a defender of the papacy, the Medici regime, and her son; in other words, the 'good' mother, who places her marital family interests above all else regardless of any personally adverse consequences for her.

In a letter to another Medici secretary Gheri spoke of Alfonsina's prudence.[182] It was, as we have seen, generally considered to be the mark of a good ruler. As Paolo Giovio later noted in his description of her, this quality was a 'manly' attribute. In fact, the highest form of praise for a powerful woman at the time was to be described positively as manly. The level of skill and tenacity which Alfonsina exhibited, as well as the influence, power and authority she exercised could only be conceived of by contemporaries in terms of greed and querulousness. These very same qualities would have been described more favourably in men: namely, as liberality and magnificence. Her efforts to act in the interests of her son by involving herself in government business and political activity conflicted with contemporary expectations that women should behave with subtlety and decorum even when, as members of the city's ruling family, they were in the public eye.[183]

However, Alfonsina was continuously subject to more blame than praise. She was posthumously denounced by the Florentine anti-Medicean, republican, regime of 1527-1530, for having been allowed to acquire the Lake of Fucecchio without paying for it, bypassing the appropriate Communal officials and draining the lake — which hurt the local fishing industry and deprived Florence of much needed water. She was also condemned for the deforestation of the surrounding land.[184] The republican government tried to recover the 6,749 gold florins owed to the commune from her heirs — namely, her eight-year-old granddaughter Caterina — but was unsuccessful.[185] It declared that in 1515, when she acquired the lake, Alfonsina 'could do as she pleased'.[186] The commission specially charged with dealing with the issue specifically referred to a law of July 1516 that gave her the lake and surrounding land rent free, and paid all of Alfonsina's expenses.[187] It further stated in relation to the lake that she 'had appropriated [it] for herself'.[188] It is not surprising, therefore, that this anti-Medicean regime so feared Alfonsina. They did so because she effectively ruled the city in a manner akin to that of women in seigneurial regimes and monarchies rather than republics.

The particular language of the criticisms of Alfonsina's character and 'rule', before and after her death, is telling. It suited individual circumstances. In a similar fashion to Isabeau of Bavaria or Ginevra Bentivoglio before her Alfonsina was described as avaricious, but unlike her predecessors, she was not also accused of sexual misconduct and impiety as they had been respectively. Instead, Alfonsina was pejoratively described as having a lust for power because of her desire to acquire a lordship for Lorenzo. Alfonsina's business acumen and her maternal devotion were targeted because the criticisms of these attributes reflected the generally negative feeling of Florentines towards the Medici's financial abuses of their power as well as their seigneurial ambitions. Even Alfonsina's many opponents could not deny her considerable authority and skills as a ruler. The rare phenomenon of a woman who ruled, in fact, provided all Florentines, regardless of their allegiances, with the opportunity to rail against the abuses of the Medici regime with comparatively little risk. The inherent 'problem' being raised was one that would have been considered to be a difficulty by all: namely, that a *woman* had been given the authority to govern. The implicit gendering of Alfonsina as male by her few supporters was the only method available to contemporaries to deal with the contradiction of a powerful woman who had ruled. Alfonsina's power and authority was a symbol to critics of all that was problematic with Medici rule. For the regime's supporters, however, it indicated how Florence should be governed: namely, in a style similar to that of noble courts and monarchies which could sometimes enable a woman to rule.

Notes

[1] Further research, which is beyond the scope of the present project, in the voluminous diplomatic archives of the Northern Italian courts, may discover non-Florentine views of Alfonsina's character and 'rule'.

[2] A. Saxonhouse, 'Introduction - Public and Private: The Paradigm's Power', in Garlick, Dixon & Allen (1992), pp. 1-9, esp. pp. 4-6. Maddern (2001), pp. 17-27 discusses Aristotle's and St Augustine's views on women and the polity as the basis for this connection between women and disorder in the public arena, which was a major source for medieval and Renaissance views on the subject. For a useful discussion of early modern views on women and disorder, see Wiesner (2000), pp. 252-255. For a theoretical discussion of the notion of women and their disorderly nature, as a reason given by male theorists for their exclusion from the public arena, see C. Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 4, 17-18.

[3] Lubkin (1994), pp. 46-47, quotation at p. 47.

[4] ASF Signoria, Dieci, ... Leg. e Com. Miss. Resp. 10, 177^{v}-178^{r} and 268^{r}. (All archival references unless otherwise indicated are to the ASF.) The broader political context of the issues identified in this letter are provided by M. Mallett, 'Diplomacy and War in Later Fifteenth Century Italy', *Proceedings of the British Academy* **69** (1981), pp. 267-288, esp. pp. 276-277.

[5] Fradenburg (1991), pp. 8-9. For the whole theme, see J.C. Parsons (ed.) *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St Martins Press, 1994), esp. pp. 1-11.

[6] For some examples, see J. M. Richards, 'Mary Tudor as "Sole Quene"?: Gendering Tudor Monarchy', *The Historical Journal* **40** (4) (1997), pp. 895-924; J.M. Richards, '"To Promote

a Woman to Beare Rule": Talking of Queens in mid-Tudor England', *Sixteenth Century Journal* **28** (1) (1997), pp. 101-121; D.R. Doyle, 'The Sinews of Habsburg Governance in the Sixteenth Century: Mary of Hungary and Political Patronage', *Sixteenth Century Journal* **31** (2) (2000), pp. 349-360; J.G. Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies* (Phoneix Mill & Wolfboro Falls, NH: Alan Sutton, 1992), pp. 94-152: 'Women Diplomats: The Ladies Peace of 1529'. The Treaty of Cambrai (1529) was known as the 'Ladies Peace', because it was planned and negotiated between the Archduchess Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), aunt of Emperor Charles V and Regent of the Low Countries and Louise of Savoy, mother of the French King Francis I. Louise of Savoy's activities on her son Francis I's behalf following his defeat and capture at Pavia are referred to in R. J. Knecht, '"Born Between Two Women ...": Jules Michelet and Francis I', *Renaissance Studies* **14** (3) (2000), pp. 329-343 and K. Crawford, 'Catherine de Médicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood', *Sixteenth Century Journal* **31** (3) (2000), pp. 643-673, where reference is made to Louise of Savoy's political self-representation at pp. 649-651.

[7] S. ffolliott, 'Catherine de' Medici as Artemesia: Figuring the Powerful Widow', in *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourse of Difference in Early Modern Europe* (ed.) M. Ferguson, M. Qulligan & N.J. Vickers (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1986), pp. 227-241; S. ffolliott, 'A Queen's Garden of Power: Catherine de' Medici,' in *Reconsidering the Renaissance* (ed.) M.A. Di Cesare (Binghamton, NY: MRTS, 1992), pp. 245-255; S. ffolliott, 'Examplarity and Gender: Three Lives of Queen Catherine de' Medici', in *The Rhetorics of Life Writing in Early Modern Europe* (ed.) T.F. Mayer & D.F. Woolf (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 321-340; S. ffolliott, 'The Ideal Queenly Patron of the Renaissance: Catherine de' Medici Defining Herself or Defined by Others?', in Lawrence (1997), pp. 99-110. See on Catherine's 'performance' of her political role, Crawford (2000), pp. 643-673, esp. pp. 653ff.

[8] C. Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1994), p. 1. There is some doubt as to whether Elizabeth actually said these words. See now, S. Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 'Introduction: Who Represents Elizabeth?', pp. 3-21, at p. 9. Cf. p.13, for Elizabeth's representations of herself as 'Princess' and 'Queen' or 'Prince' and King' rather than as 'woman' and 'King'. Cf. J.M. Green, '"I My Self": Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp', *Sixteenth Century Journal* **28** (2) (1997), pp. 421-445, who argues that Elizabeth did, in fact, utter these words. A substantial selection of Elizabeth's own writings and speeches are now readily accessible in L.S. Marcus, J. Mueller & M.B. Rose (eds) *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[9] Levin (1994), pp. 146-147. More generally on this theme, see *ibid.* pp. 121-148, and Stafford (1995). See for a discussion of how Elizabeth's rule was conceptualised in the political culture of her day and particularly her personification by contemporaries as the 'English Deborah': A.N. McClaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558-1585* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 12-49, esp. pp. 23-30 on Deborah. Queen Esther was also a model of female power for Elizabeth; see now Ephraim (2001). Elizabeth too, was subject to contemporary 'negative press' that often focussed on her status as an unmarried queen and besmirched her sexual reputation. On this whole theme see J.M. Walker (ed.) *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1998), esp. articles by Sheila Cavanagh and Carole Levin.

[10] S. Dixon, 'Conclusion - The Enduring Theme: Domineering Dowagers and Scheming Concubines', in Garlick, Dixon & Allen (1992), pp. 209-225. See also the remarks in C. Levin & P.A. Sullivan (eds) *Political Rhetoric, Power and Renaissance Women* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), chs 1 and 15.

[11] P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Batsford, 1983), pp. 24-31, quotation at p. 24.
[12] Stafford (1983), pp. 24, 35, 47, 58-59; J.M. Bak, 'Queens as Scapegoats in Medieval Hungary', in Duggan (1997), pp. 223-233.
[13] P.A. Lee, 'Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship', *Renaissance Quarterly* 34 (2) (1986), pp. 183-217; E. Kruse, 'The Blood-Stained Hands of Catherine de Médicis', in Levin & Sullivan (1995), pp. 139-155.
[14] Lee (1986).
[15] Kruse (1995), p. 140 and p. 142 cites the negative contemporary depictions of Catherine de' Medici referred to here, with the exception of the pejorative designation of Queen Catherine as a 'manlike woman', which is cited in K. Park, 'The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade, 1570-1620', in D. Hillman & C. Mazzio (eds) *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 171-193, quotation at p. 185.
[16] This phrase refers to John Knox's book of the same title, which relates to his attack on Catholic queens of the mid-sixteenth century, but its sentiments are also relevant to this discussion. On the overall theme see the discussion in Levin and Sullivan (1995), chs 1 and 15.
[17] For Alfonsina's arrival in Florence from Rome in 1515, see Landucci (1983), p. 350; Guicciardini 1986-[1999]), v. 2 p. 54, letter 166, 91/6/1515, and pp. 56-57, letter 167, 6/6/1515. Landucci dates her arrival in Florence as June 4th, while Guicciardini was expecting her any day on the 1st of June, but was still awaiting her on June 6th.
[18] Printed in Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 977 n. 1. 'Sua Signoria è sempre occcupata, o a scrivere a Roma, o costà [to you in Lombardy] o a dare udienza, di che ne segue che la casa e sempre piena; e da tale concorso ne risulta riputatione allo Stato, animo agli amici e timore alli adversi. Conclusive fa quello offitio che altra donna sarebbe impossibile, a pochi huomini facile'.
[19] On the concept of the Virago in the Renaissance, see J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (orig. 1860; repr. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1990), p. 252; King (1991), pp. 188-193, especially p. 192; L. Coltheart, 'The Virago and Machiavelli', in Garlick, Dixon and Allen (1992), pp. 141-155, at p. 148; Schiesari (1989), esp. pp. 68-69. Breisach (1967).
[20] See above p. 166.
[21] For an interesting discussion of the beginnings of this process in the mid-fifteenth century, see Bullard (1998). On the numerous visitors to the Medici palace at the same time, see Preyer (1998).
[22] Butters (1985), pp. 280, 283; Cerretani (1993), p. 314.
[23] See above p. 171for one example.
[24] See above p. 182.
[25] Rubinstein (1997).
[26] See above chapter 2 in particular.
[27] For general comments on Alfonsina's involvement in Florentine government at this time, see Stephens (1983), pp. 86-88.
[28] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 15^{v}-30^{v}.
[29] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 16^{r}. 'ex com[m]issione Illustrissime Domine [word crossed out] Alfonsine'.
[30] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 15^{v}. '... s'intenda esso sia electo et deputato e' proveditore de' Consuli del Mare et proveditore delle gabelle di Pisa ... per tempo d'uno anno .... ex com[m]is[s]ione Magnifice Domine Alphonsine'.
[31] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 21^{r-v}; 22^{v}.
[32] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 21^{r}.

[33] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 21^{v} 'Ad instantia Domine Alphonsine'; 22^{r}, 29^{v}, contains the other examples.
[34] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 19^{r}. 'con com[m]essione hauta da Madonna Alphonsine'.
[35] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 20^{v}.
[36] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 25^{v}. 'ex commissione Domine Alphonsine'.
[37] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 29^{r}.
[38] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 25^{r}.
[39] Misc. Rep. Busta II Ins. 49, 15^{v}-30^{v}. 'ex commissione Domine Alphonsine'.
[40] MAP 137, 687, 23/9/1515. 'le cose di Cado ... et domattina ho ordinato che la exporrà a li Otto di Pratica ... et a lui si darà parole gentili ....'.
[41] P. Viti, (ed.) *Carteggi delle magistrature dell'età repubblicana: Otto di Pratica* v. 1(1) (Florence: Olschki, 1987-), p. 438. 'in quanto si è referito giornalmente ad Alfonsina Orsini ogni notizia di rilievo'.
[42] MAP 114, 246, 20/10/1515. 'di fare vedere Gonfalonier di Justitia in questa tratta il nostro Bernardo Bini che la gliène farà cosa gratissima'.
[43] MAP 137, 713, 6/12/1515. Noi ci ricordamo dirti che li Octo di Balìa si havevano a fare di presente, et ti mando una nota di quelli habbiamo disegnati ... et ogni minima cosa è bisognato risolvere a noi'. Cf. MAP 137, 712 2/12/1515, where Alfonsina tells Lorenzo that two of the men he wanted to be chosen for office were ineligible.
[44] MAP 123, 349, 10/9/1515. 'lettere della vostra Magnifica Madre'. 'Magnifici padri et madre [sic] vostre'. Another example of Alfonsina's assistance to nuns during her 'rule' of Florence, can be found in a letter of 28 July 1515 in which she prevailed upon the bursar of a charitable hospital in Prato to give a certain nun, Maria di Francesco Panciatichi, the money and clothes belonging to her late mother that the hospital had in its possession. This letter is published in Petri (1973), p. 290.
[45] MAP 137,673 c.2^{r}, 12/9/1515. 'ama la casa nostra, come buono amico de epsa che è...'.
[46] MAP 137, 706, 22/10/1515.
[47] MAP 137, 668, 6/9/1515.
[48] MAP 137, 668, 6/9/1515.
[49] For background, see Giorgetti (1883), pp. 194-215; 311-320; Devonshire Jones (1972), p. 114ff; R. Devonshire Jones, 'Lorenzo de' Medici, Duca d'Urbino, "Signore" of Florence?', in *Studies on Machiavelli* ed. M.P. Gilmore (Florence: Sansoni, 1972), pp. 299-315; Butters (1985), pp. 270ff.
[50] MAP 137, 652^{v}. 'Lorenzo, io divento rossa di vergogna...'. The letter is partially published in Giorgetti (1883), p. 215 n. 2.
[51] MAP 137, 652^{v}, 16/8/1515. 'considerare bene che il Re [of France] è in Italia con 80 mila persone e che questa ciptà e devotissima della Corona di Francia. E anche ti ricordo che per volere Piero essere pertinace et di sua opinione, siamo stati xviiii anni fuori di casa'.
[52] MAP 137, 653, 17/8/1515.
[53] MAP, 105, 216, 22/8/1515. 'Vostra Signoria è prudentissima et inteso el iuditio di Nostra Signore, governerà tucto in b[u]ona forma, ala quale, io, per ordine di Sua Santità, ho scripto la presente.... il Re ha intellig[ent]ia in Firenze, e mi parso advisarne Vostra Signoria'. The full text of the letter is also published in H. Reinhard, *Lorenzo von Medici, Herzog von Urbino, 1492-1515* (Freiburg: Waibel, 1935), Doc. 3, pp. 90-91.
[54] MAP 137, 658, 24/8/1515. 'et cavatone quelle parti che non mi parevono a proposito di mostrarle [*Otto di Pratica*], et questa mattina la mosterrò a questi ciptadini'.
[55] MAP 137, 658, 24/8/1515. 'Io farò quanto Sua Santità ne conmette ...'.
[56] MAP 137, 658, 24/8/1515.
[57] Published in Reinhard (1935), p. 91, Doc. IV. '... la magnifica Madonna Alfonsina ne ha mostra... una lettera che li scrive Piero Ardinghelli per ordine di Vostra Santità ....' Cf. Viti (1987-), v. 1(1) p. 433.

[58] Viti (1987 -), v. 1 p. 435.
[59] MAP 105, 253, 29/8/1515. Published in A. Verdi, *Gli ultimi anni di Lorenzo de' Medici, Duca d'Urbino* 2nd ed. (Este: Pietrogrande, 1905), pp. I-II, Document 2. NB Verdi's date of 28 August is incorrect.
[60] MAP 105, 253, 29/8/1515. 'che non sieno se non fra loro d'accordo, et che habbia voluto condurre Nostra Santità in uno extremo et in una necessità di questa forma'.
[61] MAP 105, 253, 29/8/1515, c. 1^{v}. '[q]uesto saria uno [caso] far grande li nemici vostri'.
[62] MAP 137, 663, 30/8/1515.
[63] MAP 137, 665, 1/9/1515. 'per essere occupata ...'.
[64] MAP 137, 669, 7/9/1515. cc.1^{v}-2^{r}. 'Non te ne far beffe che hora sono tempi da povera cura ad ogni cosa'. quotation at c.1^{v}.
[65] MAP 137, 672, 10/9/1515.
[66] MAP 137, 684, 22/9/1515. 'mi mand[er]ono le particularità'.
[67] MAP 137, 684, 22/9/1515, 'Che tutto fa [by the French king] per cavare danari ... perchè habbiamo megl[i]o el modo noi a trovare denari et più quantità che questi nostri vicini.... Ma l'importantia è Napoli, ala quale non cederei mai anchora io'.
[68] MAP 137, 685, 22/9/1515. 'la protectione dela casa de' Medici con mantenimento dello Stato etc'.
[69] MAP 137, 687, 23/9/1515. '... [H]o ordinato che el Magnifico Juliano manda... Giovanni Vespucci a Nostra Signore a confortarene et pregarne Sua Santità ... et così ho ordinato che li Otto di Pratica hanno scripto sopra questa [cosa] una lunga et buona lettera a Sua Beatudine'.
[70] MAP 105, 8^{v}, 20/10/1515. '[E]t non so che maggiore riputatione o gloria voi vi possiate havere al mondo che vedere un Re di Francia in casa tua...'.
[71] On this papal visit to Florence, see I. Ciseri, *L'ingresso trionfale di Leone X in Firenze nell 1515* (Florence: Olschki, 1990).
[72] The papal brief is published in Ciseri (1990), p. 248. 'Non existimamus Nobilitatem tuam egere monitis, novimus enim, eam prudentiam, atque virtutem, qua te supra comunem condictionem sexus tui decoravit altissimus'. '...omne studium atque omnem industriam vimque animi et ingenii tui, que permagna est ...'.
[73] MAP 105,14, 24/10/1515.
[74] Ciseri (1990), Document 24, pp. 245-248, at p. 245. The source is MAP 105, 18, 3/11/1515.
[75] Ciseri (1990), p. 246.
[76] On the displays, processions and celebrations organised for the papal visit, see Ciseri (1990); Cummings (1992), pp. 67-82; Reiss (2001), pp. 133-135. See also Landucci's account of the papal visit in Landucci (1983), pp. 350-359.
[77] Ciseri (1990), p. 213. 'nostra patrona'. 'molti altri huomini da bene ...'.
[78] Elam (1994), pp. 357-383, at p. 379. This project continued on for several months after the official papal entry. Cf. Elam (1992), pp. 41-84, with documents at pp. 77-78. Alfonsina provided Lorenzo with 300-400 ducats for the stables in June 1516. C.S. III 15, c.17^{r}. (Alfonsina to Filippo Strozzi).
[79] See above chapter 3 for further discussion of the gendered nature of architectural patronage and Alfonsina's own patronage of architecture.
[80] Ciseri (1990), p. 260.
[81] Ciseri (1990), p. 251.
[82] MAP 105, 14, 24/10/1515. 'quando qui [Florence] s'intenda che e' denari si habbino a spendere per acrescimento di Stato, o dela ciptà o tuo proprio [Lorenzo], non si farà difficultà nessuna né pel publico né pe' privati'.
[83] Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine', BNF [Fondo Principale] II IV 171, 121^{r}, published in Ciseri (1990), p. 314. 'fussino comandati dalla Signoria et di poi da madonna Alfonsina'. Landucci

(1983), p. 359 also refers to the displeasure many felt at the costs of the papal visit. He further suggests in *ibid.* that the total cost for labour was at least 70,000 florins and possibly more.

[84] For the context, see Polizzotto (1992), 362-363.

[85] Polizzotto (1992), p. 363 n. 37, citing P. Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine', BNF [Fondo Principale] II IV 171, 123^{v}. 'Perdita libertas post hac, Florentia, nam te/ femina ab Ursino sangue solo regit'. The translation is the author's.

[86] See above, p. 167 for a brief discussion of the negative portrayal by contemporaries of Queen Catherine de' Medici of France.

[87] C.S. III, 167, 33, 13/4/1516. 'Vi pregho che ordinate che domattina, uno o dua di cotesti homini della abbondantia, venghino qui a me con piena auctorità et potestà di potere deliberare et fare ogni cosa in che ci resolvessimo circa la provisione di grani per cotesta ciptà et contado'.

[88] C.S. III,167, 37, 17/1/1515/6.

[89] P. Parenti, 'Istorie fiorentine', BNF [Fondo Principale] II IV 171, 130^{r}. 'il ghoverno rimase in potestà di Messer Ghoro [Gheri] de Pistoia ... capo della città et a lui andavano tutti i primi di questo Stato'.

[90] On Goro Gheri see A. Anzilotti, *La crisi costituzionale della repubblica fiorentina* (Rome: Multigrafia Editrice, 1969), pp. 93-101; Lowe (1988), pp. 91-106.

[91] Lowe (1988), pp. 91-92.

[92] For Gheri's correspondence with Alfonsina, see Copialettere, I and II and several letters in MAP 142 and MAP 143. Alfonsina's only reply to one of these letters is in C.S. I, 7, 18^{r}-19^{v}, [January 1516/17].

[93] See for example, Clarice Orsini's receipt of news reports from Medici secretaries and other employees in chapter 2 above. On Medici secretaries in the later fifteenth century, see Brown (2002).

[94] Copialettere, I and II.

[95] Copialettere, I, 316^{v}–317^{v}; 318^{r}-319^{v}; 320^{r-v}; (all 24/1/1516/7) and 320^{v}-321^{r}. (25/1/1516/7).

[96] C.S. I, 7, 18^{r}. (24/1/1516/7). '...le provisione di costà [Romagna] vadino molto adagio'.

[97] Copialettere, I and II. For background on Lorenzo and the war in Urbino, see Giorgetti (1881).

[98] Copialettere, I, 172^{r}, 7/12/1516.

[99] Copialettere, I, 156^{v}-157^{r} (1/12/1516). 'la Signoria Vostra intende la cosa come la sta', quotation at 157^{r}. Cf. *ibid.* I 159^{v}. (2/12/1516).

[100] For an analysis of Gheri's view on this issue, see Lowe (1988) pp. 91-105.

[101] MAP 142, 298, c. 1^{v} -2^{v}(9/11/1516); MAP 142, 300 (10/11/1516).

[102] Copialettere, I, 122^{r} (20/101516). 'per la servitù sua et di tucta casa sua'. Cf. *ibid.* I, 136^{v}-137^{r}.

[103] Copialettere, I, 168^{r} (6/12/1516). '[n]ello Stato bisognia havere delli amici ...'.

[104] Copialettere, I, 189^{r} (15/12/1516). '...[P]rego la Signoria Vostra me advisi quello che [Lei] et la Excellentia del Duca vogliono che io faccio'.

[105] Copialettere, I, 181^{r}. (11/12/1516).

[106] MAP 142, 320 (17/11/1516). '...accioché el benefitio habbia el debito suo'.

[107] Copialettere, I, 157^{r}, (1/12/1516). 'come advisa la Signoria Vostra'. Cf. *ibid.* I, 144^{v} (27/11/1516).

[108] MAP 142, 285^{r} (4/11/1516).

[109] Copialettere, I, 297^{v}-298^{r}, (4/1/1516/17); v.2, 33^{v} [February 1516/7].

[110] Copialettere I, 161^{v} (4/12/1516). 'di quella fanculla'...E lui conosce che se non era el favore della Signoria Vostra, le cose sua andavano altro modo'.

[111] Copialettere, I, 159[v]. 'Questa mactina [2/12/1516] si sono facti e' [C]ons[e]rvatori [di Legge] secondo che la Signoria Vostra me li rimandò risegniati'. Cf. Stephens (1983), p. 88 for the translation and general discussion of this point.
[112] See for example, the list of instances taken from Gheri's Copialettere cited in Stephens (1983), pp. 89n.and 91n.
[113] Copialettere, I, 189[v] (16/12/1516). 'In questa [lettera] mando alla Signoria Vostra una nota de' designati per la nuova Signoria et per Gonfalonier di Compagnia ... La Signoria Vostra la risolverà con la Excellentia del Duca et me le rimanderà anotate come vuole che si exeguischa ...'.
[114] Copialettere, I, 193[r] (17/12/1516).
[115] Copialettere, I, 200[r], (2/12/1516).
[116] C.S. III, 151, 74[r]. 13/2/1517. 'Baptista della Palla nostro ... per nostro ordine'.
[117] C.S. I, 7, c.6[r], 22/1/1517/18. 'Io, per la loro vecchia amicitia et servitù, non ho voluto neghare loro'.
[118] Signoria, Dieci ... Leg. e Comm. Miss. e Resp. Busta 77, c. 337, (11//1518).
[119] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 2 p. 231 (12/12/1516); pp. 234-235 (16/12/1516); p. 237 (18/12/1516).
[120] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 p. 322 (29/3/1518). 'el buono et amorevole officio che Vostra illustrissima Signoria ha usato verso di me, col scrivere in mia defensione ...'.
[121] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 2 pp. 402-403, (14/12/1517). 'Io la concederò, vedendo la voluntà di Madonna [Alfonsina]... et li farò intendere che tucto quello che si fa, è per ordine della Signoria di Madonna ...'.
[122] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 p. 160 (3/11/1517).
[123] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 p. 357 (8/5/1518). 'che ha ordinato a Roma che sia facta la promessa...in quel modo che sarà commesso dal vostro ambasciadore'.
[124] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 p. 347 (29/4/1518).
[125] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 p. 402 (13/6/1518). '[I]o farò sempre tanto quanto Quella mi ordinerà'.
[126] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 p. 48. 'mi é parso ... scriverne a Vostra Signoria, che farLi intendere che ... è necessario che La ordini a Roma che di là non sia retractata'.
[127] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 3 pp. 352-353 (4/5/1518), quotation at p. 352. '...haveva ordinato fussino rimessi a Vostra Signoria'.
[128] MAP 142, 66. 7/7/1519. 'un pezo'.
[129] MAP 142, 69, 8/7/1519.
[130] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 4 p. 350. (22/11/1519). '...in questo et in tucte le altre cose di Vostra Signoria, non mancho, né mancherò della diligentia debita'.
[131] Guicciardini (1986-[1999]), v. 4, p. 318 (30/7/1519). 'si disegna di levare questo governo a Madonna [Alfonsina] et darlo al Cardinale ...'.
[132] Giovio (1551), p. 189. 'donna veramente di prudentia virile, ma avara n'è mai senza querela. Costei con cieca ambitione desiderava molto di far grande il figliuolo, d'accrescergli ricchezze, et sopra tutto l'acquisto di qualche stato altrui'.
[133] Cited in Reiss (2001), p. 249 n. 64. The original archival source is MAP 108, 118. '... la più fortunata donna mai fusse, che li danari che la dà per [D]io li fruttono più perché se li prestassi a usura'.
[134] BNF II IV 19, 51[v]. B. Cerretani, 'Sommario... dalle [sic] historia ...in dialogo delle cose di Firenze dal anno 1494 al 1519'. 'gran avaritia di Madonna [Alfonsina]'.
[135] Cerretani (1993b), p. 351. 'si dette hordine se gli [the duke] facesse honore'.
[136] Cerretani (1993b), p. 84. Cf. a description of the banquets by the Medici secretary, Goro Gheri, in his Copialettere, IV, 287[v]-288[r], (28/9/1518).
[137] Cerretani (1993b), pp. 351-352.

[138] Cerretani (1993b), p. 352; A. Parronchi, 'La prima rappresentazione della Mandragola', *La Bibliofilia* **64** (1962), pp. 37-62, esp. pp. 52-53.
[139] BMaF Manoscritti B.III, 66 c. 57^{r-v} at c. 57^{r}. The text is also published in Parronchi (1962), p. 52. ' ... veramente questo dì si è passato molto allegramente. Et Dio ci ha serviti d'un tempo bellissimo, et con tanta satisfactione dello universale che non ve lo potrei dire. Et veramente ci è stato tanto el popolo per le finestre, per li tecti, per le strade, per li palchetti che si erano facti in ogni luogo donde si poteva vedere, che non vi imagineresti mai la metà etc'.
[140] Cerretani (1993b), p. 353. 'il perché stimo fussi pel mal hordine per chi fu chapo'.
[141] Cerretani (1993b), p. 355. 'in disordine ghrandissimo perché tenevano una spesa intollerabile'.
[142] On the theory of magnificence in Florence see Fraser-Jenkins (1970) and Kent (1977b).
[143] Stafford (1983), p. 24.
[144] R. Gibbons, 'Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France (1385-1422): The Creation of an Historical Villainess', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* ser. 6, **6** (1996), pp. 51-73, esp. pp. 55, 63,66; Crawford (2000), p. 647.
[145] Cited in C. James, *Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti: A Literary Career,* (Florence: Olschki, 1996), pp. 75-76. 'la tenacità et avaritia ... innata e de propria natura cum el picolo animo'. Cf. Arienti's description of his wife, Francesca Bruni, as charitable. 'There existed in her a generosity which went beyond the bounds of the female sex'. Cited in S. Kolsky, 'Bending the Rules: Marriage in Renaissance Collections of Biographies of Famous Women', in Dean & Lowe (1998), pp. 227-248, quotation at p. 232 which also includes Kolsky's undocumented assertion that contemporaries viewed women as naturally avaricious. The translation is the author's.
[146] The quotations are cited in the editor's preface to G.S. degli Arienti's, *Gynevra de le clare donne* ed. C. Ricci & A. Bacchi della Lega, (Scelta di curiosità letterarie o rare dal secolo XIII al XIX, 223), (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 1888 repr. 1968), pp. xviii-xix . 'matrona potens sed plus quam foemina poscet' and as '[e]mpia, maligna, avara, e scellerata'.
[147] C.S. III, 110, 160^{r}, 13/2/1519. The English translation is in Bullard (1980), p. 90 n. 95. 'Alfonsina Ursina cuius obitum nemo vitam deflevunt omnes iocundissmium in humano genere saluberimumque depositum'.
[148] Cited in Pieraccini (1986), v. 1 p. 187. 'Qui [in Rome] è morta senza alchuna lachrima, chè infine el carnovale è pazia morire'.
[149] Pastor (1950), v. 8 p. 174.
[150] Masi (1906), p. 245. '[Alfonsina è] morta con non troppa buona grazia, perché non attendava ad altro che a comulare danari.... [E]l figliuolo era morto con poca grazia, costei morì con meno'. The reference to Alfonsina taking money from Florence after Lorenzo died is in *ibid.*
[151] Cambi (1770-1789), v. 3 in v. 22, p. 158. 'dissesi aveva lasciato buona somma di scudi contanti'.
[152] Cited in Reiss (2001), p. 126 n. 5. '... ducati 70,000 e chi diceva molto più'.
[153] Fulin (1969), v. 28 col. 260.
[154] ASP Tomo II: Salviati di Roma, busta 61, fasc. 18 contains a copy of her will dated 6/2/1520. 'perchè no[n] voria che riceveste torto'. An additional copy is contained in UCLA, Department of Special Collections, Orsini, Box 240, 15. Both copies contain the legal preamble in Latin and the Italian testament dictated by Alfonsina. See also Lefevre (1975), pp. 129-130, which publishes, in full, a document summarising Alfonsina's property and testamentary bequests.
[155] Lefevre (1975), pp. 97-98, 130, in general. On the farms see MAP 99, 44, c.157^{r}–c.162^{v}. (Sept 1519-December 1521). On the Roman property apart from the palace, see Acq.

e Doni, busta 286, inserto 2, c. 1– c. 3 unfoliated. [1/5/1529]. Pope Clement VII returned this property to the surviving Medici heirs. On the shops in Florence, and property at Fucecchio, see Tommasini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) pp. 1050-1053.

[156] On women's legal rights in relation to property and inheritance, see Kuehn (1991), esp. ch. 10.

[157] Cardinal Giulio de' Medici defrauded Clarice Strozzi of most of her inheritance after he became Pope Leo X's universal heir in 1521. See Devonshire Jones (1972), p. 147. On Clarice's desire to regain possession of the farms at Poggio as her inheritance from her mother, see Filippo's letter to his brother, Lorenzo Strozzi. C.S. III, 108, 114^{r-v}, 23/11/1527. Clarice was also entitled to receive via her mother's inheritance, a further 6000 ducats bequeathed by Clarice's grandmother, Caterina di Sanseverino, on which see Tomassini (1883-1911), v. 2(2) p. 1054. On Caterina de' Medici's protest to Duke Alessandro at the alienation of property inherited from Alfonsina upon her marriage, see MAP 159, c.195–c.196, 8/10/1533. Her protest was unsuccessful. MAP 159, c.221–c.224, 8/10/1533.

[158] Masi (1906), p. 45. 'come si costuma andare quando si fa le Messe di qualche gran maestro'.

[159] Kent (1993), pp. 279-313 at p. 279.

[160] Cambi (1770-1789), v. 3 in v. 22 p. 159. 'come si fece al figliuolo'.

[161] Cerretani (1993b), pp. 313-314, 350; Polizzotto (1992), pp. 360-363; Butters (1985), pp. 280, 311ff.

[162] Butters (1985), pp. 237-238, 280.

[163] Nerli (1728), p. 131. 'Erano in que' tempi i cittadini dello stato nel segreto malcontenti, perchè il Duca Lorenzo, desiderando ridurre il governo a forma di Principato, pareva, che si degnasse di convenire più ne' magistrati e con cittadini come soleva, e poco e con fatica dava audienza, e meno attendeva alle faccende della città, ma faceva trattare, e praticare tutte le cose pubbliche da Messer Goro da Pistoia suo segretario ....'.

[164] Devonshire Jones (1972), p. 141; Vettori (1972), pp. 259-272.

[165] F. Vettori, 'Sommario della istoria d' Italia (1511-1527)', in Vettori (1972), pp. 133-246, at pp.184-185. '[Lorenzo] non era amato perché é impossibile che li omini, usi a essere liberi, amino chi li comanda'.

[166] Giorgetti (1883), pp. 194-215; 311-320, at p. 312.

[167] Guicciardini (1986-[1999], v. 4 pp. 172-173.

[168] Herlihy (1978), ch. 14, quotation at p. 20; See too on this theme Kuehn (1998), p. 92.

[169] Vettori (1972), p.185. 'donna avara'.

[170] Vettori (1972), p.185. 'troppa reverenzia'.

[171] Vettori (1972), p. 267. '...[E] madonna Alfonsina cominciò a infestare il Papa, che dovessi dare uno stato al figliuolo. Et tanto operò [Alfonsina] con parole e pianti ch'el Papa fu contento che Lorenzo cercassi di torre lo stato a Francesco Maria della Ruvere, duca d'Urbino'.

[172] It is interesting to note that Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga represented Alfonsina's daughter Clarice, in a similar fashion in January 1527, when she pleaded with Clement VII to provide the ransom to free her husband who was being held as a hostage by Imperial troops. See above chapter 5.

[173] This purported series of events can be found in Vettori (1972), p. 184.

[174] Cited in Ciseri (1990), p. 247. 'noi habbiamo qualche stato, et la mira mia è in su Urbino'.

[175] MAP 132, 89^{r}.

[176] On Lorenzo's ill health and death, see Reiss (2001), p. 138 and the literature cited there.

[177] See above, p. 167 and notes 10 and 15 respectively for references to the terms 'manipulative dowager' and 'monstrous mother'.

[178] See now, for a discussion of this whole theme, P.F. Howard, 'Entrepreneurial Ne'er-Do-Wells: Sin and Fear in Renaissance Florence', *Memorie Domenicane* n.s. **25** (1994), pp. 245-258, esp. pp. 254-255.

[179] BML Capitolare di San Lorenzo, I, 8^{r}. 'per dimostrare che el nostro capitulo hebbe a cuore tal chosa molto malfatta verso tanta chasa fondatrice del nostra chiesa'.

[180] For one example of a group of men being exiled for what was said at a dinner party about the Medici, see Butters (1985), pp. 304-306.

[181] Copialettere, II, 98^{r}, (20/3/1516/7). 'Circa [... Lorenzo], intendo quanto la Signoria Vostra dice et la opera che Lei ha facta che è stata cosa molto approposito et necessaria et Dio ne ammetterà la scusa à Vostra Signoria perché non è facta né per *avaritia né per accumulare*, ma per defensione della Sede App[ostoli]ca et dello Stato [et] di Casa sua'.

[182] Copialettere, IV, 107^{r}, (13/2/1518/9).

[183] Pauline Stafford's discussion of the contradictions inherent in the representations of the powers of the eleventh-century English Queen Emma, which she suggests is common to all queens, provides a useful comparative analysis. See P. Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century', in Duggan (1997), pp. 3-26.

[184] Cambi (1770-1789), v. 4 in v. 23 p. 28.

[185] Balìe, 46, 102^{v}-104^{r}, 23/7/1527; 147^{r}-150^{r}, 7/9/1527; 153^{v}-155^{r}, 1/10/1527. The total amount owed is listed at 155^{r}. See too, the discussion in Stephens (1983), p. 223.

[186] Balìe 46, 103^{r}, 23/7/1527. 'poteva exiguire quello che gli piaceva'.

[187] Balìe 46, 103^{v}.

[188] Balìe 46, 104^{r}. 'apropriava per sè'. According to Catherine Kovesi-Killerby, however, Alfonsina's motives were more complex than the men of the 1527-1530 republic believed, as it seems that draining the lake may have benefited the health of the local inhabitants and assisted the farmers in the area. Plans were also apparently made for her to pay for the lake in instalments, which was forestalled by Alfonsina's death. See her forthcoming article entitled: 'Muddying the Waters: Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici and the Swamp of Fucecchio'. I am grateful to Dr Kovesi-Killerby for allowing me to cite her unpublished paper.

Afterword

At all times of political crisis or change during the century between republican and ducal rule in Florence, the women of the Medici family were actively involved in ensuring that Medicean interests were protected and advanced. This was the case at the end of our period as much as it was at the beginning. Continuity is equally as important a factor as are crisis and change in explaining the contribution of the Medici women to increasing and consolidating the power and authority of the Medici regime. However theirs was not solely a story of a simple linear progression in which the women's exertion of power and influence increased exponentially as the Medici regime became more seigneurial. Rather, critical moments of change came in cycles and often the Medici women's success depended upon their continuing of tradition rather than the instituting of radical change.

The women with whom I have been chiefly concerned, namely: Lucrezia Tornabuoni; Clarice Orsini; Maddalena Cibo; Alfonsina Orsini; Lucrezia Salviati; Maria Salviati, and to a lesser extent the other Medici women under study, achieved their access to power through their various familial roles as daughters, sisters, mothers, wives and widows of the Medici male rulers. Their source of power and influence was derived from their familial relationship. But in republican Florence, it intersected with, and was underpinned by, a conciliar system of government based on the holding of elected office by a generally elite group of men. The Medici men, to be sure, had to be seen to conform to the dictates of the republican constitution even when their regime took on an increasingly seigneurial character, but their gender did not exclude them *per se* from the holding of formal political power, as it did for the women. We have been able to trace how the women in the Medici family over the course of the century between 1434 and 1537 managed to negotiate the limited political spaces allowed them, albeit with varying degrees of approbation and disapproval by both contemporary and later friends and critics of the Medici. Through the actions and activities of the Medici women we have also been able to trace the changing *modus operandi* of the Medici regime which enabled the family increasingly, as time wore on, to act in all but name as *signori* of Florence.

The marriage strategies of the Medici are a key indicator of this change. The women who married into the Medici family in the first half of the fifteenth century were wealthy and sometimes noble, but their connections and influence, although important, did not generally stretch beyond Florence and its territories. Daughters and sisters of the Medici men in the mid-fifteenth century — Nannina Rucellai being an obvious example — had limited influence and sometimes could feel, justifiably, that being born a woman meant that they would not get their own way. The mothers, widows and, to a lesser extent, the wives of powerful Medici men at the time were closer to the centre of power and had a greater influence to bring to

bear with the Medici men and their supporters and employees. And so they were able often to get their own way, not for themselves, but rather for family members, clients and allies. Lorenzo 'the Magnificent''s marriage to the noble and 'foreign'-born Clarice Orsini was a foretaste of things to come. Lorenzo's daughters, although less powerful than Alfonsina Orsini — who was not only of nobler blood, but also the wife and widow of one head of the Medici regime and later the mother of another — would certainly not have expressed themselves as Nannina Rucellai had. All the women of the Medici family from the late 1480s onwards were more involved in the political sphere than the previous generation, eventually moving further afield to the usually all-male arena of the papal court by the second decade of the sixteenth century. Every generation acquired greater nobility of blood, wealth and prestige marrying into noble Italian families from beyond Florence and eventually also into the French royal house.

Wifehood brought with it its own contradictions. On the one hand, as Contessina Bardi, Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Clarice Orsini all discovered, it could provide an opportunity for them to exert a good deal of influence with the men of their marital family and others because of the authority each derived from her domestic responsibilities and familial relationships. But on the other hand, the woman concerned sometimes had to divide her loyalties between her natal and marital families which could have both negative and positive consequences, as it did for Lucrezia Salviati, or be of great advantage to both families as occurred in the case of Clarice Orsini.

The situation was far clearer for Medici widows who, having decided not to 'abandon' their children and return to their natal families as other widows were sometimes forced to do, could exercise tremendous influence with their sons and others in the Medici regime by virtue of their maternal authority. Their greater financial independence gave them an opportunity to engage in religious and cultural patronage on their own rather than together with their spouses, although by the late 1480s this opportunity to act independently as cultural patrons was also available to some of the wives and married daughters of the Medici men. And in the mid-1510s, Alfonsina Orsini was given a rare opportunity as a woman to build a palace in Rome as well as to supervise major building works and to organise a papal visit to Florence.

Changes over time in the political culture of Florence had a significant effect on the extent of the power and influence of the Medici women. From the mid-1460s important government decisions were sometimes made in the privacy of the Medici palace, away from the 'public' all-male centre of republican power, the *Palazzo della Signoria*. Consequently, this move gave Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Clarice Orsini greater opportunities to act. By the early sixteenth century, the 'private' space belonging to the Medici now included the papal court of Rome, thereby enabling such women as Lucrezia Salviati, Maddalena Cibo, Contessina Ridolfi, Alfonsina Orsini, and Maria Salviati to win entry to this quintessential 'male', 'public', space, with the opportunity to use their access to it to gain greater benefits for their relatives and clients than had been possible for the women of the earlier generation.

Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Alfonsina Orsini, both of whom were widows and mothers of leaders of the Medici regime, were the two most powerful women under study. The differing receptions by contemporaries of these women's actions point to the constraints and contradictions of their power. Only certain actions or roles were acceptable for women and harsh criticism was meted out to those seen to transgress them. Lucrezia's generally positive reception as mother and saint contrasted sharply with Alfonsina's identification with avarice and tyranny. Effectively, the comparison was akin to that between good and evil, saint and sinner, the Virgin Mary and Eve.

The differences between the two Medici regimes' approaches to rule are also exemplified in both women's contrasting representations, and their very different ways of exercising power. The Medici in the mid-fifteenth century constructed themselves as Florence's holy family, legitimating their rule by aligning themselves with traditional religious *exempla*. Lucrezia's identification, then, as mother and saint, was crucial to the legitimisation of Medici rule at the time. The Medici regime of the early sixteenth century, on the other hand, had claimed the chair of St Peter, and of course could claim sanctity openly and formally. Thereafter the Medici could adopt a more seigneurial mode of government, which, in turn, gave Alfonsina the opportunity to rule. Her general unpopularity reflected Florentine unhappiness with the Medici, who, contemporaries thought, selfishly abjured republican tradition, failing to consult with Florence's chief citizens or to give audiences and, moreover, allowing their city to be ruled by a woman who was also a foreigner. Alfonsina's authority was evidence in itself, many believed, of the Medici's disdain for Florence's republican traditions, and their desire to rule as *signori*.

Lucrezia's and Maria Salviati's later effective use of a more traditional Florentine model of feminine intercession at the court of Pope Clement VII to promote the interests of their husbands and sons, confirms the impression that even in the last years of the Medici regime before the Principate, the Medici women could exert power, without incurring censure, only within limited and negotiated spaces. This method of operation, moreover, had more lasting effects than Alfonsina Orsini's more seigneurial mode of exercising power and therefore was ultimately more successful.

The ability of the women in the Medici family in the early sixteenth century to move beyond Florence to the male sanctum of the papal court in Rome, and their earlier efforts to have the Medici men recalled from exile, were signposts of change. But, as always, their exercise of power was generally most acceptable to contemporaries when it conformed to the traditional model of female patronage by intercession, with women exerting power and influence with their husbands, sons and others by virtue of their authority as wives and mothers. The family's seigneurial ambitions and character — for all that the Medici worked within the boundaries of a republican constitution — were made clear by the very actions of its women members in the public realm that sometimes broke with previous tradition.

The Medici women's various uses of power and their exercise of influence over a century, therefore, were central to the history of Florence and its citizens'

relationship to the Medici more generally. They had to negotiate and manipulate particular cultural ideals of womanhood in order to support and assist their men folk. As women, they could never rule in their own right, and so, although some had considerable power and authority, they had to justify their participation in the political sphere by working to defend and protect the interests of their male relatives and worthy clients, rather than any interests of their own.

Their gender determined the degree of the Medici women's access to power and the ways they could use it. It remains an open question as to whether any, or indeed all, of the women of the Medici family wished to do more to advance themselves. The actions of Alfonsina Orsini in the first two decades of the sixteenth century and those of Lucrezia and Maria Salviati in the 1520s and 1530s, suggest that they may have welcomed an opportunity to do so. But even if we cannot know with any degree of certainty how much personal power individual women of the Medici family may have wished to acquire, we do know that their familial power was of vital importance. The Medici women successfully managed to negotiate the male space of the public realm, creating opportunities to act for themselves through the use of their positions as mothers of, and intercessors with, powerful men. They were thereby an integral part of the Medici regime.

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