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From France to Florence: Marriage Strategies, Political Education and *Raison d'État* in the Case of Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans

BY VINCENZO LAGIOIA

This essay examines the figure of the Grand Duchess Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans and her unhappy marriage. Inserted within the rationale of raison d'état, her biographical narrative reveals important aspects of this royal princess's political education. The decisions she took relate back to the peculiarities related to her education and upbringing during the events of the Fronde. Further, the close bond with her mother, Marguerite of Lorraine, duchess of Orléans, and her mother's interventions during the Florentine period, help us to understand the political dimensions of the actions Marguerite-Louise subsequently undertook. Several contemporary sources, notably a lengthy letter from an anonymous former spiritual guide, provide a deeper understanding of her rank and her cultural milieu, the product of a princess's education in an era of political turmoil and changing attitudes towards elite women's behaviour.

There has been a considerable amount of historiographical reflection concerning marriage strategies, women's education in politics and their relationship with the notion of *raison d'état* within the framework of the high aristocracy and the great ruling dynasties of Europe.¹ Women, rank and function at court are themes that have particularly influenced recent studies, locating research not only within the study of history, but also within related interdisciplinary fields. In a book that traces a pathway between symbols and power in the profiles of French queens from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Fanny Cosandey recently pointed out the value of rank and heritage as pervasive factors of building collective identities, and of the political education of these royal women to keep them rigidly in line with the imperatives of social order.² Jonathan Spangler's *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* is a more complex work, about a dynasty as a whole, that contains a survey of women's education in politics in which he points out that the preparation of young princesses for marriage constitutes the very aim of their political education, training them to adapt to their role in life.³ This implies an education to prepare a young woman to undertake the appropriate role and the correct rank,⁴ to gain an understanding of ceremonial laws, and to expect marriages that were often unhappy but strategic in terms of familial and dynastic politics.

1 I thank Jonathan Spangler for his essential help in producing an English text that otherwise would not have been so accurate.

2 Fanny Cosandey, 'La reine en ses terres: l'exemple de Catherine de Médicis', in Maria Teresa Guerrini, Vincenzo Lagioia and Simona Negruzzo (eds), *Nel solco di Teodora. Pratiche, modelli e rappresentazioni del potere femminile dall'antico al contemporaneo* (Milan, 2020), pp. 180-90; see also Fanny Cosandey, *Le rang. Préséances et hiérarchies dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 2016).

3 Jonathan Spangler, *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 125-62.

4 Cosandey, *Le rang*, pp. 162ff.

Nevertheless, it is not easy to outline the specific educational pathways taken by princesses of the great European princely families between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Isabelle Poutrin and Marie-Karine Schaub point out that women were taught notions of Christian morality necessary for the harmony of the wider social body, as well as foreign languages, Latin, geography and mathematics. Men were taught these subjects as well, but were also given military training.⁵ The history of one's own dynasty was an important element that characterised the education of princesses with regard in particular to the marital alliance, as well as the history of the family of choice. But there were political aspects as well. Although the Oratorian Jacques Joseph Duguet (1649–1733) believed that women should be absolutely excluded from state government because—according to him—their disposition was not conducive to that role, and that those who did hold power did so only because their rank or the concessions made by their consorts somehow allowed such a possibility,⁶ a re-examination of the histories of princesses, queens and regents has shown us that the virtues and practices of these women, who, acting as their role required, did indeed make a difference in the very political space in which power manifests itself.⁷ As a case study of this phenomenon, the biographical—and quite political—story of Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans, a cousin of Louis XIV, daughter of Gaston d'Orléans and Marguerite de Lorraine, helps us see in a paradigmatic way how the combined attitudes towards court life, rank and marital strategy also contributed to the development of a 'raison d'état' education of royal princesses in this period (fig. 1).

Educated for Freedom: From the Lorraines to the Medicis

After Mass one day in 1677, Louis XIV, the absolute monarch himself, approached Carlo Antonio Gondi, the resident envoy of Cosimo III, grand duke of Tuscany, and entrusted his thoughts to the minister, who carefully recorded the precise words: 'The King, talking about his cousin—the Grand Duchess—said that we should not take any notice of her mood, and that it did not surprise him, considering the education given to her by her mother, who let her do whatever she wanted, which could not have produced any other outcomes.'⁸

5 Isabelle Poutrin and Marie-Karine Schaub (eds), *Femmes et pouvoir politique. Les princesses d'Europe XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Rosny-sous-Bois, 2006), pp. 40-1. See also Fanny Cosandey and Isabelle Poutrin (eds), *Monarchies française et espagnole, 1550–1714* (Paris, 2000); Maria Pia Paoli, "'Mutar paese". Il potere discreto di Caterina Medici Gonzaga, duchessa di Mantova e Monferrato', in Chiara Continisio and Raffaele Tamalio (eds), *Donne Gonzaga a Corte. Reti istituzionali, pratiche culturali e affari di governo* (Rome, 2018), pp. 283-306.

6 Duguet writes: 'But one suffers from those enterprising and skillful women, full of designs for themselves and their houses, who, authorised by their birth or by the positions held by their husbands, fill the Court with movements and intrigues; this is what I mean by a government in which women have a great part; and the Prince is willing to prevent favour, contention, partiality, interest and passion from prevailing.' ('Mais s'il souffre que des femmes entreprenantes, adroites, pleines de desseins pour elles et pour leurs maisons, autorisées par leur naissance ou par les emplois de leurs maris, remplissent la Cour de mouvemens et d'intrigues; c'est ce que j'entens par un Gouvernement où les femmes ont beaucoup de part; et le Prince veut bien impossible d'empêcher que la faveur, la brigue, les partialitez, l'interêt, et les passions n'y dominant'), in Jacques Joseph Duguet, *Institution d'un Prince; ou Traité des qualitez des vertus et des devoirs d'un Souverain* (Leiden, 1739), pp. 40ff. For more information, see Caroline Chopelin-Blanc, 'L'Institution d'un Prince de Duguet, un traité d'éducation à la charnière des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', *Chrétiens et sociétés* 18 (2012), pp. 19-38.

7 Cesarina Casanova, *Regine per caso. Donne al governo in età moderna* (Rome-Bari, 2014), esp. pp. v-xxi.

8 Archivio di Stato di Firenze [hereafter ASF], *Mediceo del Principato*, 4769, dispatch of resident Carlo Antonio Gondi, 21 January 1677 (not numbered). 'Il re parlando della cugina granduchessa disse che dell'umore di essa non era da farsi caso ed egli non essere sorpreso mentre l'educazione datale da sua madre, che lasciava farle quello che voleva, non poteva produrre altro fatto.'



FIGURE 1 Portrait of Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans, by Justus Sustermans, 1675
(Fondazione Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici)

The 'outcomes' they were talking about was the difficult marriage and separation between the King's cousin and the Grand Duke. Born in Blois on 28 July 1645, Marguerite-Louise was the eldest daughter of the second marriage of Gaston, duke of Orléans, to Marguerite de Lorraine.⁹ Gaston, the brother of Louis XIII, had produced five children from his union

9 On the Grand Duchess, see Emile Rodocanachi, *Les infortunes d'une petite-fille d'Henri IV. Marguerite d'Orléans Grande Duchesse de Toscane (1645-1721)* (Paris, 1902); Emilio Robiony, *Gli ultimi dei Medici e la successione al Granducato di Toscana* (Florence, 1905), pp. 41-58; Gaetano Pieraccini, *La stirpe de' Medici di Cafaggiolo* (Firenze, 1925), vol. II, pp. 661ff; Françoise Decroisette, 'Les fêtes du mariage de Cosme III avec Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans a Florence, 1661', in Jean Jacquot and Elie Konigson (eds), *Les fêtes de la Renaissance* (Paris,

with the sister of the duke of Lorraine, four daughters and one son: Marguerite-Louise, who married the heir to the grand duke of Tuscany in June 1661; Elizabeth-Marguerite who married Louis-Joseph de Lorraine, duke of Guise; Françoise-Madeleine who married Charles Emmanuel II, duke of Savoy; Marie-Anne, Mademoiselle de Chartres, who died young; and Jean-Gaston, duke of Valois who also died prematurely. Anne-Marie-Louise of Montpensier, the well-known ‘La Grande Mademoiselle’, was much older, the fruit of Gaston’s union with his first wife, Marie of Bourbon-Montpensier.

Little is known of Marguerite-Louise’s youth and upbringing, and much of the information that has come down to us is obtained from the heavily biased *Mémoires* of Mlle de Montpensier, her half-sister. One of the Grand Duchess’s biographers, Emile Rodocanachi, considers that the court of the duke and duchess of Orléans at the Château of Blois — seen as an ‘alternative’ political space during the years of the Fronde — was disorganised and the upbringing of the Princess poorly supervised.¹⁰ Montpensier agrees, commenting on how her step-mother brought up her half-sisters: ‘Madame would see her daughters for half an hour in the morning and evening; she would say nothing to them except: stand up straight; lift up your heads. This is all the education she gave them.’¹¹ According to Montpensier, her instructions were careless, superficial and distracted, and yet, careful examination of the documentation present in the archives reveals another image of the mother of Princess Marguerite-Louise and an attitude that is by no means trivial. She was attentive to her own dynastic interests (those of the House of Lorraine), and tenacious and determined towards her consort in pursuing a union for her daughter that was both desired and happy, albeit opposed by the King.

In 1661, the dowager duchess of Orléans (Gaston had died the year before) was present for the marriage negotiations for her daughters, whose subsequent histories show their precise function as political instruments in the service of the House of Bourbon. Indeed, to all intents and purposes, Marguerite de Lorraine was herself an educational example in a well-defined setting. Sophie Vergnes conjures in several passages the image of Marguerite of Lorraine in her subjective identity taking on herself the political and collective construction of the rebellious women in her social circle.¹² The political education of a princess was an education for her role, as a function of dynasticism, in compliance with social laws. This was of

1975), vol. III, pp. 421-36; Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana. I Medici* (Turin, 1976), pp. 465ff; Harold Acton, *The Last Medici* (London, 1932); Jean-Claude Waquet, ‘L’échec d’un mariage: Marguerite-Louise d’Orléans et Côme de Médicis’, in Poutrin and Schaub (eds), *Femmes et pouvoir politique*, pp. 120-32; Maria Pia Paoli, ‘Marguerite d’Orléans, Granduchessa di Toscana’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. LXX (Rome, 2008), pp. 166-69; Enza Biagini, ‘Due straniere alla corte medicea. La camicia bruciata di Anna Banti: romanzo storico e finzione biografica’, in Giulia Calvi and Riccardo Spinelli (eds), *Le donne Medici nel sistema europeo delle Corti. XVI–XVIII secolo* (Firenze, 2008), vol. II, pp. 551-66; Maria Pia Paoli, ‘Di madre in figlio: per una storia dell’educazione alla corte dei Medici’, *Annali di Storia di Firenze* III (2008), esp. pp. 121-25; Vincenzo Lagioia, ‘La verità delle cose’. *Margherita Luisa D’Orléans: donna e sovrana d’Ancien Régime* (Rome, 2015).

10 Rodocanachi, *Les infortunes d’une petite-fille d’Henri IV*, p. 12. For the alternative political space of the duke and duchess of Orléans in the 1650s, see Georges Dethan, *La vie de Gaston d’Orléans* (Paris, 1992), pp. 261-85; Jonathan Spangler, *Monsieur. Second Sons in the Monarchy of France, 1550–1800* (Abingdon, 2022), pp. 106-8; 262-3.

11 Mlle de Montpensier, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1858-9), vol. III, p. 391. ‘Madame ne voyait ses filles qu’un demi quart d’heure le soir et autant le matin, et ne leur disait rien, sinon: Tenez-vous droites; levez la tête. Voilà toute l’instruction qu’elle leur donnoit.’

12 Sophie Vergnes, *Les Frondeuses: Une Révolte au féminin (1643–1661)* (Paris, 2013), pp. 129-30. From another angle, Jonathan Spangler reveals interesting particulars about the duchess of Orléans, in particular her spiritual education and religious networks, not only from a personal perspective but also a familial one, in ‘Bridging the Gaps: The Household Account Books of Marguerite de Lorraine, Duchesse d’Orléans’, *Annales de l’Est* 2 (2017), pp. 69-85.

utmost importance as a marriage of state, and a princess's ability to fulfil this role is representative of the scope of that education. This required practice more than ideology, and knowledge of the sufficient responses to ceremonial duties and their imperatives, rather than merely theoretical instruction. 'Spaces of freedom', as Waquet calls them, were permissible owing to the privilege of status, to those born to illustrious parents and houses.¹³ It was from Marguerite de Lorraine, Gaston d'Orléans and the aristocratic *frondeurs* that filled their court in the 1650s, that the young princess learnt the measure of the freedoms she could enjoy due to her rank, and educated herself accordingly.

The same 'political spaces', between privileges and responsibilities, and between public and private representations, specifically of women, could be formed around negotiations that were shaped by the manners that characterized an elite woman and indicated her education. A virtuous princess, capable in her duties, conquered spaces not only recognized by law or related to historical-political circumstances, but through the exemplarity of her qualities.¹⁴

One of the experiences of the young Marguerite-Louise, known before her marriage as 'Mademoiselle d'Orléans', reveals the obvious features of well-defined political strategy. Her half-sister Montpensier recounts the main facts of this story in her *Mémoires*. One of the Princess's cousins, the future Duke Charles V of Lorraine, son of Marguerite's brother Nicolas-François de Lorraine (and of Marguerite's cousin, Claude de Lorraine) — who later became a famous general, known for his valour at the battle of St. Gotthard in 1664, and alongside the Polish king John III Sobieski at the liberation of Vienna in 1683 — was staying at the court of Blois in Spring 1660 and developed a tender affection for his cousin Marguerite-Louise, which she reciprocated.¹⁵ Cardinal Mazarin, the King's representative, and the bishop of Béziers, Piero Bonsi, extraordinary ambassador for Grand Duke Ferdinand II (and future cardinal), discussed the complicated matter of negotiating a marriage for the Princess d'Orléans with her mother. Initially, Marguerite de Lorraine had strongly favoured the Princess marrying her nephew, Charles of Lorraine, to re-fortify the kinship links between the houses of Bourbon and Lorraine; however, after pressure from Mazarin, she was obliged to yield to the King's wishes for a Tuscan alliance. Marriage terms with the House of Medici were discussed; Marguerite de Lorraine negotiated a dowry payment for her daughter that would not be too onerous. In her memoirs, Mlle de Montpensier—herself a frequent subject of marital negotiation and eighteen years older than her half-sister—expressed her disapproval of the behaviour of the young Charles, presenting his suit independently, which she considered reckless. Indeed, as a prince whose dynastic lands had only so recently been occupied by French troops, it seemed clear that annoying the Sun King was not a good idea.¹⁶

It is in this narrative within the *Mémoires* of La Grande Mademoiselle that we can see aspects that are particularly significant with regard to the political education of Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans that reveal the delicate balance sought by Louis XIV between the needs of the two dynasties, Bourbon and Lorraine, given the long association of the

13 Waquet, 'L'échec d'un mariage', p. 130.

14 Helen Matheson-Pollock, Joanne Paul and Catherine Fletcher (eds), *Queenship and Counsel in Early Modern Europe* (London/Brighton, 2018), pp. 1-10. See also Amanda L. Capern (ed.), *The Routledge History of Women in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2020).

15 Laurent Jalabert, *Charles V de Lorraine ou la quête de l'État (1643-1690)* (Metz, 2017), pp. 104-10.

16 Anne-Marie-Louise de Bourbon, duchess of Montpensier, *Mémoires de Mlle de Montpensier*, in *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France* (Paris, 1825), vol. XLIII, pp. 15-6.

Medicis with both families.¹⁷ In June 1661, Marguerite-Louise received the order from the King to leave France for Tuscany within only a few days. The negotiations were over and the wedding was to be celebrated. The Princess was *not* to be considered part of the broader Lorraine dynasty, her mother's family, but was destined for the Medici court as part of French foreign policy. But Marguerite-Louise made one last plea for her own choice. Montpensier gives a particularly emotional account of the reaction of the distraught Princess. She threw herself at her royal uncle's feet and professed that she would be as a faithful daughter to him, and an obedient spouse to her cousin Charles, if only this possibility could be granted to her.¹⁸ This was a clear reflection of the spaces of the privileged, and perhaps even the result of an education stressing aristocratic freedoms, which the Princess had learned from her mother who in her own marriage had fought particularly hard for her own marriage choice against nearly insurmountable hostilities.¹⁹ Mlle de Montpensier once again expresses her outrage regarding such freedoms that she herself does not approve of (or at least that had been denied to her). Despite her youthful passion, Marguerite-Louise felt she could rely on the privileges of rank and the ancient glories of the Lorraine family, and its famous cadets, the dukes of Guise. The political complexity is revealed even more clearly in the pages of the tutor of her erstwhile suitor, Charles of Lorraine, the marquis de Beauvau:

The King had decided to marry Mademoiselle d'Orléans to the Prince of Tuscany: it was in vain that he [Charles] hoped to marry her ... Madame the Duchess of Orléans would have liked to be able to give this satisfaction to her daughter Mademoiselle [marrying her to the Prince of Lorraine], seeing her so reluctant to marry the Prince of Tuscany; but in the end the King did not align his plans according to the passion of these young lovers.²⁰

17 The matrilineal connections between the houses of France, Tuscany and Lorraine has been described as 'une dorsale catholique européenne'. Jean-François Dubost, *Marie de Médicis: la reine dévoilée* (Paris, 2009), p. 73.

18 Mlle de Montpensier recounts a further episode of Marguerite-Louise pleading with her other uncle, Charles IV of Lorraine: 'The Count of Furstemberg [...] told me that my sister had no desire to break off the marriage negotiations with Tuscany until she heard that M. de Lorraine [Duke Charles IV] wanted me to marry his nephew [Prince Charles]; [...] that she threw herself onto her knees and said to him, 'Uncle, think of what you are doing in handing over your states [Lorraine and Bar] to your nephew to marry my sister; she is proud and full of vainglory: she will think that you are doing yourself too much honour in receiving them there, and will drive you away from there when she is mistress; she will have no regard for you and will never accept that you marry Marianne [Pajot, the daughter of two members of Montpensier's household]. If you want to give me your nephew, I will live with you in a much more submissive way: you will marry Marianne and I will live with her with all the tenderness and respect imaginable. So please stop this business with my sister and think about mine. You will find excuses to free yourself from your commitments: my sister's contempt for your nephew is a reasonably good one.' *Montpensier*, vol. XLIII, pp. 15-16. 'le comte de Furstemberg, [...] me conta que ma soeur n'avoit eu d'envie de rompre son mariage de Toscane que lorsqu'elle avoit su que M. de Lorraine me vouloit marier avec son neveu; [...] qu'elle s'étoit jetée à ses genoux, lui avoit dit "Mon oncle, vous ne songez pas à ce que vous faites de donner vos Etats à votre neveu pour épouser ma soeur; elle est fière et glorieuse elle croira vous faire trop d'honneur de les recevoir, et elle vous en chassera lorsqu'elle y sera la maîtresse elle n'aura aucune considération pour vous, et ne souffrira jamais que vous épousiez Marianne. Si vous voulez me donner votre neveu, je vivrai avec vous d'une manière bien plus soumise vous épouserez Marianne, et je vivrai avec elle avec toute la tendresse et le respect imaginable. Ainsi je vous prie de rompre l'affaire de ma soeur, et de penser à la mienne. Vous ne manquerez pas de prétextes pour sortir de vos engagements le mépris que ma soeur marque pour votre neveu en est un bien raisonnable.'"

19 Dethan, *La vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, pp. 101-6. Marguerite married Gaston in 1632 against the express wishes of Louis XIII, and was kept from entering France for over a decade, while the validity of her marriage was debated in the seminaries of Paris and the ecclesiastical courts of Rome. See Spangler, *Monsieur*, pp. 102-6.

20 'le Roi ayant résolu le Mariage de Mademoiselle d'Orléans avec le Prince de Toscane: c'étoit en vain qu'il esperoit de l'épouser. [...] Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans eut bien désiré elle-même pouvoir donner cette satisfaction à Mademoiselle sa fille, luy voyant une si grande répugnance à épouser le Prince de Toscane; mais le Roy ne mesuroit pas ses desseins avec la passion de ces jeunes amans', *Mémoires du marquis de Beauvau pour servir à l'Histoire de Charles IV Duc de Lorraine et de Bar* (Cologne, Chez Pierre Marteau, 1690), pp. 189-90.

The plans of Louis XIV and his ministers were ultimately quite different from those of the dowager duchess of Orléans; their political objectives differed greatly from the plans of a house (Lorraine) that, while maintaining its dignity and its history after the restoration of its sovereignty after 1660, could no longer impose its own choices. Yet, as we shall see, the resistance of the Princess would later manifest those possibilities of freedom, revealing a political education with very deep roots.

'But we are in Italy': Educated for Court Etiquette

A sufficient knowledge of etiquette, ceremonial duties at court, the performative representations of power, and the ability to adapt to all these as the needs required, were the aims of a political education for any princess of Europe's ruling houses. A princess of royal blood shows she is trained in the obligations of her rank precisely by responding to all these things with meticulous attention.²¹ The Princess d'Orléans was ready for Florence, and the Grand Duke's galleys led by his brother Prince Mattias welcomed the bride in the port of Marseille, as the Prince himself recounts:

Having heard the salute [from the city] I entered the boat with Monsignor Bonsi, the Marquis Riccardi, three of my knights with the Marquis Albizi, and I took myself to the part of the ship reserved for the Bride. I gave precedence to the Marquis Albizi who bore the letters [formal credentials] of the Most Serene Bridegroom, and then I greeted her with a reverence, as a private Knight. [...] I saw she was courteous, and a little tired.²²

Prince Cosimo, the groom, was suffering from German measles and, as announced by the Marquis Gabriello Riccardi, ambassador of the Grand Duke, would not be able to welcome the Princess to Livorno, the chief port city of Tuscany. His absence was unavoidable, and the Ambassador was keen to reiterate how important it was to dispel any unnecessary gossip regarding this inconvenience. In a letter sent to Florence, Riccardi reports his observations about her reactions to this news, and reveals he had no doubt about the qualities of the Princess: 'in many situations, she has given clear signs that she is very discreet.'²³ Marguerite-Louise had discretion, suggesting prudence and moderation. Soon after, Giovanni Battista Gondi, a leading grand ducal official wrote from Florence to Riccardi,

21 The bibliography is extensive, and I will mention just a few sources: Maria Antonietta Visceglia and Catherine Brice (eds), *Cérémoniel et rituel à Rome (XVIe–XIXe siècle)* (Rome, 1997); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Saint Simon ou le système de la Cour* (Paris, 1997); Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds), *La Corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento. 'Teatro' della politica europea* (Rome, 1998); Silvia Tofani, 'Composizione e cerimoniale della Corte Medicea (1650–1670)', in Sergio Bertelli and Renato Pasta (eds), *Vivere a Pitti. Una reggia dai Medici ai Savoia* (Florence 2003), pp. 109–34; Nicolas Le Roux, 'Codes sociaux et culture de cour à la Renaissance', *Le Temps des savoirs. Revue interdisciplinaire de l'Institut universitaire de France*, "Le Code", IV (2002), pp. 131–48; Monica Ferrari (ed.), *Costumi educativi nelle corti europee: (XIV–XVIII secolo)* (Pavia, 2010); Pierpaolo Merlin, *Nelle stanze del re. Vita e politica nelle corti europee tra XV e XVIII secolo* (Roma, 2010); James Ronald Mulryne, Maria Ines Aliverti and Anna Maria Testaverde (eds), *Ceremonial Entries in Early Modern Europe: The Iconography of Power* (London/New York, 2016); Marcello Fantoni, *Italian Courts and European Culture* (Amsterdam, 2022). On the historiographical debate on court culture, see the enlightening essay by Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Italian Historiography on the Courts: A Survey*, on the web: www.enbach.eu/en/essays/essays/italian-historiography-on-the-courts-a-survey.aspx.

22 ASFi, *Miscellanea Medicea*, 298, insert 7, c. [carta] 101v, 8 June 1661, Mattias de' Medici to Grand Duke Ferdinand II: 'sentito il saluto [della città], entrai in una filuca con monsignor Bonsi, marchese Riccardi tre de miei cavalieri con il marchese Albizzi e mi portai al quartiere della Sposa, feci prima passare il marchese Albizzi con la lettera del Serenissimo Sposo e poi io la riverii, come Cavaliere privato; [...] la trovai cortese, e un poco stracca.'

23 *Ibid.*, c. 145v, letter of Riccardi, same date: 'havendo in tante occasioni dato segni così evidenti della sua discretezza.'

calling for the intervention of Monsignor Bonsi in order to prepare the Princess's soul for the disappointment of the absence of her new spouse on her arrival: 'There is no doubt that because of the prudence of the Lady Princess, so well known, she is not heading in this direction [towards disappointment] due to any difficulties she is experiencing.'²⁴ On 11 June, a man in the entourage of Prince Mattias wrote to Gondi: 'The *Serenissima* Mistress Bride is very benign and proud while maintaining the right decorum; her great birth [her dynastic rank] makes her worthy of it; such dignity and greatness are proportionate to what she will have to sustain, and I believe that she will soon be able to adapt well to Tuscan customs.'²⁵ The qualities of the Princess d'Orléans augured well for the future: the benign nature that translates into courtesy, pleasantness and amiability; and pride and decorum as well as behaviour worthy of her great birth. What the Princess displayed was what she was educated for, virtues that in dynastic marriages took on political value to the extent that she had, her love for Prince Charles of Lorraine cast aside, swiftly adapted to the role for which she was born and chosen. At least at this stage, the Princess d'Orléans appeared in such a manner, and the men in the service of the Grand Duke, full of hope, reported what they saw.

Nevertheless, small misunderstandings soon arose concerning some aspects of Italian etiquette that differed from French customs. During lunch, the Princess wished to be accompanied by one of the ladies close to her, a concession that seemed inappropriate to the Marquis Riccardi, while Bonsi found it tolerable.²⁶ Similarly, the kiss of greeting that was to be given to all the ladies of her entourage by Prince Cosimo was a custom used in France but not at the Tuscan court:

Even in the Italian custom the husband kisses the bride the first time he goes to meet her, and if the Prince does not use such courtesy with the Bride, these Ladies would be offended; if then His Highness must also kiss Madame d'Angolem [Angoulême], all would like to be kissed, for this is the custom in their country; if it were not done in this way they would be hurt by it, but we are in Italy and we have made it clear that we want to act according to our own customs.²⁷

24 *Ibid.*, c. 149r, Gondi to Riccardi, same date: 'non restando alcun dubbio che la prudenza si ben conosciuta della Signora Principessa non sia per pigliare in buona parte questa risoluzione cagionata dalla forza del mal presente.'

25 *Ibid.*, c. 106r, letter of 10 June 1661: 'La Serenissima Signora Padrona Sposa è benignissima, et fiera con sostenere però il decoro, et hà parte degna della sua gran nascita, et proporzionata alla grandezza che doverà sostenere, e giudico, che ben presto si accomoderà al usanza toscana.'

26 'Madame de Belloy has some pretensions about how she should be treated, and Monsignor Bonsi asked me this morning if she would eat with the Serenissima because in France it is customary for her to do so, but I told him that it would not be appropriate in Italy, and that in the court of Tuscany it would absolutely not be fitting, and I invited him not to encourage such requests, but I still do not know the result of it; among the reasons he presented to me there is the one that since she is going back to France in a few days, it would be good for her to go back with a sweet mouth'. [satisfied], *ibid.*, c. 127r. 'Questa Madama di Belue è quella che hà qualche pretensione di trattamenti, et Monsignor Bonsi stamattina m'ha domandato se ella mangerà mai con la Serenissima et che in Francia usa, io gli ho detto liberamente di no, et che in Italia, ò almeno nella Corte di Toscana non usa, et ho cercato, che non promuova questa cosa, non so quello si farà; fra le ragioni, che dice è che dovendosene tornare fra pochi giorni in Francia è bene se ne tornino à bocca dolce'.

27 *Ibid.*, c. 131r. 'anco all'italiana, la prima volta che si va a visitare la Sposa, il Marito la bacia, et se il signor Principe non usassi tal cortesia con la Sposa, queste Dame si troverebbero offese; se poi Sua Altezza deve usare anco il bacio con Madama d'Angolem, me ne rimetto, dico bene, che tutte volentieri sarebbero bacciate, perché così usa nel loro paese, et non si facendo sarebbe disgusto, ma noi siamo in Italia, et si è tenuto forte da noi altri di fare all'italiana'. Regarding the Medici court, Marcello Fantoni has noted that 'in the *Diari di Etichetta* we can see that the Tuscan court of the first half of the seventeenth century had already developed a precise ceremonial structure, at least seventy years before Louis XIV ascended to the throne. Given the splendour of Louis's court, it famously set an example to other European sovereigns, but the organization of such 'structure' had already been established a long time before. Its origin must, in my opinion, be sought elsewhere and in a period certainly prior to the seventeenth century. What

Yet things soon settled down. Through careful use of sources in the archives, from the *Memorie fiorentine* by Settimalani to Bonazzini's *Diario*, from *Carte Stroziane* to *Miscellanee* and *Guardaroba Medicea*, we can reconstruct the day-to-day times for ceremonial behaviour and the presence of the Princess within the court structure. Her respect for the correct forms and the very public dimension of her activities confirms the initial adherence of Marguerite-Louise to the political project established through her for an alliance between France and Tuscany. In her performance, she was smoothly operating within the usual framework established for dynastic partnerships between the great princely families of Europe.²⁸

The first period of Marguerite-Louise's married life was spent in apparent calm; the Princess was present at public functions and always seemed to behave in an appropriate manner.²⁹ In 1663, Prince Ferdinando was born, a son and heir for the Medici family; in 1667, Anna Maria Luisa was born; finally, the last child, Gian Gastone was born, in 1677. Yet history would ultimately see this as a sterile generation, unhappy and characterized by illness and adverse circumstances. Indeed, the last grand duke, Gian Gastone, would have no children and would also be forced to separate from his wife Anna Maria Francesca of Saxe-Lauenburg due to insuperable incompatibilities.³⁰ But long before this, their mother, the Princess d'Orléans had complained about incompatibility regarding her marriage with Cosimo. As Riguccio Galluzzi, the historian of the Grand Duchy, points out, what once was kept under wraps so as not to compromise appearances, at some point became known to the world, and the news of an impending separation and an uncontrolled malaise transcended the borders of Tuscany: 'Having been forced by authority to consent to this marriage, she was convinced that there had been a lack of freedom of consent and that the bond was null and void, and consequently that she was not obliged to respect the duties imposed on her in a legally contracted marriage.'³¹ The Princess opposed royal authority through her idealised 'spaces of freedom', once again attributable to her exalted rank which she felt she could use as a bargaining position.³² Her growing dissatisfaction with her life in Tuscany was compounded by the drastic reduction of her household and of her already quite moderate amusements — hardly comparable to those she had enjoyed in France — a refusal to allow her to attend meetings of the Consulta, the grand ducal privy council, and the continuing presence in government affairs of her mother-in-law, the Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere, in whom Cosimo placed a great deal of

Elias revealed for the court of Louis XIV cannot therefore be called historically original.' See Marcello Fantoni, 'Feticci di prestigio: il dono alla Corte Medicea', in Sergio Bertelli and Giuliano Crifò (eds), *Rituale Cerimoniale Etichetta* (Milan, 1985), p. 160. See also Silvia Tofani, *Composizione e cerimoniale della corte medicea (1650–1670)*, pp. 109–34; and Hélène Chauvineau, 'La corte medicea', in Jean Boutier, Sandro Landi and Olivier Rouchon (eds.), *Firenze e la Toscana. Genesi e trasformazione di uno stato (XIV–XIX)* (Florence, 2010; ed. orig. 2004), pp. 229–40.

28 Regarding this aspect of her early life in Florence, see Lagioia, 'La verità delle cose', pp. 63–94.

29 ASFi, *Guardaroba Medicea. Diario di Etichetta*, 6, c. 330r–332v.

30 See Patrizia Urbani, 'Il Principe nelle reti. Tutto è forza d'una fatale necessità', in Monica Bietti (ed.), *Gian Gastone (1671–1737). Testimonianze e scoperte sull'ultimo Granduca de' Medici* (Florence, 2008), pp. 21ff; Vincenzo Lagioia, "'Più celar non si poteva!'. L'immagine del granduca Gian Gastone tra libertinismo e dimensione politica', in Umberto Grassi, Vincenzo Lagioia and Gian Paolo Romagnani (eds), *Tribadi sodomiti invertite e invertiti pederasti femminelle ermafroditi ... per una storia dell'omosessualità, della bisessualità e delle trasgressioni di genere in Italia* (Pisa, 2017), pp. 69–92.

31 Riguccio Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici* (Firenze, 1830), vol. XV, Book VII, p. 183.

32 Waquet, "'Des accidents tout à fait extraordinaires et surprenans'", p. 124.

trust, but whose non-royal birth the Bourbon princess did not see as equal to her own.³³ The Florentine court saw this as a stubborn aversion to Italy and the court of Florence; for Louis XIV, as letters between the King and his cousin show us, they were unacceptable whims: ‘These are the situations that are unworthy of you and me, and I cannot allow your malaise to take away my protection and my consideration for you.’³⁴

The issues put forward by the Princess suggesting the nullity of the marriage reflect a political and educational dimension of her upbringing. The marriage and its validity, given the authority of the French sovereign and his precise will with regard to its celebration, recall not only the debates about marriage that took place at the Council of Trent, where there had been much discussion regarding free will,³⁵ but also the biographical details of her own mother, Marguerite de Lorraine, whose marriage to Gaston had been questioned because it had been undertaken without the consent of Louis XIII.³⁶ Maternal influence certainly had had a considerable effect on the education of the Princess, precisely in the field of marriage: in her daughter’s early years the ideas bubbling out of the movement in Paris known as the *précieuses* significantly affected the women of the Fronde and the Lorraine circle.³⁷ The request made by Marguerite-Louise d’Orléans to be included in the Consulta was certainly not a whim, since she was now the Grand Duchess (Grand Duke Ferdinand II died in May 1670), and had produced heirs, so she should have had the right to enter it. The bishop of Marseille, Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, the king of France’s extraordinary envoy, was sent as a mediator in a last-ditch attempt at a reconciliation in the spring of 1673. He pointed out that Marguerite-Louise’s mother-in-law had been willing to give up her seat in the Consulta in favour of her daughter-in-law. The Bishop believed that Marguerite-Louise’s request was driven by whims and not by a conscious desire to contribute to the government of the Grand Duchy.³⁸ It could perhaps be surmised that the qualities of the consort were not considered appropriate for the role.

The household of the Princess also had a political dimension, manifesting a presence around her of the House of Lorraine and the women most faithful to her mother, such as

33 *Relazioni inedite di ambasciatori lucchesi*, edited by A. Pellegrini (Lucca, 1901), pp. 217-22. In a report written by the bishop of Marseille, Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, sent to Florence by Louis XIV in the spring of 1673 to make one last attempt at a reconciliation between Marguerite-Louise and Cosimo III, we read: ‘Ses plaintes furent, qu’on luy avoit oste ses domestiques françois et allemands aussi bien que ses pierreries; que son logement estoit si incommode qu’elle n’avoit pas un cabinet ou se pouvoir retirer; qu’elle n’avoit point encore la Consulte quoy qu’elle deust presider au Conseil des Parties comme G. Duchesse regnante’, Célestin Douais, *La mission de M. de Forbin-Janson, évêque de Marseille, plus tard évêque de Beauvais, auprès du Grand Duc et de la Grande Duchesse de Toscane. Mars-Mai 1673. Récit d’un témoin* (Paris, 1904), p. 160.

34 *Œuvres de Louis XIV, Lettres particulières* (Paris 1806), vol. V, p. 511, Nancy, 22 August 1673: ‘ce sont des extrémités si peu dignes de vous et de moi, que je ne vous célerai pas que, si par malheur vous vous y portiez, vous ne devez plus attendre ni considération ni protection de ma part.’ See the secretariat report prepared by the ministers of the Grand Duke in ASFi, *Miscellanea Medicea*, 591, 19 (no date), cited in Lagioia, ‘La verità delle cose’, p. 226. For her long-lasting negative reputation, see Giuseppe Baccini, *Vita scandalosa di Margherita d’Orléans* (Milan, 1923).

35 See E. Christian Brugger, *The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent* (Washington, 2017); Philip L. Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology of Marriage from its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge, 2018).

36 See Pierre Gatulle, *Gaston d’Orléans. Entre mécénat et impatience du pouvoir* (Paris, 2012), pp. 133-7.

37 See Roger Lathullière, *La Préciosité. Étude historique et linguistique*, vol. I, *Position du problème. Les origines* (Genève, 1966); Carolyn C. Lougee, *Le paradis des femmes. Women, Salons and Social Stratification in Seventeenth Century France* (Princeton, 1976); Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier and Eliane Viennot (eds), *Royaume de fémynie. Pouvoirs, contraintes, espaces de liberté des femmes, de la Renaissance à la Fronde* (Paris, 1999); Roger Duchêne, *Les Précieuses ou comment l’esprit vint aux femmes* (Paris, 2001), pp. 124, 270.

38 Célestin Douais, *La mission de M. de Forbin-Janson* (Paris, 1904), p. 159.

the comtesse de Belloy.³⁹ This had been one of the sources of major conflict. In November 1663, on learning of the decision by Grand Duke Ferdinand II to send the ladies in the service of her daughter back to their homeland, Marguerite de Lorraine had written several letters, all similar, to the most important personages of the court: cardinals Giovan Carlo and Carlo de' Medici, Prince Leopoldo and Grand Duke Ferdinand and his consort Vittoria: 'you know very well that it was agreed that the number of my daughter's household would not be reduced and that they would be allowed to live in the French style. Breaking this promise made by the Grand Duke would cause me and my daughter a great deal of pain.'⁴⁰ Thus we see that, according to Marguerite de Lorraine, it was more appropriate for the Princess to live in the French way, as she had been brought up, and even more importantly, that political agreements should be respected.

In the years before the final separation, formalised with the signing of a contract on 26 December 1674 at the Villa di Castello, numerous mediators, lay and religious, were sent by the king of France and the dowager duchess of Orléans, notably the bishop of Marseille.⁴¹ In that same month (shortly before the Grand Duchess returned to Paris), Silvestro Arnolfini, the ambassador from Lucca, decried the rumours flying around the European courts about the Grand Duchess by writing about her qualities:

She possesses eminent prerogatives of mind and body; her body is formed of beauty and marvellous grace; all her actions inspire gracefulness; she exaggerates in courtesy. Honesty above all shines forth in Her Serene Highness, [and] even in the turmoil that she is experiencing, she is not overcome by malice. Her intelligence is admirable and the proof of this is that she has learned the German language and music in a short time.⁴²

His reference to learning German reveals another interesting indication of this princess's independent will: as she suggested herself to Louis XIV in a letter of January 1673, she had devised her own plan to leave Tuscany and travel to Bavaria where their cousin was the Electress, supposedly to join a convent, but perhaps in reality to meet up once more with Prince Charles of Lorraine, as indicated in a subsequent memorandum between Florentine officials.⁴³

Instructions from a Former Servant and the Role of Conscience

A letter sent to the grand princess of Tuscany by a person who presented himself as an former servant of the Orléans family reached Marguerite-Louise probably in the midst of the initial

³⁹ The countess de Belloy is more likely Marie-Françoise Autier de Villemontée, marquise de Villenauxe, who husband, the comte de Belloy, had been the Captain of the Guard of the late Gaston, duke of Orléans. For other Lorraine women serving in the household of Gaston's widow, see Spangler, 'Bridging the Gaps'.

⁴⁰ ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, 6265, unnumbered letters, as of 3 November 1663, Marguerite de Lorraine to Cardinal Carlo de' Medici. 'vous savez bien qui l'est convenue que le nombre quel a demeurez y l'est assez petits et mesmes ont convenit quel viveroit a la franceses, cela me seroit de la derniere douleur et a ma fille aussi si ont ne tenoit point ce que Monsieur le grand duc m'a proumis.'

⁴¹ Among the numerous mediators: the duchess of Angoulême (January 1662), the count of Sainte-Mesme (early 1664), Mr d'Aubeville (alongside Sainte-Mesme 1664), the marquis of Bellefonds (1664), the marquis of Créquy (May 1664), Fr. Cosme Feillet (December 1664), and the marquis du Deffans (May-June 1665). The latter returned to Florence in December 1672, joined, as we have seen, by Forbin-Janson, bishop of Marseille, in March 1673.

⁴² Amedeo Pellegrini (ed.), *Relazioni inedite di ambasciatori lucchesi* (Lucca, 1901), p. 216. 'possiede prerogative eminenti sì d'animo che di corpo; questo è formato di bellezza e grazia meravigliosa, tutte le sue azioni spirano leggiadria; e nella cortesia si può dire ch'ecceda. L'onestà soprannomodo risplende nell'A. S., né la malignità ha trovato luogo ne' presenti sconvolgimenti di darli braccia ben minima. L'intendimento suo è mirabile; e prova, fra l'altre cose, ne sono la lingua Tedesca e la Musica imparate da lei in brevissimo tempo'.

⁴³ Marguerite-Louise to Louis XIV, January 1673, cited in Douais, *La mission de M. de Forbin-Janson*, pp. 119-21; ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, 4771, n.n., written by Marucelli to Gondi from Florence, 2 September 1673.

unrest caused by the unhappy state of her marriage.⁴⁴ Its style and content suggest the author was a clergyman, someone close to her. It is likely the author was Monsignor Bonsi, with whom the Princess herself had previously had the chance to discuss the marriage to which she had been subjected. The letter begins:

Madame, the state in which Your Highness now finds herself deserves so great a reflection due to the rank you occupy in the world, and because everyone turns their eyes to you; I would not be able to consider myself a former household servant [‘Domestique’] of your Royal House, completely dedicated to your service, and fearing it would go against my conscience, if I did not humbly and with deep respect present to you what is important to your well-being, your glory and even your salvation.⁴⁵

It was a matter of conscience and, moreover, touched on the glory of a house that the writer had once served, and it was now once again a matter of concern for the reputation of her rank and for the salvation of her soul. Through the persuasive rhetoric of his letter, the anonymous clergyman tries to remind the young woman—who he says was ill-advised and therefore disrespected—of her duties, which touch the political dimension and once again revive thoughts about the good education she had been given, one that was crucial for the fulfilment of the task to which she had been called. Her great spirit, so well-formed, but tempered by a determined and tenacious will, had been twisted in a direction that made her a bad example ‘to the world’, and caused spiritual damage: ‘A determined will that does not want to follow the lights that your great spirit gives you.’

The *auctoritates* mentioned in this letter, which appears to be a set of instructions, include sacred writings (via indirect quotations) such as the Bible and the Church Fathers, among them Augustine and Bernard. The themes recall a Jansenist environment that permeated the Paris of Marguerite-Louise’s childhood, seen in the ideas and behaviours of women in the circle of *précieuses* that Vergnes defined as ‘Jansenists of love’, those who wished to be free to love God unrestricted by a formal ecclesiastical institution.⁴⁶

Almost like a squeeze on the conscience, the former servant and preceptor of the Princess aims particularly strong blows at the woman’s soul. He writes in closing: ‘The time that God gives us is short, and it is more necessary than ever to see one another as soon as possible because the abyss that awaits such a great soul by birth and by education is dark and profound.’ Indeed, such strongly worded spiritual advice was part of a political education. As mediators between God and princes, the confessors of the court, by means of their instructions, counsels and spiritual direction, fulfilled a role that in political terms, was necessary for the balance of a properly harmonized system of power.⁴⁷ Famously, Bishop Bossuet

44 Regarding a possible date for this letter (probably 1668–70), see Vincenzo Lagioia, ‘La sérénité de la Conscience ovvero la retorica della persuasione’, in Vincenzo Lagioia (ed.), *Poteri e linguaggi del sacro. Testi, oggetti e riti nell’Europa moderna* (Bologna, 2017), pp. 15–49.

45 ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, 6265, cc. n.n., s.d. (without date): ‘Madame, l’estat on se trouve presentement V.A. merite de si grandes reflexions tant à cause du rang, qu’Elle tient dans le monde qu’à cause que tout le monde tourne les yeux vers Elle que je ne me puis considerer comme un ancien Domestique de Vostre Maison Royale entierement devové à vostre service sans crainde que je ne blesse ma conscience, si je ne vous represente avec un tres humble et tres profond respect ce qui importe infiniment à vostre repos, à vostre gloire et mesme à vostre salut..’

46 Vergnes, *Les Frondeuses*, pp. 411–7. On the relationship between Jansenism and political education, see Guillaume de Thieulloy, ‘Le prince dans les traités d’éducation jansénistes’, in Ran Halévi (ed.), *Le savoir du prince. Du Moyen-Âge aux Lumières* (Paris, 2002), pp. 261–93.

47 See Flavio Rurale (ed.), *I religiosi a corte. Teologia, politica e diplomazia in antico regime* (Rome, 1998); Pierre Benoist, *La monarchie ecclésiastique. Le clergé de cour en France à l’époque moderne* (Paris, 2013); Nicole Reinhardt, *Voices of*

and later Archbishop Fénelon wrote to Louis XIV in the frankest of terms. In writing to the King regarding bad advisors, Fénelon pointed out: ‘Have you not sought counsellors of all kinds, the most willing to flatter you in your highest ambitions, vanity, pomp, softness and artifice? You have had no difficulty believing in steadfast and disinterested men, who desire nothing from you and who do not let themselves be dazzled by your greatness, who would respectfully tell you all your truths and contradict you, to prevent you from making mistakes.’⁴⁸

The author of the anonymous letter to Marguerite-Louise d’Orléans continues: marriages of the ‘Great Ones’ are like clocks composed of perfect mechanisms. Everything holds together, everything works until an atom or a hair disturbs that perfect system so desired by Heaven.⁴⁹ In reminding her, with some severity, of the duties of a princess of this rank and her political role as consort of a prince, he also exalts the quality of the house that gave France two queens, and praises the devotion and virtues of such a Christian princess.⁵⁰

In his articulated reasoning, the author repeatedly dwells on the state in which the Princess finds herself, on her temporary separation from her consort which, although permitted by the Council of Trent, does not have sufficient justification. He suggests that bad advisers made her believe that a return to her former state of freedom was possible by virtue of her declared incompatibility of character. Could a princess of such exalted royal blood believe that earthly happiness was of greater importance than the eternal salvation and good of the people over whom she was destined to rule?

The first of your complaints, Madame, is that it is very difficult for a princess of your age to spend her life away from her customary activities and from those close to her. But is that not the ordinary fate of people of your condition? Is it not true that princesses are destined from the beginning for foreign alliances? Has something happened to you at this point that does not happen to a thousand others of your rank and often with

Conscience: Royal Confessors and Political Counsel in Seventeenth-Century Spain and France (Oxford, 2016). Regarding the period in general and the education of princes, see Claude Bontems (ed.), *Le Prince dans la France des XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris, 1965); Isabelle Flandrois, *L’Institution du Prince au début du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1982); Barbara Whitehead, *Women’s Education in Early Modern Europe: A History, 1500–1800* (New York, 1999); Jean Meyer, *L’éducation des princes du XVe au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2004); Pascale Mormiche, *Devenir prince. L’école du pouvoir en France (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2009).

48 ‘N’avez-vous point cherché les conseillers en tout genre, les plus disposés à vous flatter dans vos maximes d’ambition, de vanité, de faste, de mollesse et d’artifice? N’avez-vous point eu peine à croire les hommes fermes et désintéressés, qui ne desirant rien de vous, et ne se laissant point éblouir par votre grandeur, vous auroient dit avec respect toutes vos vérités, et vous auroient contredit, pour vous empêcher de faire des fautes’, François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, *Directions pour la conscience d’un roy* (Paris, 1825), p. 32; see also Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l’Écriture Sainte à Monseigneur le Dauphin* (Paris, 1709), pp. 234-5.

49 ‘Les mariages des Grands sont semblables à ces riches horloges qui sont composez d’email et de pierreries on y assemble tout ce que la terre a de plus grand prix, sur tout on a soin qu’il aye une grande correspondance entre les mouvements du dedans et qu’ils soient d’intelligence avec ceux du Ciel, qui en doivent estre la regle; Mais il arrive souvent qu’un cheveu, ou un atome deconcerte tout l’ouvrage, et y apporte le dernier desordre, d’où vient que si l’on y donne un prompt remede ce composé de merveilles continue bien de briller au dehors, mais ce n’est plus que confusion au dedance et l’image d’un Chaos’, ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, 6265, *passim*.

50 On the devotion of Cosimo III, see Marcello Fantoni, ‘Il bigottismo di Cosimo III: da leggenda storiografica ad oggetto storico’, in Franco Angiolini, Vieri Becagli and Marcello Verga (eds), *La Toscana nell’età di Cosimo III* (Florence, 1993), pp. 389-402; idem, ‘Il “principe santo”. Clero regolare e modelli di sovranità nella Toscana tardo medicea’, in Rurale (ed.), *I religiosi a corte*, pp. 229-48; Maria Pia Paoli, ‘Le ragioni del Principe e i dubbi della coscienza: aspetti e problemi della politica ecclesiastica di Cosimo III’, in Angiolini, Becagli and Verga (eds), *La Toscana nell’età di Cosimo III*, pp. 497-519. On the devotional aspects of Marguerite-Louise d’Orléans, see Lagioia, ‘La verità delle cose’, pp. 200-12.

circumstances infinitely more troublesome than those you have to suffer? [...] Because it is obvious to everyone that among the hundred princesses who marry, almost no-one gets to choose her husband.⁵¹

The author points out the social condition of Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans, her birth, and therefore her upbringing, that indicate what is obvious to everyone, that perhaps out of a hundred princesses, only one chooses her own groom. By not accepting the agreement desired by Heaven between natural and moral law, condemning herself to being forbidden from taking communion, and failing to show herself as an example to her subjects, means that she is opposing Divine will and endangering the salvation of her soul.

France provided you with a marriage that she thought best suited to you and the country. You accepted, expressing your vows before the Church. Now you are bound by all the laws of conscience and honour to live in perfect understanding with the Prince your husband. If there are some thorns in your eyes, if you cannot live without pain away from your homeland, if you come across customs which upset your mood, if you are not fully satisfied with the people you see, being obliged to give them your complete consideration, Your Highness will allow me to say that however you look at these things, they are in any case the necessary duties of your birth and trials favourable to your salvation.⁵²

Conclusion

The political education of Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans should have inculcated these maxims that the anonymous former servant so intensely reminded her of in this long letter. As events unfolded, after a brief separation from her husband in 1664, only three years into the marriage, the intervention of the pope himself, Alexander VII, and the mediation of the many men of the Church sent by her mother Marguerite de Lorraine, Marguerite-Louise returned to her proper place in the Tuscan court. Nevertheless, the domestic annoyances and the unbridgeable differences between the grand ducal couple continued to grow — the increase in her status from wife of the heir to consort of the ruler in 1670 did little to help — and eventually drove her to bring the difficult affair to a conclusion with a final separation in 1675 and a return to France, a scandal soon known to the world, like something out of a novel.⁵³ Once back in France, in Paris, lodged in the monastery of

51 ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, 6265, *passim*. 'La premiere de vos plaintes M. est qu'il est fort rude a une Princesse de vostre age de passer sa vie dans l'esloignement de ses habitudes et de ses proches. Mais n'est ce pas le sort ordinaire des personnes de vostre condition? Les Princesses ne sont elles pas destinées dez leur naissance aux alliances estrange-res? vous est il rien arrivé en ce point qui n'arrive a mille autres de vostre rang et souvent avec des circonstances infiniment plus facheuses que celles que vous avez a souffrir? [...] Car il est evident a tout le monde que de cent Princesses qui se marient il n'y en à pas presque une seule qui choisisse son espoux'.

52 'La France vous a procuré un mariage qu'elle a crû fort convenable pour Elle et pour vous. Vous l'avez accepté par une volonté qui s'est déclarée en face d'Eglise. Vous estes maintenant obligée par toutes les loix de la conscience et de l'honneur de vivre dans une parfaite intelligence avec le Prince que vous avez pour mary. Que s'il se trouve quelques espines dans vos voyes, si vous ne pouvez vivre sans douleur éloignée de vostre Patrie, si vous rencontrez en celley des coutumes qui contrarient votre humeur, si vous n'avez pas une pleine satisfaction des personnes que vous voyez estre obligées de vous la donner toute entiere, V. A. me permettra de Luy dire que quoy qu'Elle regarde toutes ces choses, comme des sujets d'une ce sont neantmoins des apannages necessaires de sa naissance et des accidents favorable pour son salut.', ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, 6265, *passim*.

53 There is in fact a novel devoted to the turbulent story of the Grand Duchess, by Anna Banti, *La camicia bruciata* (Milan, 1973).

Montmartre, the Grand Duchess lived very much withdrawn from court life. Her settlement with the Grand Duke had been clear, and although her annual pension paid by her husband was very satisfactory to her, its size nevertheless forced her to live a more withdrawn lifestyle than she might have preferred. In fact, although she did reclaim her freedom by returning to France, it was at a price and she was kept by orders of Louis XIV far from court for most of her life.

If the letter, written as we have assumed by Monsignor Bonsi, was indeed a set of instructions, the Princess and later Grand Duchess would not have spared its author the blame for offering a solution that was immediately recognised by everyone involved to be an unhappy one, as Marguerite-Louise herself angrily wrote to Bonsi in February 1673:

The cause comes from further afield, and you should not be surprised, because you know that I came here in spite of not wanting to, and that knowing my temperament and that of the people I spend my time with, you would easily understand that we would have made each other miserable; but although you say that you have tenderness for me, you have not, in truth, protected my interests by putting the rope around my neck for your own benefit.⁵⁴

Indeed, Saint-Simon would later write: 'In marriage matters, these Bonsi were only concerned for themselves.'⁵⁵ This Florentine family had long dealt with important marriage negotiations between the houses of Tuscany and France: from Catherine de' Medici and Maria de' Medici, queens of France, to this more recent marriage of Cosimo de' Medici and Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans.⁵⁶ They were skilled mediators in the service of *raison d'état*, yet careful to grasp the signs of Providence in the harmony between human and divine laws, and obedient to the principles and imperatives of rank. Yet Marguerite-Louise was convinced that Piero Bonsi did not perform a good service for either the Grand Duke Ferdinand II de' Medici or herself ('you have served us poorly in this'). She had been educated to appreciate the freedoms cherished by her parents' *Frondeur* associates and their alternative court at Blois. This idea grew and emboldened her to say that in this political affair, that of her marriage, the only one to benefit was Bonsi, who would be rewarded with the purple robes of the cardinalate. This Princess of mixed Bourbon and Lorraine heritage, whose upbringing was questionable as even her cousin Louis XIV had noted, in the end did not succumb to Bonsi's persuasive rhetoric and the pressures on her conscience. She was proud and determined, as the ministers of the Grand Duke had observed, and because of her political upbringing she also re-claimed her spaces of freedom.

54 ASFi, *Miscellanea Medicea*, 591, ins. 21, *passim*, letter from Marguerite-Louise to Cardinal Bonsi, 3 February 1673. 'La cause en vien de plus loing, et vous ne devrioz pas vous en estonner puisque vous sçavez que je suis venue icy malgre moy et que connoissant mon humeur et celle des gens auqui je suis il vous estoit aisé de comprendre, que nous faisons nostre malheur l'un a l'autre; mais quoy que vous disiez d'avoir de la tendresse pour moy, vous n'avez pas mesné mes interets me mettant la corde au col pour vostre avantage'.

55 Louis de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1879-1930), vol. XI, p. 137.

56 Many years earlier Cardinal Giovanni Bonsi took an active part in the marriage negotiations between Marie de' Medici and Henry IV. He baptized the father of Marguerite-Louise, Gaston d'Orléans, and played as prominent a political role as Pietro Bonsi. Earlier, Antonio Bonsi allegedly negotiated the marriage of Catherine de' Medici. On Pietro Bonsi, see Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni* (Venice, 1859), p. 28. On the Bonsi in France see Ernest Sabatier, *Histoire de la ville et des évêques de Béziers* (Paris, 1854), pp. 352-360; Madame Bellaud-Dessalles, *Les évêques italiens de l'ancien diocèse de Béziers (1547-1669)*, I (Toulouse-Paris, 1901), pp. 215-368; and Alfred Baudrillart (ed.), *Dictionnaire d'Histoire. et de Géographie Ecclésiastique*, IX (Paris, 1914), col. 1141.

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