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The structure and dynamics of scholarly networks between the Dutch Republic and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the 17th century

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CHAPTER 2

The Dutch roots of the Medici network under Cosimo III

INTRODUCTION

“Alle 14 si scoperse Utrecht, vicino al quale un gran sobborgo, dove diversi mulini a vento che invece di macine fanno andare l’edifizio della sega. Si girono con le barche per il fosso reale le mura della città che sono di mattoni terrapienate e ripartite ad ogni tanto di qualche maschio mezzotondo in buona difesa, il suddetto fosso introduce nella città per mezzo di canali che la dividono, e servono di gran comodo co’ barchereccio al traffico, ed al commercio.”¹⁵⁴

Travel diary secretary Apollonio Bassetti, 17th of December 1667, Utrecht.

In the winter of 1667-1668, the young Florentine Prince Cosimo de’ Medici (1642-1723) travelled through Northern Europe, not – as a persistent rumor would have it – to escape his unhappy marriage with Marguerite Louise d’Orléans (1645-1721), but with the explicit aim to learn more about the various types of government and the blossoming intellectual, cultural and economic cultures in Germany and – especially – the Low Countries.¹⁵⁵ He had left Florence on the 22nd of October 1667, destined for Mainz where he would descend the Rhine by means of a canal boat to Arnhem. Once he arrived in Arnhem, he continued his journey to Utrecht where he stayed for two days. In Utrecht, as shown by the above passage, they had every opportunity to see how the Dutch used windmills and controlled the water for commerce and transportation. From there, Cosimo and his entourage went to Amsterdam, the city which at that time was the undisputed global hub of trade, printing industry, and knowledge, where he remained until the 7th of January 1668. Guided by his agents Francesco Feroni (1641-1696) and Pieter Blaeu (1637-1706), Cosimo visited here the town hall, publishing houses, cabinets of curiosities, the headquarters of the East and West Indian Trading companies, churches and synagogues. He then carried on his voyage and went to Haarlem, Alkmaar and Leiden, where he visited the University and the botanical garden. Afterwards he made a stop in Den Haag and Scheveningen, and continued his travels to Delft. On the 16th of January, he sojourned in Rotterdam, followed by Dordrecht where he left on the 19th of January, taking the route to Zeeland from where he descended the river Scheldt to Antwerp and Brussels. From Antwerp, Cosimo returned to Rotterdam and The Hague on the 5th of February 1668, where the Prince

¹⁵⁴ Apollonio Bassetti, *Memorie delle occorrenze del viaggio intrapreso dal Ser.mo Principe Cosimo di Toscana per Alemagna, et Olanda il di 22 Ottobre 1667*, Biblioteca Moreniana, fondo Bigazzi 32, f. 134v, “At two o’clock we explored Utrecht, close to where there is a big suburb, where various windmills, instead of machinery, get the lumber yard going. With the boat we travelled the moat of the city walls, which consists of an embankment of bricks, alternated, now and then, with a *maschio mezzotondo* in good defense. The moat introduces into the city by means of canals that divide it, and serve with great convenience the traffic of the boats, and commerce”.

¹⁵⁵ Initial studies suggested that the Florentine prince’s journey had been mainly motivated by the longstanding conflict with his wife, for which see P. J. Blok, ‘Cosimo III van Toscana in de Republiek’, 522-539 and Godefridus J. Hoogewerff, *De Twee Reizen van Cosimo de’ Medici, Prins van Toscane, Door de Nederlanden (1667-1669)*. *Journalen En Documenten*. (Amsterdam: Johannes Muller, 1919); C.M. Radulet, ‘Cosimo III Medici and the Portuguese Restoration: A Voyage to Portugal in 1668-1669’, *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 1, no. 2 (2003): 1–8. H. Th. van Veen, however, has shown that Cosimo’s travels have been mainly driven by political and diplomatic motives, for which see ‘Cosimo de’ Medici’s Reis Naar de Republiek in Een Nieuw Perspectief’, *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review* 102, no. 1 (1987): 44–52.

of Orange invited him to a ballet. The next day, the prince travelled to Amsterdam where he remained several days before moving on to Hamburg and to return to Italy. As shown by figure 1, he made several stops along the way from Amsterdam to the German border.¹⁵⁶

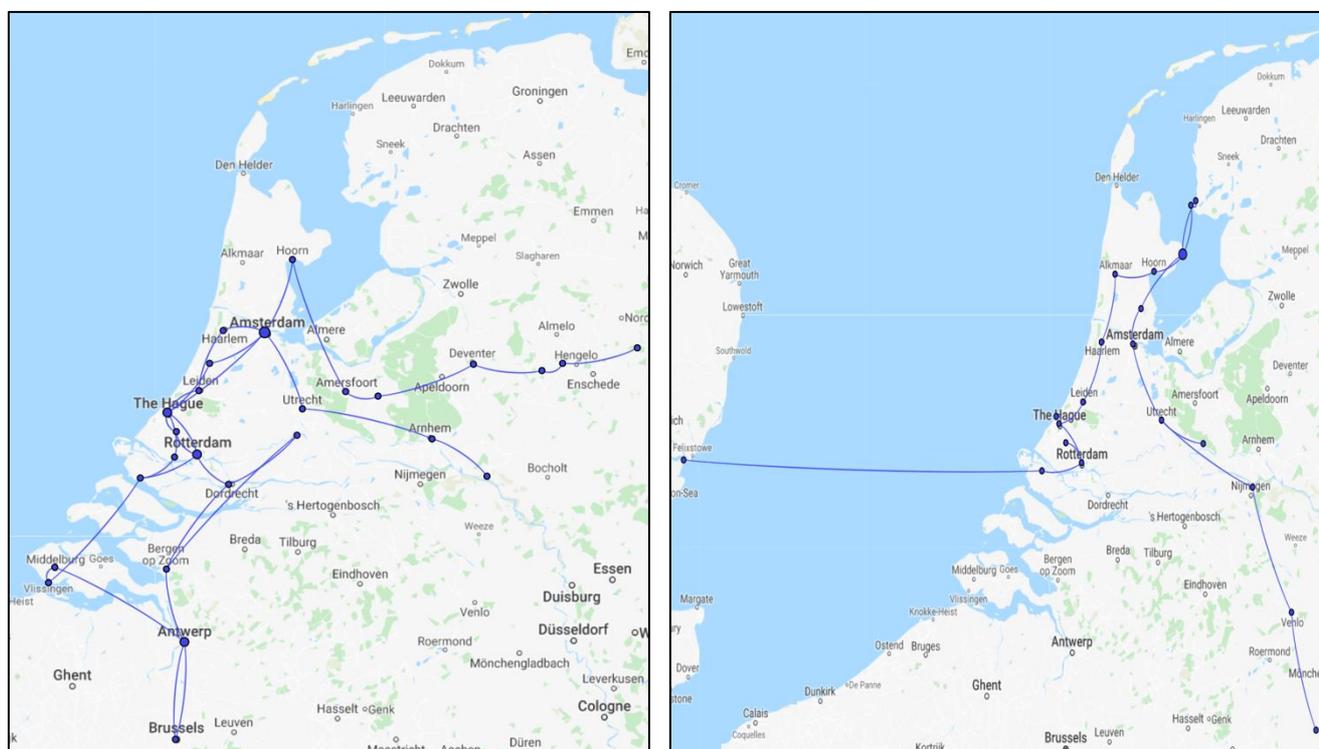


Fig. 1 Itinerary of Cosimo’s travels in the Dutch Republic. The first grand tour (1667-1668) is at the left of the image, while Cosimo’s second stay (1669) in the Dutch Republic is shown at the right. These patterns have been created with the tool nodegoat, following the entries of Hoogenwerff’s edition of Cosimo’s grand tour.

Apparently Cosimo was so fascinated by what he had seen during his first voyage that he returned to the Dutch Republic the next year. In 1669, Cosimo embarked on a second trip, this time to Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, France, and again, the Low Countries (figure 1).¹⁵⁷ During his second stay in the Dutch Republic, Cosimo visited places he had not seen before: he visited the Beemster and Schermer polders, then recently drained lakes, and went to Friesland, visiting Molkwerum and Stavoren, which were highly recommended to him by Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt (1625-1672).¹⁵⁸ The Dutch Republic was thus

¹⁵⁶ Several projects have begun to use large datasets to map the social networks of the Grand Tour in Italy. The mapping the Republic of Letters project at Stanford University uses spatial and temporal data to georectify 18th century maps in order to assess the likely routes that travelers may have taken, and produced route maps for individual travelers according to contemporary routes and conditions (<http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/casestudies/grandtour.html> [last accessed, 12-10-2018]). The Itinera project at the University of Pittsburgh, seeks to map the interactions between people, places, and art objects over time. Specifically, Itinera is a map-based and interactive resource that overlays the movements of travelers alongside the objects of their study and their own creative output. In this respect, they adopt a multi-layered approach which is a central theme in the fifth chapter of this study (<https://itinera.pitt.edu> [last accessed 12-10-2018]).

¹⁵⁷ For Cosimo’s travels in Portugal see C.M. Radulet, ‘Cosimo III Medici and the Portuguese Restoration: A Voyage to Portugal in 1668-1669’, *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 1, no. 2 (2003): 1–8; Susana Varela Flor, ‘Portraits by Feliciano de Almeida (1635-1694) in Cosimo III de’ Medici’s Gallery’, *RIHA Journal* 0144 (2016). For his five-month stay in Spain, see Taín Guzmán, *A Medici Pilgrimage: The Devotional Journey of Cosimo III to Santiago de Compostela (1669)* (Turnhout: Brepols publishers, forthcoming January 2019). For England, see Stefano Villani, ‘La Religione Degli Inglesi e Il Viaggio Del Principe: Note Sulla Relazione Ufficiale Del Viaggio Di Cosmo de’ Medici in Inghilterra.’, *Studi Seicenteschi* XLV (2004): 175–94.

¹⁵⁸ For Cosimo’s visit to Friesland see Hans Cools, ‘A Tuscan Travel Party amongst the Frisian Natives The Day Trip of Prince Cosimo to Stavoren and Molkwerum, 26 June 1669’, *Incontri: Rivista Europea di Studi Italiani* 30, no. 2 (2015): 80-90.

the only country he visited twice in the course of both his grand tours, which testifies to Cosimo's fascination for this country.

There has been a long tradition of historical studies that have acknowledged the strong relationship between the Dutch Republic and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, especially after Cosimo III's two visits to the Low Countries.¹⁵⁹ These visits, in fact, established the foundation upon which the future exchange between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Dutch Republic could take place. During his stay in the Dutch Republic, Cosimo not only learned about a different culture, but used the opportunity to build his social network. Scholars, dignitaries and merchants were sized up during these personal encounters, and Cosimo must have acknowledged the fact that, even if the Dutch held a different faith, they were excellent scholars. Trust was built and Cosimo, once he returned to Florence and became Grand Duke, seemed to be eager to maintain close contact with several individuals he had met during his travels. As Henk Th. van Veen and Andrew P. McCormick observed, it appears that Cosimo tried to use these relationships to deal with the rapid decline of the Grand Duchy.¹⁶⁰

The Grand Tour equipped Cosimo thus socially and provided him with a wider knowledge of the world that made him more fit to rule, reserving him a position of both national and international distinction. A letter from Vincenzo Marucelli, a young Florentine nobleman travelling to the Low Countries in 1672, to the grand ducal secretary Apollonio Bassetti, for instance, reads that "non saprei più esprimere quanto vantaggio sia alla nostra nazione nel viaggiare, dopo che il serenissimo Padrone ha acquistata sì gran fama ne' suoi viaggi, che il nome solo di fiorentino produce vantaggio per la grande stima acquistata da Sua Altezza da per tutto".¹⁶¹ Vice versa, as we will see in more detail in the next chapter, many Dutch philologists travelled to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the 1670s for they knew that the Grand Duke had remained impressed by the Dutch intellectual communities and was glad to welcome them in his reign. He afforded them access to the rich manuscript collections of the Florentine libraries and even offered them positions at the University of Pisa.

Yet, no attempts have been made to investigate systematically the subsequent development and significance of the relationship between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Dutch Republic after the Prince returned from his grand tour. To sustain his relationship with the Dutch Republic, Cosimo primarily relied on the administrative techniques and methods of learning handled by the principal figures at the Medici court: the grand ducal secretary Apollonio Bassetti (1630-1699) and the court librarian Antonio Magliabechi (1633-1714). Cosimo's decision to assign Bassetti and Magliabechi an important role at the Medici court immediately after his return to Florence is thus a clear indication of his efforts to put their experiences and contacts with the Dutch Republic to work for Tuscany. This chapter will give an impression of the remarkable personality of Bassetti, who accompanied Cosimo on his first grand tour, while the next chapter will focus on the book-hermit Antonio Magliabechi.

This chapter will show that Cosimo, despite his strong religious convictions, was open to the liberal culture of the Dutch Republic and very ambitious to sustain a relationship with that country. A close reading of travel diaries and correspondence will provide insights as to the nature and significance of Cosimo's interest in the Dutch Republic. Specifically, I will use archival sources that have been

¹⁵⁹ See, Henk Th. van Veen and Andrew P. McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries: An Introduction to the Sources and an Inventory of Four Florentine Libraries* (Florence: Centro Di, 1985), 62-63; Frans Felix Blok, 'Cosimo III van Toscana in de Republiek', *Onze Eeuw* I, no. 2 (1901): 522-39.

¹⁶⁰ Henk Th. van Veen and Andrew P. McCormick, 62.

¹⁶¹ Marucelli to Bassetti, 16 December 1672, ASF, Mediceo del Principato (MdP), 4261, c. 514, in Francesco Martelli, *Il Viaggio in Europa Di Pietro Guerrini (1682-1686): Edizione Della Corrispondenza e Dei Disegni Di Un Inviato Di Cosimo III Dei Medici*, vol. 1 Carteggio con Apollonio Bassetti (Florence: Olschki, 2005), XXIX, "I would no longer express how much our nation has benefitted from travelling, after the Serene Lord has acquired so much fame in his travels, that only the mentioning of the name Florentine will bring advantage because of the great fame acquired by Your Highness everywhere".

overlooked in previous research, including the travel diaries and the correspondence of Apollonio Bassetti and the court physician Giovanni Andrea Moniglia (1624-1700), both of whom we will meet often during the course of this study.

1. OFF TO A GOOD START: PREPARING THE GRAND TOUR

From 1665 onwards Cosimo started to make plans for his upcoming voyage to northern Europe, and to the Dutch Republic in particular. It was especially thanks to the Tuscan merchant Francesco Feroni and the Amsterdam bookseller Pieter Blaeu that Cosimo came to know the Dutch culture. In fact, it was through them that Cosimo received a continuous flow of books and news from Amsterdam, which he subsequently used to prepare himself for his upcoming visits to the Dutch Republic. Because of the important role played by Feroni and Blaeu in Cosimo's grand tour, here a brief resume of their lives will be presented.

Born in 1614 into a family of wool dyers from Empoli, Francesco Feroni went to work in the bank of the distinguished Buonaccorsi family in Florence.¹⁶² In the 1640s, Feroni moved to Amsterdam, probably sent there by Lorenzo Buonaccorsi to act as their agent in the Dutch Republic.¹⁶³ Once in Amsterdam, Feroni established himself as a merchant banker in his own right. Within a few years, Feroni became one of the wealthiest merchant-bankers in Amsterdam, and this mainly thanks to his role as a shareholder of the Dutch West Indian Company and as an intermediary in the slave trade in the Spanish Indies.¹⁶⁴ His growing prestige was quickly spotted by Cosimo's father, Ferdinando II de' Medici, who summoned him to act as his representative to the Dutch States-General during the first Anglo-Dutch war between 1652 and 1654. Feroni needed to ensure that the Dutch would respect the Grand Duchy's "neutrality and give up their naval blockade of Livorno, where an English convoy returning from Smyrna had taken refuge".¹⁶⁵ He successfully performed his task and throughout the next two decades, Feroni served as a Tuscan envoy in the Dutch Republic, to ultimately become Tuscany's official representative in 1666.¹⁶⁶ During his occupation, he weekly sent letters and new reports to the Tuscan court, which contained all kinds of information about the political, economic and cultural life of the Dutch Republic, he facilitated the acquisition of cultural artefacts, such as books, tapestries and paintings and distributed gifts to Dutch dignitaries and aristocrats. Moreover, Feroni assisted traveling Florentines during their stay in the Dutch Republic, including Cosimo Ciferi, who, as will be shown later in more detail, was commissioned by Cosimo III to spy on the latest innovations in the linen industry.¹⁶⁷

The grand ducal secretary, Apollonio Bassetti took care of the correspondence with Feroni. The voluminous reports resulting from this correspondence, which are nowadays preserved in the State

¹⁶² The figure of Feroni has been extensively studied by Paola Benigni and Hans Cools. See Paola Benigni, 'Francesco Feroni Empolese Negoziante in Amsterdam', *Incontri - Rivista Di Studi Italo-Nederlandesi* 3 (1985): 98–121. Paola Benigni, 'Francesco Feroni: da mercante di schiavi a burocrate', in *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III: atti del convegno, Pisa-San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), 4-5 giugno 1990*, ed. Franco Angiolini, Vieri Becagli, and Marcello Verga (Florence: Edifir, 1993), 165–83. Hans Cools, 'Francesco Feroni, intermediario in cereali, schiavi e opere d'arte', *Quaderni storici* 2 (2006): 353–366. The same article is later published in English in Hans Cools, 'Francesco Feroni, 1614/16–1696. Broker in Cereals, Slaves and Works of Art.', in *Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marika Keblusek, Badeloch Vera Noldus, and Hans Cools (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), 39–50. Hans Cools, 'An Italian in the Metropolis: The Amsterdam Career of Francesco Feroni (ca. 1640-1672)', in *The Quintessence of Lives: Intellectual Biographies in the Low Countries Presented to Jan Roegiers*, ed. Jean-Pierre Delville et al., Bibliothèque de La Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique 91 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), 227–47.

¹⁶³ Benigni, 'Francesco Feroni Empolese Negoziante in Amsterdam', 99–100.

¹⁶⁴ Cools, 'Francesco Feroni, 1614/16–1696. Broker in Cereals, Slaves and Works of Art.', 45.

¹⁶⁵ Cools, 'An Italian in the Metropolis: The Amsterdam Career of Francesco Feroni (ca. 1640-1672)', 233.

¹⁶⁶ Cools, 'Francesco Feroni, 1614/16–1696. Broker in Cereals, Slaves and Works of Art.', 41.

¹⁶⁷ Francesco Martelli, *Il Viaggio in Europa Di Pietro Guerrini (1682-1686): Edizione Della Corrispondenza e Dei Disegni Di Un Inviato Di Cosimo III Dei Medici*, vol. 1 Carteggio con Apollonio Bassetti (Florence: Olschki, 2005), XV–XVI.

Archive of Florence, must have aroused Cosimo's enthusiasm for the Dutch Republic, who decided to see the country for himself in 1667.¹⁶⁸ During Cosimo's stay in the Dutch Republic, Feroni acted as his guide. When Cosimo arrived in Amsterdam, he directly made his way to the house of Feroni on the Keizersgracht, and stayed there from the 19th of December 1667 until the 7th of January 1668.

Bassetti continued to exchange letters with Feroni in Amsterdam until 1673. The French invasion of the Dutch Republic in 1672, the so-called *rampjaar* [disaster year], and problems with the slave trade, had precipitated the departure of Feroni from Amsterdam, who "was convinced that the Dutch Republic would shortly collapse".¹⁶⁹ He was sure that Tuscany would be able to take over the Republic's prosperous commerce after its downfall, and naturally he thought that he himself would play a leading part in the future commercial revival of the Grand Duchy.¹⁷⁰ Notwithstanding Feroni's predictions, the Dutch Republic overcame its crisis and by the first half of the 1680s the Amsterdam trade had fully recovered from the crisis caused by the French invasion.¹⁷¹ Yet, part of Feroni's prophecy was true: when Feroni returned to Florence in 1673, Cosimo III appointed him senator and *depositario generale* or, to put it in modern terms, Tuscany's Minister of Finance, making him responsible for the Grand Duchy's income and financial resources.¹⁷²

Feroni's appointment was a clear indication that Cosimo III wished to put Feroni's experience in the Dutch Republic to work for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. For example, when Cosimo made Feroni Marquis of Bellavista, a Medici estate, in 1683, he began draining and reclaiming the land and constructed a windmill.¹⁷³ In addition, Feroni appears to have stimulated innovations at the port of Livorno and opened a new silk shop to revitalize the Florentine industry.¹⁷⁴ When his silk shop was running higher than expected costs, Feroni proposed to lower the real wages by increasing the price of food. That would induce the labor force to work harder and enable manufacturers to produce more cheaply. Here, Feroni appealed to the example of the Dutch, as he wrote to Apollonio Bassetti:

"Ho riconosciuto che in Leida si spenda molto meno nel mangolare la lana e ridrula in panno, di quello che si fa qua, e pur il vivere è più caro di qua; ma come travaglia quella nazione incessantemente tutto il giorno facendo il suo denaro sopra il lavoro, e ola la sera tornando a casa. Da questa loro assiduità ne succese col far più lavoro, guadagnano da vantaggio di questi, che solo la metà del giorno vogliono travagliare".¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ 383 letters between Bassetti and Feroni concerning the Dutch Republic are extant in ASF, MdP, 4260, cc. 186, 195, 313-549; 4261, cc. 194-476 and are written between the 4th of April 1667 and the 6th of March 1672

¹⁶⁹ Cools, 'An Italian in the Metropolis: The Amsterdam Career of Francesco Feroni (ca. 1640-1672)', 244.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, 244.

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*, 244.

¹⁷² Benigni, 'Francesco Feroni Empolese Negoziante in Amsterdam', 113. The Amsterdam merchant Giovacchino Guasconi, who replaced Feroni in his role as agent of the Medici family, sent his congratulations to Feroni through Bassetti on the 3th of August 1674, "Con sommo contento ho inteso la benigna elezione fatta il mio Serenissimo Padrone per suo depositario generale e senatore il signore Ferroni che Dio piu oltre conceda quanto di bene sa desiderare, sendo chiaro che la benignita di S.A. eccede ogni termine in beneficio" (ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262, f. 389).

¹⁷³ Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries: An Introduction to the Sources and an Inventory of Four Florentine Libraries, Italia e i Paesi Bassi*, 36.

¹⁷⁴ Mario Baruchello, *Livorno e Il Suo Porto. Origini, Caratteristiche e Vincende Dei Traffici Livornesi* (Livorno: Soc. An. Editrice Riviste Tecniche, 1932), 420-22. See also, Corey Tazzara, *The Free Port of Livorno and the Transformation of the Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 141-48.

¹⁷⁵ Feroni to Bassetti, 24 November 1673, ASF, MdP, 1523, ff. 251-255, transcribed in Tazzara, *The Free Port of Livorno and the Transformation of the Mediterranean World*, 143 "I myself saw in Leiden that it costs much less to press wool and turn it into cloth than it does here, and the costs if living is higher than here. But that nation works incessantly all day long, eating while they work, and only returns home at night. From their assiduity they do more work and earn more than these Florentines, who only want to work half of the day".

Moreover, in his quality as *depositario generale*, Feroni arranged funding for missions abroad. When Cosimo ascended the grand ducal throne in 1670, he regularly sent out his subjects to travel to the Dutch Republic to spy on the latest technological innovations. From the correspondence of the Florentine engineer Pietro Guerrini, it becomes clear that Feroni supplied him with the necessary funds to sustain his living abroad.¹⁷⁶ In 1683, as will be discussed in more detail later, Guerrini was commissioned by Cosimo to tour through northern Europe, in particular in the Dutch Republic, to spy on the latest developments in fortifications and other technical inventions.¹⁷⁷

It seems that the extraordinary success of Feroni, however, turned him into a heartless and arrogant person, which can be deduced from multiple sources that put Feroni in a very bad light. In 1671, for example, the Dutch scientist Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680) called Feroni a fraud, claiming that he intentionally withheld the books and wine sent to him by the Danish scientist Niels Stensen (1638-1686) who was in Florence at the time.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, when the Dutch burgomaster Coenraad Ruysch (1650-1731) became acquainted with Feroni during his visit in Florence in 1674, he lamented the fact that Feroni did not remember the distinguished counsel Nicolaas de Bijde de Jonge (1610-1675), who had written Ruysch's recommendation. According to Ruysch, Feroni did not want to acknowledge the fact that under De Bijde's jurisdiction and country he had made a fortune. Yet, someone who comes from "nothing" (Feroni was, as noted earlier, the son of a wool dyer), easily becomes arrogant and conceited after becoming "something":

“Naer de middach gingen wij aen ‘t huys van de heer Veroni, aen de welcke neef van Hoogheveen een briefken van den raetsheer De Bijde aen hadt te leveren, doch naer dat wij ruym een half uer foor de deur gewacht hadden, wierden wij seer superbs en groots van hem ontfangen. Selves toonde hij mienen van den raetsheer de Bijde niet meer te kennen, soo dat wij seer mal satisfait van deze kerel van daen gingen, de wij meenden dat ten minste met beleefde minen behoorde te toonen dat hij die luyden estimeerden onder wien en in wiens vaderlandst hij syn fortuyn gevonden hadt. Doch als in niet tot iet komt, soo is het syn selven onkenbaer.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ See, for instance, Guasconi to Bassetti, 4 February 1675, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262, f. 417, “Questo ordinario ricevo la sua de 25 scorso et in essa la nota delle spese fatte per il Serenissimo Padrone alla somma di fiorini 2772.7 che si riducono alla quantità di pezze 709 e 2/3 pagabili in Livorno, dove sarà cura di questo signore depositario [Feroni] grato il darne li ordini havendomi S.A. comandato di metter nelle mani di lui l'istesso nota acciò ne sommetta il rimborso”.

¹⁷⁷ Martelli, *Il Viaggio in Europa Di Pietro Guerrini (1682-1686): Edizione Della Corrispondenza e Dei Disegni Di Un Inviato Di Cosimo III Dei Medici*, vol. 1: 13, “et d'ogni somma ch'egli andrà borsando con sua ricevuta ne faccia pur tratta o in Sua Altezza o nel signore Depositario Generale”. See also ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263, f.712bis “A di primo luglio 1683, Io a giorno sottoscritto confesso aver riceuto dal signore giovacchino Guasconi la somma di fiorini settecento corrente moneta d'Amsterdam, quali m'a pagati d'ordine dell'Illustrissimo signore Abate Apollonio Bassetti di Firenze e per dover esser rimborsato dalla depositaria di S.A.S. nostro signore, avendo questa fatta con altra simile ambidue contenenti un solo pagamento. Questo di et anno sopradetto in Amsterdam, Io Pietro Guerrini”.

¹⁷⁸ J. Swammerdam to M. Thévenot, Amsterdam, 30 October 1670, cited in Eric Jorink, ‘Swammerdam, hoveling? Enige kanttelingen bij de reputatie van een wetenschappelijk onderzoeker’, *Studium* 8, no. 4 (24 May 2016): 187, “Mons Stenon heeft aan Feroni eenige boeken voor mij gesonden, maar hy speelt den onwetende, gelyk hij met uwe wijn, ende Uytengogerts, ende andere haar wijn gedaan heeft, dan het is een bedrieger als bekend is; t'is wonder den Hertog dat niet ter oore komt. [Sir Stensen has sent to Feroni several books for me, but he [Feroni] pretends to know nothing, like he did with your Wine, and the one of Uytengogerts, and other wine, it is known that he is a fraid, it would be a miracle if the Duke will not hear about this”.

¹⁷⁹ C. Ruysch, “Journaal van een reis naar Genève, Italië en Frankrijk van Coenraad Ruysch met zijn neef Dirck van Hoogheveen”, The Hague, National Archives of the Netherlands, Family Archive Teding van Berkhout, 1408, f. 31r, “In the afternoon we went to the House of Mr. Veroni [Feroni]. Hoogheveen had received a letter of recommendation from counsel De Bijde for the cousin of Feroni. After having waited more than half an hour in front of his door, he wonderfully and greatly received us. He revealed that he did not know counsel De Bijde anymore, making us leave very dissatisfied, believing that he should have been polite towards those men under whose jurisdiction and in whose fatherland he had made his fortune. Yet, when someone from nothing becomes something, he becomes unknowable [of his humble origins]. The travel account of Ruysch is entirely transcribed by Alan Moss at www.alanmoss.nl [last accessed 4 May 2017].

Again, in 1675, the librarian Antonio Magliabechi referred to the heartless character of Feroni in a letter to the Dutch philologist Jacob Gronovius (1645-1716), writing in strict confidence that Feroni “fa stridere ogniuno e vorerebbe che i poveri si morissero effettivamente di fame”.¹⁸⁰ Magliabechi probably refers here to the above mentioned reform program championed by Feroni to increase the price of food to maximize the profit of the Florentine silk industry.

The information about the Dutch Republic that Cosimo received from Feroni, was augmented by the news and books which the Amsterdam bookseller Pieter Blaeu sent to the Tuscan court. Pieter Blaeu was born on the 8th of October 1637, the second son of the well-known publisher and bookseller Joan Blaeu (1596-1673).¹⁸¹ Pieter held a central position in his father’s publishing house in Amsterdam, which is remembered today mainly for its atlases.¹⁸² The activities of Pieter Blaeu cannot be traced until he started to correspond with Antonio Magliabechi in the 1660s.¹⁸³ On the 12th of October 1660, Pieter wrote Magliabechi from the *Frankfurther Burchmesse* to thank him for his hospitality in Florence where he just came from. He had travelled to Italy to promote the interest of the publishing firm and to collect information and material for his father’s new project of a series of *theatri* or books on the principal towns of a number of Italian states. During this trip, Pieter also went to Florence, where he arrived with a letter of recommendation to Magliabechi. Consequently, Magliabechi introduced Pieter to the Medici court where he could make arrangements with the Grand Duke, Ferdinando II, his brother Leopoldo, and Cosimo concerning the production of a town atlas of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. As we will see in the next chapter, in which the specifics of Pieter’s sojourn in Florence will be discussed in more detail, the project of a Tuscan town atlas was never finalized. Although the project failed, Pieter’s business trip in Italy opened up a new market for his father’s family business. Once he returned in Amsterdam in 1660, Blaeu remained in contact with both Magliabechi and Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici (1617-1670), and frequently sent both of them books, news and letters. Soon, Magliabechi became Pieter’s largest customer in Italy, both on his own behalf and of that of the Medici family. A part of the books Magliabechi ordered from Pieter were for Prince Leopoldo de’ Medici, Prince Francesco Maria de’ Medici (1660-1711) and Cosimo III. Yet, just prior to Cosimo’s departure to the Dutch Republic, in April 1667, it was Cosimo himself who wrote to Pieter directly, requesting him to send him the book *China Illustrata* by Athanasius Kircher, and a nautical atlas.¹⁸⁴ Pleased with the prompt delivery of the books, Cosimo subsequently ordered anything published in Amsterdam “che trattassero materie di viaggi nuovi o di cognizioni pellegrine, e recenti”.¹⁸⁵ Evidentially, Cosimo was preparing himself for his upcoming visit to the Dutch Republic towards the end of 1667.

¹⁸⁰ Magliabechi to J. Gronovius, Florence, undated [1675], LMU, Cod 4° Cod. Msc 777, f. 28, “he makes everyone squeal and he would like that the poor actually die of hunger”; “Mi onori in ogni maniera di stracciar subito questo foglio, perche mai in tempo alcuno possa esser veduto da anima vivente. Ne la supplico per le viscere di Gjesù Cristo signore Nostro, e per tutte le sante Leggi dell’amicizia”.

¹⁸¹ About the establishment of the Blaeu firm see Djoeke van Netten, *Koopman in Kennis: De Uitgever Willem Jansz Blaeu in de Geleerde Wereld (1571-1631)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2014). See also, Gloria Moorman, ‘Publishers at the Intersection of Cultures The Significance of Italo-Dutch Contacts in the Creation Process of Joan Blaeu’s Theatrum Italiae (1663)’, *Incontri* 30, no. 2 (2015): 70–79; Gloria Moorman, ‘A Changing Perspective on the Eternal City Revealed Blaeu’s Admiranda Urbis Romae (1663) Compared to Later Editions of the Town Atlas of Rom’, *Quaerendo* 45 (2015): 108–24.

¹⁸² Moorman, *Discovering Rome through Joan Blaeu’s Admiranda Urbis Roma: the creation of the town atlas of Rome (Amsterdam, 1663) in the light of Italian-Dutch relationships in the seventeenth century*, 4.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, cit. 34. See also Alfonso Mirto and Henk Th. van Veen, *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere Ai Fiorentini. Antonio Magliabechi, Leopoldo e Cosimo III de’ Medici, e Altri, 1660-1705* (Amsterdam/Maarssen: APA Holland University Press, 1993), 51.

¹⁸⁴ Cosimo to P. Blaeu, Florence, 4 April 1667, in Mirto and Van Veen, 313.

¹⁸⁵ Cosimo to P. Blaeu, Florence, 10 May 1667, in Mirto and Van Veen, 313, “regarding matters of new travels or knowledge of pilgrims, and recent”

2. TWO FLORENTINE COURTIER: APOLLONIO BASSETTI AND ANDREA MONIGLIA

In stark contrast to the librarian Antonio Magliabechi, who never set a foot outside of Florence, a travel party of about forty Florentine courtiers accompanied Cosimo during his travels abroad. To keep memories alive of what Cosimo had seen during his travels, many of them wrote a diary. After their return to Italy, their travel accounts were edited by Cosimo's chamberlain Filippo Corsini (1647-1706) and bound into an official account of the Grand Tour, which is nowadays held at the *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*.¹⁸⁶ The official diary is complemented by an album of drawings and watercolors containing representation of landscapes, fortresses, harbors, cities and churches, which are attributed to Pier Maria Baldi (c. 1630-1686), who had visited the Dutch Republic together with Cosimo.¹⁸⁷ A modern edition of the official account of Cosimo's grand tour was published in 1919 by the Dutch scholar Godefridus Joannes Hoogewerff and recently re-edited by Lodewijk Wagenaar.¹⁸⁸ Yet, as noted by Hans Cools and Carmen Radulet, Hoogewerff wrongly labelled the official account as Corsini's personal diary, claiming instead that the main author of the account is the Florentine intellectual Lorenzo Magalotti (1637-1713), who like Corsini had accompanied Cosimo on both trips.¹⁸⁹

The grand ducal secretary Apollonio Bassetti and the court physician and poet Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, who both accompanied Cosimo on his first trip to Germany and the Low Countries, also kept a diary. The journal that Bassetti kept during Cosimo's travels, is now preserved in the collections of the *Biblioteca Moreniana* in Florence.¹⁹⁰ The diary consists of two thin oblong volumes, closely written on both sides of the page in a, sometimes, rushed handwriting. Bassetti's diary is thus much less formal than the journal of Moniglia as it was mostly intended for personal use. The small booklet, in fact, could be easily held in Bassetti's pockets, making annotations of his observations and impressions along the way. In addition, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs, the diary of Bassetti served a larger purpose, functioning in effect like a field reporter's notebook, that later became an important source of inspiration to other travelers. Moniglia's journal, on the other hand, is completely composed in *terza rima* and can be found today in at least four surviving manuscripts in Leiden and Florence.¹⁹¹ Less informative and descriptive about the customs and practices of the Dutch, the diary has a strong literary value, mainly written to entertain, and to inspire its readers. Each of these diaries is thus completely different in nature, both in style and in content, yet they both show the fascination of the Grand Duke for the Dutch

¹⁸⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Med. Pal. 12.

¹⁸⁷ See Radulet, 'Cosimo III Medici and the Portuguese Restoration: A Voyage to Portugal in 1668-1669', 3.

¹⁸⁸ Hoogewerff, *De Twee Reizen van Cosimo de' Medici, Prins van Toscane, Door de Nederlanden (1667-1669)*. *Journalen En Documenten*. Other diaries described in the edition of Hoogewerff are from the grand ducal treasurer Cosimo Prié and the Bolognese physician Giovan Battista Gornia (1633-1684), the first of which kept a diary during the first voyage while the second wrote a journal of Cosimo's second trip. A new edition of Hoogewerff's book is curated by Lodewijk Wagenaar, *Een Toscaanse prins bezoekt Nederland: de twee reizen van Cosimo de Medici 1667-1669*, trans. Bertie Eringa, (Amsterdam: Lubberhuizen, Uitgeverij Bas, 2014).

¹⁸⁹ Cools, 'A Tuscan Travel Party amongst the Frisian Natives. The Day Trip of Prince Cosimo to Stavoren and Molkwerum, 26 June 1669', 85; C.M. Radulet, 'Cosimo III Medici and the Portuguese Restoration: A Voyage to Portugal in 1668-1669', *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 1, no. 2 (2003): 1-8.

¹⁹⁰ Biblioteca Moreniana, Bigazzi 32, "Memorie delle occorrenze del viaggio intrapreso dal Ser.mo Principe Cosimo di Toscana per Alemagna, et Olanda il di 22 Ottobre 1667", 2 vols. (called hereafter *Memorie Bassetti*).

¹⁹¹ Giovanni Andrea Moniglia's travel journal ("viaggio del Serenissimo Principe Cosimo di Toscana descritto in sette Capitoli dal dottore Giovanni Andrea Moniglia suo Medico") can be found today in the University Library of Leiden (BPL 3294), the State Archive of Florence (Cod. Mediceo, no. 6385), the National Library of Florence (Cod. Palatino 804) and the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (cod. Antinori 85). Interestingly, Hoogewerff, in his 1919 edition of selections from the journal of Prince Cosimo's travels to the Low Countries, claimed that he knew that the travel journal of Moniglia existed but that he was unable to find it: "door schrijver dezes is vergeefs naar het handschrift een onderzoek gedaan. Zeer zeker zouden meer dan tweeduizend heroïsche terzinen in het verband der hier geboden teksten misplaatst zijn geweest, maar het is toch jammer, dat den lezer er zelfs geen proefje van kan aangeboden worden", cited in *De Twee Reizen van Cosimo de' Medici, Prins van Toscane, Door de Nederlanden (1667-1669)*. *Journalen en Documenten*, LVIII-LIX.

Republic, possibly even more so than for any other state outside of Italy. Since Moniglia and Bassetti are essential to the conduct of this study, it is necessary to address here a brief sketch of their lives and role in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

Bassetti was born in Florence to the second charioteer of Cardinal Giovan Carlo de' Medici (1611-1663), the second son of Grand Duke Cosimo II of Tuscany (1590-1621). On discovering the intelligence and abilities of the young Bassetti, the Cardinal guided him towards an ecclesiastical career at the Medici court. From 1654 until 1662, Bassetti acted as the Cardinal's personal secretary where he was trained to handle paperwork and correspondence. After the death of the Cardinal, Bassetti's initial training opened the way to his purchase of a position under the then prime secretary of Grand Duke Ferdinando II de' Medici, Carlo Antonio Gondi (1642-1720).¹⁹² Shortly thereafter, the Grand Duke decided to appoint Bassetti in the service of the future heir to the Medici throne, prince Cosimo de' Medici. The decision to appoint Bassetti as secretary of Cosimo, marked a turning point in the career of Bassetti, who suddenly became responsible for managing the administrative apparatus of the future ruler of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Furthermore, the newly obtained function permitted him to accompany Cosimo on his Grand Tour through Northern Europe, which included first and foremost a visit to the Dutch Republic.

While the prince travelled to learn how to become a ruler, the grand tour prepared Bassetti for a career as prime secretary for which he had been destined upon return at the Medici court. In fact, when Cosimo ascended the Grand ducal throne, following the death of Ferdinando II, he secured Bassetti's position by appointing him *Segretario della Cifra* in 1670, which may be defined, as a modern-day equivalent, as the Secretary of State. For the next 30 years Bassetti would act as Cosimo's chief counsellor, confidant, advisor and friend, deciding not only over the future of the Grand Duchy, but also watching over the Grand Duke's consciousness. In fact, besides fulfilling his role as Cosimo's prime secretary, Bassetti was named Canon of the Church of San Lorenzo in 1666, the parish Church of the Medici family. This position strengthened his position as a clergyman, by placing him strategically in the center of ecclesiastical power in Florence.¹⁹³ Bassetti's role as both a states- and a clergyman finds its ultimate expression in the words of Giovan Battista Frescobaldi, prior of the Church of San Lorenzo, who wrote a eulogy after the death of Bassetti in 1699. According to Frescobaldi, Bassetti "così come in Corte era l'idea degl'uomini saggi, così in Chiesa era il modello degl'uomini religiosi".¹⁹⁴

In his history of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Galazzi, while he flattened Cosimo's reign to the level of mere bigotry, he recognized the important role of Bassetti:

"Era il Bassetti ammirato per la sua facondia, e le sue lettere erano accolte da per tutto come un modello di stile e di buon gusto nel trattare la lingua Toscana; dedito alli studj dell'antiquaria avea profittato della familiarità che teneva col Noris per formare una raccolta dei monumenti più rari di antichità degna di qualunque gran Personaggio. Si acquistò questo Ministro gran reputazione per tutta l'Italia, e a esso attribuivasi il merito delle più lodevoli risoluzioni di Cosimo".¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Francesco Martelli, 'A Corte e in Capitolo Apollonio Bassetti, Segretario Di Cosimo III Dei Medici e Canonico Di San Lorenzo, e Il Priore Giovan Battista Frescobaldi', in *San Lorenzo: A Florentine Church*, ed. Robert W. Gaston and Louis Alexander Waldman, Villa I Tatti Series (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 633.

¹⁹³ Martelli, 639.

¹⁹⁴ Martelli, cit. 632, "Just like in court he was the idea of the learned men, so he was in the Church the model of the religious men".

¹⁹⁵ G. Riguccio Galluzzi, *Istoria del granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici* (Firenze: Per Gaetano Camiagi Stam. Granducale, 1781), vol. VIII, 354.

According to Galluzzi, it was difficult for a man of his brilliance to receive the goodwill and support of the Grand Duke, who only “loved blind dependence and adulation”.¹⁹⁶ Clearly, Bassetti was the mastermind behind Cosimo’s efforts to curb the seemingly, yet inevitable decline of Tuscany.

“One shearling cloak, six pairs of woollen socks, two pairs of white gloves, three winter undercoats of cashmere-like wool and four warm trousers”, these items were enlisted by Apollonio Bassetti in preparation for his upcoming travel to Germany and the Low Countries in the cold winter of 1667-1668.¹⁹⁷ Bassetti made part of the entourage who accompanied Cosimo on his first grand tour. During the voyage, Bassetti was responsible for all the incoming and outgoing correspondence of the Prince, he organized meetings with Dutch dignitaries, scholars and merchants and he kept Ferdinando II de’ Medici up to date on the whereabouts of his son. Bassetti’s travel experience resulted in a vast network of contacts throughout Europe, which kept him updated about the latest political, economic and cultural developments in each respective country. This extraordinary correspondence is still largely intact and comprises thousands of letters in the Medici Grand Ducal Archives in Florence.¹⁹⁸

While Bassetti took care of the prince’s administration, the physician Giovanni Andrea Moniglia was responsible for his well-being. Moniglia received his early formal training from Jesuit institutions in Florence, and later entered the University of Pisa, where he earned his doctorates in both philosophy and medicine. In 1664, he was the private physician of Cardinal Giancarlo de’ Medici (1611-1663).¹⁹⁹ After the death of the cardinal, he became the physician of Vittoria della Rovere (1622-1694), and, after the death of the Tuscan physician Francesco Redi in 1698, of Grand Duke Cosimo III. Besides his abilities as a physician, he also worked as a literary scholar, writing comedies and opera for the *Accademia degli Immobili* and the *Accademia della Crusca*, both literary academies in Florence. Moniglia is best remembered for his work the *Ercole in Tebe*, published in Florence in 1661, that he wrote in celebration of the marriage of Cosimo III with Marguerite Louise of Orléans.²⁰⁰ From 1667 until 1681, Moniglia held a chair in practical medicine at the University of Pisa, and from 1681 until his death he assumed a chair in female medicine (“de morbis mulierum”) at that same university.²⁰¹

Moniglia is best known for his quarrelsome character, episodes of which are a clear thread running through this study. Gabriel Maugain has even labelled him as “l’adversaire le plus dangereux des modernes dans le dernier tiers du XVIIe siècle”.²⁰² Because Moniglia had an influential position at the University of Pisa, he could make scholarly reputations as easily as he could break them. He is known to have sabotaged the career of many university professors, including, amongst all, the Dutch philologist Jacob Gronovius (to which we return in the fifth chapter), the lawyer Federico Nomi (1633-1705), and the satirist Benedetto Menzini (1646-1704). Moreover, in 1670, Andrea Moniglia had initiated, together with other more conservative members of the Pisan faculty, a conflict against the followers of Galileo, including Lorenzo Bellini (1643-1704), Donato Rossetti (1633-1686), and Alessandro Marchetti (1633-

¹⁹⁶ G. R. Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici*, vol. VII (Florence: Stamperia Vignozzi, 1781), 83-85.

¹⁹⁷ ASF, Miscellanea Medicea, 368, cc. 1366, “Appunti per lo svolgimento del lavoro di segreteria, presumibilmente durante il mandato di Apollonio Bassetti”.

¹⁹⁸ For the correspondence between Bassetti and the Dutch Republic: ASF, MdP, Fiandre & Olanda, 4260-4265.

¹⁹⁹ Marco Catucci, ‘Moniglia, Giovanni Andrea’, <http://www.treccani.it//enciclopedia/giovanni-andrea-moniglia>, last accessed 16 January 2019.

²⁰⁰ Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, *Ercole in Tebe: festa teatrale rappresentata in Firenze per le reali nozze de' serenissimi sposi Cosimo terzo, principe di Toscana, e Margherita Luisa, principessa d'Orleans* (Firenze: nuova stamperia all'insegna della stella, 1661).

²⁰¹ Ridolfo Del Gratta, ‘I docenti e le cattedre dal 1543 al 1737’, in *Storia dell’Università di Pisa 1343-1737*, ed. Pisa Commissione rettorale per la storia dell’Università di Pisa, vol. 1.2 (Pisa: Edizioni PLUS Università di Pisa, 1993), 526.

²⁰² Franco Carnevale, ‘Ramazzini vs. Moneglia: Una “Terribile” Polemica Medica Seicentesca’, *Medicina & Storia* XI (2011): 213.

1714).²⁰³ This controversy ended with a victory for Moniglia and his followers: a *de facto* prohibition was issued preventing the teachings of atomist and Galilean doctrine at the University of Pisa.²⁰⁴ Outside the walls of the university, Moniglia's main quarrel with his contemporaries concerned the death of the marchioness Maria Maddalena Bagnesi. The person involved in this quarrel was the physician Bernardino Ramazzini (1633-1714), who was, in 1681, called to the bedside of Maria Maddalena who, only a few hours after giving birth, was in a very grave condition. After her death, Ramazzini wrote a medical rapport in which he confirmed that, although she had died because the placenta was not expelled, a manual removal of the placenta would not have saved her life. The rapport was frowned upon by Moniglia who accused Ramazzini for not removing the placenta. This disagreement marked the start of a four-year debate that instigated sixteen publications between Moniglia and Ramazzini regarding their respective medical abilities.²⁰⁵ The quarrel between Ramazzini and Moniglia led to another confrontation, this time with the physician Giovanni Calvoli Cinelli (1626-1706). In his publication, the *Quarta Scanzia*, published in Naples in 1682, Cinelli endorsed the position of Ramazzini.²⁰⁶ Moniglia, offended by Cinelli's publication, managed to convict Cinelli out of revenge and he ended up in prison for 93 days. Moreover, all copies of the *Quarta Scanzia* were burned on the 11th of March 1682 in the inner courtyard of the *Bargello* prison in Florence. These events are extensively described in Magliabechi's letters to his Dutch correspondents:

“Non voglio tralasciare di accennarle, quel che sue, acciocché tanto maggiormente V.S.Ill.ma vegga, in che miserabili tempo qua siamo. Il povero Cinelli, compose la quarta Scanzia, nella quale offese leggerissimamente quell'infamissimo Medico. Non la fece stampare, perché la mando manoscritto a Modena al signore Ramazzini, che fu quello che la fece stampare in Venezia. Non ostante per tanto che avesse offeso leggerissimamente quell'empio, e che non l'avesse fatta stampare, e che non fosse stampata qua, con tutto ciò, fu tenuto tre mesi in segrete; gli furono dati mille gastighi e gli fu il Libretto abbruciato pubblicamente per mano del Boia, col suono della Campana del Bargello, come quando va a impiccarsi qualcuno.”²⁰⁷

From this passage we learn that Magliabechi spoke up for Cinelli, as he did for many scholars that became victim of Moniglia's vicious attacks. This, as we will see in the following chapters of this study, put Moniglia into a rage, who subsequently tried to do everything, ranging from the spreading of fake news reporting the death of Magliabechi to revenge publications, to undermine Magliabechi's reputation.

3. THE TRAVEL ACCOUNTS OF BASSETTI AND MONIGLIA

At the time of Cosimo's grand tour, the Dutch Republic had become a major center of trade, technology, science and learning in seventeenth-century Europe. A *laissez-faire* attitude towards commerce and a

²⁰³ The letters between Alessandro Marchetti and Magliabechi shed light on this conflict (University Library of Pisa, MS. 356 (cc. 59-69) and 357 (cc. 73-278)), several of which are transcribed in Nicola Carranza, 'Antonio Magliabechi e Alessandro Marchetti', *Bollettino Storico Pisano*, no. XXVIII–XIX (1960 1959): 393–446.

²⁰⁴ Renée Raphael, *Reading Galileo: Scribal Technologies and the Two New Sciences* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 130–31.

²⁰⁵ Franco Carnevale, 'Ramazzini vs. Moniglia: Una "Terribile" Polemica Medica Seicentesca', *Medicina & Storia* XI (2011): 213.

²⁰⁶ Giovanni Calvoli Cinelli, *Della Biblioteca Volante Di Giovanni Cinelli Accademico Gelato Scanzia Quarta* (Napoli, 1682), 6-7.

²⁰⁷ Magliabechi to J. Gronovius, Florence, undated, LMU, Cod 4° Cod. Msc 778, f. 26, "I do not want to forget to mention that, so that V.S.Ill.ma sees, in what miserable time we are here. The poor Cinelli, who composed the fourth Scanzia, in which he very lightly offended that very infamous Doctor. He did not print it, because the manuscript was sent to Modena to sir Ramazzini, who was the one who printed it in Venezia. In spite of the fact that he had offended that villain very lightly, and that he had not printed it, and that it was not printed here, with all this, he was kept in prison for three months; he was given a thousand strokes and the Booklet was burned publicly by the Executioner, with the sound of the bell of the Bargello, as when someone will be hanged."

relatively tolerant intellectual and religious environment allowed the Dutch Republic to grow into one of Europe's most progressive and cosmopolitan societies. These thriving conditions made the Dutch Republic a popular destination for foreign travelers, including Cosimo, who visited the country twice to observe and learn from a culture that was far removed from his own. Upon the arrival of Cosimo's travel party from Florence to Utrecht on the 17th of December 1667, Moniglia wrote the following:²⁰⁸

Ma già pel'fosso alle Muraglie intorno
Utrecht Piazza fortissima si gira
Un ora in circa avanti al mezzo giorno,

Ove purgiunti, oh quanto ben si vede
L'ordine delle cose, e che l'Olanda
Dei tesori di Spagna è fatta Erede.

Ivi del circuito si rimira
Il largo spazzio, onde posare il Piede
Dentro alle porte cirascheduno aspira,

Ivi il Pubblico regge, e sol comanda
Quant'utile conosce, e cortesia,
Se guadagno non è mette da banda.

With the Grand Duchy of Tuscany under the sway of strong hereditary princes, the Dutch Republic appeared in the eyes of Moniglia as a society where the citizens ought to rule themselves. In fact, as opposed to the centralized controlled state of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Dutch Republic was rather fragmented without a central government – a country where “il pubblico regge, e sol comanda” – to use the same words of Moniglia. This federated form of government in the Dutch Republic was strongly advocated by political thinkers like the Grand Pensionary of Holland Johan de Witt, with whom Cosimo became acquainted during his grand tour. In his *Deduction* of 1654, De Witt wrote in defense of the adoption of the Act of Seclusion earlier that same year, which debarred the prince of Orange and his descendants from holding office in the State. De Witt's *Deduction* consisted of an oration praising Holland's absolute sovereignty and true freedom, denying any rights to the States General and the House of Orange. De Witt held that high positions cannot be assigned in a republic to those whose ancestors held these posts, without considerable peril to freedom. Interestingly, when De Witt discoursed about bad examples of Republics in Europe, he referred especially to Florence under the Medici rule, which had lost its splendor because an “eminent head” that was inherently dangerous, had damaged the freedom of the Republic.²⁰⁹

The Witt's idea that the Grand Duchy of Tuscany suffered under ineffectual Medici rule, connects to a long history in literatures critical of the political regime of the Medici family, especially under Cosimo III. The 1970s gave rise to a large number of studies that presented the traditional view of Cosimo's III reign as one characterized by bigotry, depression and intellectual obscurantism. Furio Diaz, for instance, depicts Cosimo as a weak mind, who wholly abandoned the government of his state for the sake of blind devotions, spending hours in prayer and surrounding himself with friars and priests.²¹⁰ Similarly, Christopher Hibbert writes that “Florence is much sunk from what it was”, focusing mainly on Cosimo's zeal for gaining converts to Catholicism, providing pensions to foreign protestants who were willing to abandon their faith.²¹¹ Eric Cochrane presented a more nuanced, and rather generous, view of Cosimo's reign, which was, according to the latter, “certainly no worse, and probably somewhat better, than that of most other states at the time”.²¹² Although they partially rehabilitated the long-vilified view of Cosimo's reign, they did not deviate from the fact that Cosimo's religious inclinations were more important than

²⁰⁸ Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, ‘Viaggio del Ser.mo Principe Cosimo di Toscana. Descritto in sette Captioli dal Dot.re Gio. And.a Moniglia suo Medico [called hereafter *Viaggio Moniglia*], UBL, BPL 3294, f. 43.

²⁰⁹ Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 725–726.

²¹⁰ Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana. I Medici* (Turin: UTET, 1976), 494.

²¹¹ Christopher Hibbert, *The rise and fall of the House of Medici* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), 302

²¹² Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the forgotten centuries 1527-1800* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 272.

the government of his own state. To use the words of Cochrane, Cosimo's "exemplary piety was constantly commended by the papal states."²¹³ Many grounds concurred to form this judgement over the centuries and there is no doubt that it contains some truth. Contemporary sources attest to this. For instance, the letters of Cosimo's librarian, Magliabechi, read in part that Cosimo III "non si cura più niente degli Studi, ma della pietà".²¹⁴ In addition, in July 1696, Magliabechi wrote to the Dutch scholar Jacob Gronovius that "Questi Serenissimi Principi non comprano Libri, essendo qua per le Lettere, e per gli Studi, finita ogni cosa affatto".²¹⁵ He scrawled these words on a small piece of paper, separate from the main letter, ready to be burned.²¹⁶

Returning to Moniglia's travel diary, Moniglia amply praises the Dutch Republic the moment Cosimo's travel party arrived in Amsterdam on the 19th of December 1667. He underlined that the Dutch economy was stimulated by Dutch maritime superiority and commercial expansion across the world, which made the Republic "la più ricca Città di questo mondo":²¹⁷

Scendi Apollo (ti prego) e con giocondo
Aspetto per lodar, prepara i carmi
La più ricca Città di questo Mondo.

In terra è formidabile, immortale
Nel mar s'è resa, e a maggior grado ancora
Nel buon governo imperiosa sale.

Non di Macchine eccelse, e non di marmi
Tratti dal sen di Paro, e non d'Eroi
È fecondo Amsterdam, ma toghe, ed Armi

Quivi non si dipinge, e non s'infiora
Il volto, e 'l seno di tenera Donzella
ne gemmato monile il collo indora,

Ha tante quante bastano; ma poi
In politica, e in ora, a questa eguale
Nell'ampio giro tuo trovar non puoi

Quanto semplice più, tanto più bella
Tra vesti umili, e pari Lini avvolta
Tratta gl'affari suoi pulita, e snella.

Seventeenth-century Amsterdam was characterized by its canal houses, ports and warehouses which mirrored the extent and success of its overseas trade. Florence, on the other hand, with its churches, palaces, marbles, statues, nobles, priests, its religious festivities, and a population immersed in religion, was the complete opposite. Once arrived in Amsterdam, Moniglia noted, as shown above, that the wealth of the city is not mirrored in the majesty of its buildings and statuary, but rather in "toghe, ed armi" – learning and warfare. In addition, Moniglia describes the Dutch people as simple and modest, but effective and with faith in the prosperity of their business. In fact, the women are simply dressed, without any jewelry and make-up, running their business with honesty and efficiency.

The thriving commercial conditions in the Republic, attracted the attention of many foreign merchants, including many from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. With the end of the Thirty Years' war, there was a grain crisis in Europe, and large parts of Southern Europe were threatened by famine. Partly because of this, the relations between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Dutch Republic improved, who began to trade large quantities of grain.²¹⁸ Consequently, numerous Italian merchants established

²¹³ Cochrane, 299.

²¹⁴ Magliabechi to J. Gronovius, Florence, undated [1676], LMU, Cod 4° Cod. Msc 778. f. 8, "does not care about scholarship at all, only about compassion".

²¹⁵ Magliabechi to J. Gronovius, Florence, July 1696, LMU, Cod 4° Cod. Msc 778. f. 23, "These Serene Princes do not buy any books because here the literature and scholarship are completely terminated"

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*, "Per le viscere di Gjesù Cristo, e per tutte le sante leggi dell'amicizia, prego V.S.Ill.ma, a stracciar questa carta, subito che l'avrà letta, scrivendolela io in estrena segretezza, e confidenza, ed in sigillo di confenssior naturale, perche mai in tempo alcuno, possa esser veduta da anima vivente".

²¹⁷ Viaggio Moniglia, f. 47, "The richest city in the world".

²¹⁸ Antonella Bicchì, 'Immigration and Acculturation: Italians in Amsterdam', in *Rome * Amsterdam. Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schulte, n.d., 250–51.

themselves in Amsterdam, who became mainly active in trading with the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish colonies, particularly in the Spanish wool trade and the slave trade. Francesco Feroni, immigrating to Amsterdam in the 1640s, is exemplar of this phase of the Italians' activity in the Dutch Republic. Another wave of Italian immigration took place in the second half of the seventeenth century, which coincides with the sudden upswing of Florentine's companies *in accomandita* or limited partnerships abroad.²¹⁹ This third phase is illustrated by the presence of the Florentine merchants Giovacchino Guasconi, Giuseppe Marucelli, and Giovanni de Verrazzano, who had established their trading companies in Amsterdam in the 1660s. The fact that the various branches of their families were spread throughout Europe, made them very attractive partners for the merchants of Amsterdam, and not only for them, but for Cosimo III as well.

On the 17th of December 1667, Cosimo became acquainted with Guasconi, Marucelli and De Verrazzano, who arrived in Utrecht "in una barca bella guarnita di specchi" to celebrate Cosimo's arrival in the Dutch Republic.²²⁰ They were accompanied by Francesco Feroni, the "prima figura" of the company, who was firmly put at the focus of attention "essigendo da quei cavalieri un gran rispetto".²²¹ That their business was booming at the time of Cosimo's visit, is underlined by Moniglia, who sums up his first impressions of these merchants "ingrassati".²²²

Allor sentiamo di sono arrivati
D'Amsterdam i Mercanti Fiorentini
Tutti con buona Cera, ed ingrassati,

E con ordine poscia accorto, e bello
Racchiusi in Casse ad Amsterdam mandati
Avea del Celibi sopra un Vascello;

E doppo mille baciabassi, e inchini,
Fatti da loro al Principe; Al Feroni
Volta l'Altezza Sua, disse i miei vini

Onde qual ora fussimo arrivati
Dal prezioso Elisir, che Bacco stilla
Venissero gli spirti rattivati;

Son anco giunti? Avean provovisioni
Il Principe, di Chianti, e di Castello
Fatte in Firenze delicati, e buoni,

Con tal speranza ogn'alma si tranquilla
Dicendo; in Amsterdam berem per bene,
E d'allegrezza inpetto il cuor ci brilla.

Once arrived in Amsterdam, Cosimo and his traveling companions visited the headquarters of the East and West Indian Trading Companies. Here, they witnessed how the ships of the VOC and WIC brought into the Dutch Republic a wide variety of goods and curiosities from all corners of the world. They paid a visit to the company's warehouse, where pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves were collected and assigned an estimated value for the market:

"Nel suddetto Palazzo sono però i magazzini di tutte le merci che vengono d'India, in genere di droghe, et un altro ne anno nel cuore della città ove stanno le merci fini d'alta natura, come gioie, Telerie, udori e cose diverse. Nel primo vedole S.A. tutte le stanze, altre piene di centinaia di botti di noci mostarda altre, di Pepe, a migliara e migliara di moggia, spalato et ammortato sino al tetto, come usa nelli magazzini del grano, altre di migliara di balle di cannella, altre di garofani il cui valore ascende a milioni di fiorini".²²³

²¹⁹ Bicci, 253.

²²⁰ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 135, "boat beautifully decorated with mirrors".

²²¹ *Ibidem*, "demanding from these gentlemen great respect."

²²² *Ibidem*, "fattened".

²²³ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 142, "in that same building there are however the stockrooms of all the goods that come from the Indies, which generally consists of herbs, and they have another one in the heart of the city where there are the fine goods of different nature, like jewels, fabrics, perfumes, and diverse things. In the first one Your Highness sees all the rooms, and he sees other rooms full of hundreds of bottles of nutmeg, others with thousands and thousands bushells of peper, shovelled

Moreover, The Republic's remarkable political structure and absence of a state religion impacted all branches of Dutch society, especially the printing industry. In fact, the relatively open government culture, with its religious tolerance and freer censorship policies, made Amsterdam the "magazin de l'universe".²²⁴ Printers benefitted from the lack of control, and could take advantage and profit from the stricter conditions in other countries. As a result, the Dutch printing industry flourished in the seventeenth century as information and books flowed into and out of the Dutch Republic, with Amsterdam as its printing capital.²²⁵ Not for nothing, Magliabechi referred in his letter to the Huguenot printer Pierre Huguëtan in Amsterdam that he was in a country where "è lecito liberamente lo stampare ciò che vuole".²²⁶ The wealth of books in the Low Countries did not go unnoticed by Bassetti and Moniglia, who, together with prince Cosimo, visited libraries, bookshops and printer's workshops throughout their visit in the Dutch Republic. Moniglia records these moments as follows:²²⁷

In ampie stamperia veddi infinito
Gran numero di libri, dissi allora
Perché di nobile non son io fornito?

Cent'ungheri; a me donagli; m'invaglia
Di far nobile spese; I libri piglio
Ma di studiargli m'andò via la voglia.

Il Principe Padron, che sempre onora
Il mio debil talento, entro la soglia
Di Camera mi chiama, e caccia fuora.

In Amsterdam, the Amsterdam bookseller Pieter Blaeu guided Cosimo and his travel companions to his own printing shop, where they spent hours examining and buying all sorts of books and maps:

"Si portò a veder carte recondite, e situazione di luoghi diversi disegnati delli paesi d'India. Le furono mostrati varij libri d'immagini, che mostrano li abiti, il costume e molte azioni de' popoli d'India, di China, e del Giappone e trattò di comprarli."²²⁸

Through Blaeu, Cosimo became also acquainted with the lawyer Laurens van der Hem (1621-1678). Together they paid a visit to the renowned collections of the Amsterdam lawyer, admiring "disegni di città, luoghi, e coste dell'Indie eccellentemente miniati, et un gran numero di carte geografiche universali e particolari pur manufatte". In the Hague, Cosimo visited the library of Isaac Vossius (1618-1689), which was "ricca di manoscritti".²²⁹

The universities contributed to the flourishing of the printing industry as well. Five of the seven provinces boasted institutions for higher education, of which the University of Leiden, founded in 1575, was the oldest and most important one.²³⁰ At the time of Cosimo's visit, the University had attracted an

and amortized up to the ceiling, as used in the storage of grain, others with thousands of bales of cinnamon, others with carnations, the value of which comes down to millions of Florins".

²²⁴ Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck et al., eds., *Le Magasin de L'Univèrs: The Dutch Republic as the Centre of the European Book Trade: Papers Presented at the International Colloquium Held at Wassenaar, 5-7 July 1990* (Brill Publishers, 1992).

²²⁵ Andrew Pettegree and Arther der Weduwen have shown that the Dutch produced more printed items per head than any other country in Europe, and by quite some considerable margin, publishing at least 357.500 editions in the seventeenth century alone ("What Was Published in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic?", *Livre – Revue Historique*, 2018, 1).

²²⁶ Magliabechi to P. Huguëtan, undated, UBL, PAP 15, "it is freely legitimate to print whatever he wants".

²²⁷ Viaggio Moniglia, c. 53.

²²⁸ Memorie Bassetti, c. 143, "He was led to see secret maps, and situations of various places of India. He was shown various books with images, that show the customs, clothes and many activities of de population of India, China, and Japan and he negotiated to buy them".

²²⁹ Memorie Bassetti, c. 49, "rich in manuscripts".

²³⁰ See Paul G. Hoftijzer, 'The Dutch Republic, Centre of the European Book Trade in the 17th Century', *European History Online (EGO)*, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/hoftijzerp-2015-en>, last accessed 1 April 2019, cit. 4.

international faculty with some of the foremost scholars of the day including Nicolaas Heinsius (1620-1681), Johannes Fredericus Gronovius (1611-1671), Franciscus de le Boë Sylvius (1614-1672) and Johannes Van Horne (1621-1670). During his visit at the University of Leiden, Johannes Fredericus Gronovius welcomed the Grand Duke with a Latin oration. After the session, leaflets with other poems in honor of Cosimo were distributed, which were later included in a published edition.²³¹ In Leiden, Nicolaas Heinsius acted as their guide, and together they paid a visit to the printing office of the Elzevier firm, which was located right next to the academy building and the botanical garden:

“Nel cortile preambolo al liceo, vi è un elegantissimo, e ben tenuto orto di semplici, pieno assai di piante rare. Havvi ancora la famosa stamperia dell’Helzeviro librario d’Amsterdam che anche qui come ad Utrecht fa andare tale officina. In questa sono sei torchi, ed huomini esperti che sempre lavorano, e godono il beneficio di tutti li professori della facoltà che prestano ogni opera più cortese alla correzione.”²³²

In Leiden, the Elzeviers served as university printers from 1620 to 1713, thanks to their large assortment of typefaces, including commercially unattractive fonts such as Arabic, which were used to print the oriental studies and text editions of the Leiden professors.²³³ The Heinsius family had an influential position in the Elzevier firm. Nicolaas’ father, the renowned philologist Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), had been a trusted advisor of the publishing house in Leiden, while Nicolaas had that same position for the Elsevier branch in Amsterdam. Specifically, Heinsius was the advisor and a good friend of Daniel Elsevier, who, on the 7th of January 1668, had presented himself to the Grand Duke and gave him several books that just came off his press in Amsterdam.²³⁴ A business correspondence between Daniel Elzevier and the Medici family, however, did not come off the ground once Cosimo returned to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. He rather preferred to rely on the intermediation of Nicolaas Heinsius. Only in exceptional cases, when Heinsius was too busy, the Grand Duke ordered the merchant Guasconi to contact Elzevier directly: “S.A. comprerà volentieri tutti i volumi segnati in questo istesso foglio, però dice che ella ne sia coll’Elzeviro e se ne intenda anche con l’Heinsio, al quale se ne scrive, se il tempo della vendita stingesse si che V.S.ill.ma non potesse provvedere con la direzione di Mons. Heinsio, vuole L’A.S. che ella con l’Elzeviro facciano nel’ miglior modo”.²³⁵

²³¹ Chris L. Heesakkers, ‘An Lipsio Licuit et Cunaeo Quod Mihi Non Licet? Petrus Francius and Oratorical Delivery in the Amstrdam Athenaeum Illustre.’, in *Ut Granum Sinapis: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Honour of Jozef IJsewijn*, ed. Gilbert Tournoy and Dirk Sacré, Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia, XII (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 333.

²³² Memorie Bassetti, c. 28, “In the inner courtyard there is a very elegant and well-kept botanical garden, very full of rare plants. There is also the famous printshop of the Elzeviers, booksellers of Amsterdam, who manage here, as in Utrecht, the office. In this one there are six presses, and expert men who always work, and whose work benefits from the faculty professors who provide them to correct their work with courtesy”.

²³³ Hoftijzer, ‘The Dutch Republic, Centre of the European Book Trade in the 17th Century’, cit. 24. For more about the Elsevier’s publishing activities, see William Davis Davies, *The World of the Elzeviers, 1580–1712* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1954); Paul G. Hoftijzer, ed., *Boekverkoopers van Europa. Het Zeventiende-Eeuwse Nederlandse Uitgevershuis Elzevier* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000); Paul G. Hoftijzer, ‘The Dutch Republic, Centre of the European Book Trade in the 17th Century Dutch Book Trade’, *European History Online (EGO)*, 2015, 1–31; Alphonse Willems, *Les Elzevier: histoire et annales typographiques* (Brussels: G.A. van Trigt, 1880). Paul G. Hoftijzer, ‘Between Mercury and Minerva: Dutch printing offices and bookshops as intermediaries in seventeenth-century scholarly communication’, in *Les grands intermédiaires culturels de la République des Lettres*, ed. Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck and Hans Bots (Amsterdam/Maarssen: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2005), 119-131.

²³⁴ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 22. For the relationship between Heinsius and Elzevier see William R. Veder, *Brieven van Daniël Elsevier Aan Nicolaas Heinsius (9 Mei 1675-1 Juli 1679). Volgens Het Handschrift, Bewaard Ter Universiteits-Bibliotheek Te Utrecht, Met Enkele Aanteekeningen Uitgegeven Door de Vereeniging Ter Bevordering van de Belangen Des Boekhandels.*, vol. 3, Bijdragen Tot de Geschiedenis van Den Nederlandschen Boekhandel 2 (Amsterdam: Van Kampen, 1890).

²³⁵ Bassetti to Guasconi, Florence, 17 April 1674, ASF, MdP, 4262, f. 366, “Your Highness would like to buy every volume indicated in that sheet, and discuss it with both Elzevier and Heinsius, to whom a letter has been written. In these cases the time of the sale is running out, and if Your Illustrious Lordship is unable to make provisions with Heinsius, Your Highness wants that you work together with Elzevier in the best possible way”.

At the University of Leiden, Cosimo also visited the anatomical theatre and the university library, which however did not live up to the expectations of the Grand Duke:

“Apresso fu condotto al Teatro dell’anatomia che è giusto come quello di Pisa, quanto all’auditorio, ma ornato di moltissimi scheletri ben collegati, d’huomini e d’animali grossi e minuti, tenestrie, aerei, aquatili, et anfibi, et di più di alcuni armarij di rarità naturali curiose in genere di animali, piante, conchiglie, minerali e cose di tal natura, donate da diversi huomini dotti, secondo a ciascuna cosa canta l’iscrizione. Tutto insieme, l’aggregato di questo teatro non ha punto del singolare, e del grande. Vi è vicina, e congiunta nello stesso ceppo di fabbriche la pubblica biblioteca a comodo della studiosa gioventù in cui né per qualità né per quantità di libri, né per ornamenti, né per nessun’altra circostanza, non si vede nulla di riguardevole, onde S.A. presto se ne sbrigò.”²³⁶

Cosimo also frequented botanical gardens and cabinets of curiosities to learn about the new discoveries of natural history and anatomy, never ceasing to admire the numerous shells, animals, and plants that the Dutch had imported from the East and West Indies. In fact, it was thanks to trading networks of the East and West India Trading Companies that Cosimo could admire so many exotica in the Dutch gardens and cabinets of curiosities.²³⁷ For instance, on the 27th of December 1667, Cosimo and his travelling companions visited in Amsterdam the famous aviary of birds belonging to secretary Jan Roeters (1614–1668), who had collected birds from every corner from the world:

“Si condusse ad un Giardino fuori della città pel vedere certo serbatorio d’uccelli raccolti da uno che si dilettaua conservarne di tutte le spezie reperibili in qualunque parte del mondo, i più pellegrini, e rari: onde d’India Orientale, e d’America vi sono cose bellissime. Appunto in tal giorno era morto il Padrone di tal luogo che faceva questa professione signore Routers segretario della città. Et nel medesimo punto erano anche morti due uccelli singolari, non senza molta ammirazione della gente.”²³⁸

Then, the next day, they visited the private collections of Johan Wttenbogaert (1608–1680), who for the last 50 years had collected shells and minerals “quanto hanno mai condotte tutte le navi d’Indie, et d’altre parti del mondo.”²³⁹ In addition, on the 4th of January they decided to pay a visit to the house of the renowned anatomist Frederik Ruysch (1638–1731). Ruysch’s cabinet was one of the must-sees of contemporary Amsterdam, and Bassetti was stunned by the collection’s rich display of anatomical specimens and wondered how the anatomist had prepared the specimens to look so alive, referring to a

²³⁶ Memorie Bassetti, c. 152, “Hereafter he was led to the anatomy theater which is just like the one in Pisa, as is the auditorium, but adorned with very many skeletons well bound together, of men, large and small animals, terrestrial, aerial, aquatic, and amphibian, and more cabinets filled with curious natural curiosities of all sorts of animals, plants, shells, minerals and things of that nature, donated by several learned men, as is chanted by each description. All together, this aggregate theater has nothing singular, or substantial. Nearby, and in the same strain of buildings, there is the public library, at the convenience of the young students in which, neither for its quality, nor for its quantity of books, neither for its ornaments, nor for any other circumstance, one does not see nothing of consideration, and so Your Highness quickly hurries away [from the library].”

²³⁷ Dániel Margócsy, *Commercial Visions: Science, Trade, and Visual Culture in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 2. See also Eric Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715*, trans. Peter Mason, vol. 191, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden/Boston: Brill Publishers, 2010).

²³⁸ Memorie Bassetti, c. 172, “he is led to a garden outside the city to see a certain reservoir of birds gathered by a man who desired to conserve from all species available in every part of the world, the most foreign and rare ones, amongst which there are beautiful things from the East Indies and America. On that day, the proprietor of that place died, sir Routers, who was the secretary of this city. At the same time, two singular birds died as well, non without great admiration of the people.”

²³⁹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 8, “ever brought by every ship from the Indies, and other parts of the world. About Wttenbogaert see S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, ‘Mr Johannes Wttenbogaert (1608–1680), Een Man Uit Remonstrants Milieu, En Rembrandt van Rijn’, *Jaarboek Genootschap Amstelodamum* 70 (1978): 146–69; See also Oscar Gelderblom, *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 132–33.

“cadavero di un Putto così ben conservato, che par vivo”.²⁴⁰ In Leiden, on the 9th of January, they visited the renowned botanical garden of the University, which was “ben tenuto” and “piena assai di piante rare”.²⁴¹ Moreover (although both Bassetti and Moniglia does not make mention of it) they visited the collection of insects of Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680). Cosimo was so fascinated by Swammerdam’s collection that he offered the Dutch scientist 12.000 guilders for the collection, on condition that Swammerdam settled in the Florentine court.²⁴² Although the purchase of this cabinet failed, Cosimo remained interested in how these natural curiosities were collected in the Dutch Republic. For instance, in 1714, as will be explained in more detail below, Cosimo sent the botanist Jacopo Guiducci to the Dutch Republic to inform him about the present state of affairs of these collections and curiosities.

The appraisal of a city’s fortification and technical innovations forms a central topic in the travel account of Bassetti, a fact that, as will be discussed in more detail later on, had significant relevance to his and Cosimo’s future ambitions to deal with the many technological shortcomings in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. During his travels, Bassetti had every opportunity to study the technical qualities of the Dutch. They had arrived in the Low Countries by means of a canal boat, with which they had travelled all the way from the German border to Amsterdam. Along the way, Bassetti spent his time inspecting fortresses, canals and water works. In Schenkenschans, for example, he witnessed a “fortezza delli Olandesi sopra la punta d’una lingua di terra” which was strategically build at the bifurcation of the Rhine to Arnhem.²⁴³ In Utrecht, as noted earlier, he observed the way the Dutch defended their territories against their enemies, how they controlled water in an efficient manner, and used windmills to cut wood.

Religion figures prominently in the organization of Cosimo’s grand tour. As pointed out in the entries of their diary, nowhere than in Amsterdam, Bassetti and Moniglia witnessed a greater diversity of religions.²⁴⁴ They visited churches, both Catholic and Protestant, and even went to a service at the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. Inside the synagogue, a private residence was prepared for the Prince, who was received with open arms by the Hebrew community. Yet, according to Bassetti, Cosimo “non ne usò punto e vi si trattenne anche poco”, preferring the hospitality in the house of the merchant Feroni instead.²⁴⁵ In an entry of the 26th of December 1667, Bassetti reports that Cosimo “volle vedere diverse chiese d’Eretici”, a clear indication of Cosimo’s curiosity towards the religious traditions of the countries he visited.²⁴⁶ Consequently, they visited “una chiesa di Luterani, in una d’Anabattisti, in una di Sociniana et in una di Arminiana, che sono tutte religioni differenti”. Following that, they went to the principal Calvinist Church of Amsterdam, nowadays called the *New Church*, which was, and still is located at the Dam square. The church had attracted much of their attention: “edificiato già da i Cattolici” the church was “magnifico, e superbo per ogni circostanza”.²⁴⁷

Upon entry into the Church, Bassetti immediately observed the interior to be “semplice” noting that the Reformists “non tengono in Chiesa imagini d’alcuna sorte”.²⁴⁸ Moreover, he noticed that there

²⁴⁰ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 166, “corpse of a *putto* (chubby male child) that well-preserved, it seems real.”

²⁴¹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 144, “well maintained”; “very full of rare plants”. For a description of Ruysch’s cabinet, see Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715*, 319–25.

²⁴² Jorink, 314.

²⁴³ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 128, “fortification of the Dutch build upon the point of a strip of land”

²⁴⁴ On religious diversity in the Dutch Republic, see Willem Frijhoff, ‘La coexistence confessionnelle. Complicités, méfiances et ruptures aux Provinces Unies’, in *Histoire vécue du peuple chrétien*, ed. Jean Delumeau, vol. 2 (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 1979) 229-255; W. Th. M. Frijhoff, ‘Dimensions de la coexistence confessionnelle’, in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, ed. C. Berkvens- Stevelink, J. Israel and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1997) 213-237; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap press, 2007), 172-176.

²⁴⁵ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 146, “Did not make use of it and remained there briefly”

²⁴⁶ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 2, “Wanted to see various heretic churches”.

²⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, “magnificent, and superb in every instance”.

²⁴⁸ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 4, “do not hold any kind of images in the Church”

was no light in the church, apart from some daylight that arrived from the stained-glass windows at the entrance, which represented the history of “l’acquisto delle Eretici sopra i Cattolici”.²⁴⁹ In the back corner of the Church, Bassetti admired the grave of commander Johan van Galen (1604-1653), who was well-known to him for his involvement in the battle of Livorno, an event that had largely involved the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the 1650s.²⁵⁰ Next to the grave, a marble memorial was erected to commemorate “la fazione delli Olandesi contro li Inglesi seguita a Livorno l’anno 1653”.²⁵¹ The battle of Livorno, which took place on the 14th of March 1653, was one of the most important naval confrontations in the first Anglo-Dutch war. The war, the result of the intense commercial rivalry between the English and the Dutch during this period, did not end well for the Dutch commander Van Galen. After that a “botta di cannone” had smashed the leg of the Dutch commodore, he died “nel porto 9 giorni doppo la vittoria”.²⁵²

Bassetti took time and effort to describe the religious practices of the Dutch, carefully observing the ceremony of the Reformed Christians. While visiting the *New Church*, the Eucharistic celebration must have particularly attracted his attention, which constituted one of the central points of controversy between Catholics and Protestants. While reformed Christians held that Christ’s body and blood are not corporeally present in the Eucharist, but rather present in a spiritual way – or “in memoria de lui” to use the same words of Bassetti – the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church held that that the bread and wine offered in the sacrifice of the sacrament of the Eucharist physically became the body and blood of Christ. Bassetti examined the ritual in the following way:

“La comunione de calvinisti va come l’ordine seguente: apparecchiano un gran tavola, lunga, e stretta come quelle de frati, posta d’avanti alla tribuna per travino della chiesa. In mezzo di essa sta il predicante volto verso la porta. All’una e l’altra banda sono sedili di panche, i quali s’empiono prima dal numero delle Donne, che seggono tutte a tavola. Il predicante ha di avanti di sé quattro gran peker [beker, cup] di argento pieno di vino, et una gran sottocoppa piena di fette di pane bianco sottili come sarebbe la pasta Reale ordinaria. Prende egli di quelle fette e ne fa bocconi de’ quali empie due piatti argento empì uno della tavola destra et altro alla sinistra della tavola. Poi piglia per sé un boccone di quel pane, dicendo in fiammingo questo è il corpo del signore, pigliamolo in memoria di lui, acciò siamo fatti di degni del bene ch’egli ci promette, e restiamo purgati dalle colpe. Poi bevendo ad uno dei calici, dice, questo è il sangue del Signore, poi porge un boccone del detto pane in mano a ciascuna delle due donne che li sono a canto”²⁵³

Note here how Bassetti objectively described every detail of the whole ceremony. These descriptions stand in stark contrast with the rather explicit verses of Moniglia, which appear to be loaded with disapproval towards the Reformed culture of the Dutch Republic. For instance, the same church is described by Moniglia with the following verses:

²⁴⁹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2 , c. 2 “The acquisition of the Heretics from the Catholics.”

²⁵⁰ Nicholas Brownlees, ‘A Medici Agent’s Newsletters to Florence during the Leghorn Crisis of 1653’, in *The Grand Ducal Medici and Their Archive (1537-1743)*, ed. Assonitis and Sandberg, 203–11.

²⁵¹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2 , c. 2, “The Dutch’ blockade against the English happened in Livorno the year 1653”.

²⁵² *Ibidem*, “cannon fire”; “in the harbours nine days after victory”.

²⁵³ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2 , c. 3, “The communion of the Calvinists goes as follows: they set a big, long table, and tight as that of the friars, in the front of the tribune of the Church. In the middle of it stands the preacher, faced down the door. On both sides there are benches, which are being filled first with women, who sit all at the table. In front of the preacher there are four big cups of silver, full of wine, and a big plate filled with thin slices of white bread, as would be the Royal, ordinary meal. From these slices he takes some, making drabs with which he fills two big plates of silver, one for the right table, and one of the left table. He then takes a mouthful of a drab of bread, and says in Flemish, this is the body of the Lord, we take him in our memory, so that we are made worth of the good he promises us, and we remain purged from our sins. He then drinks from one of the chalices, and says, this is the blood of our Lord, and subsequently offers a bite of that bread to each of the two women that sit next to him.”

“È sontuoso il Tempio ove si onora
La falsa Religion di quella setta,
Che dell’empio Calvino il nome implora.”²⁵⁴

The following entry might provide a better example of the grudge Moniglia held against the reformation. On the 16th of January 1668, Cosimo and his travelling companions arrived in Rotterdam, where they paid a visit to the principal church of the city – the St. Lawrence’s Church. Near the church they observed the bronze statue of Erasmus, which was erected in 1620 by the renowned Dutch artist Hendrick de Keyser.²⁵⁵

“La sera si stese il giro delle carrozze alla maggiore Chiesa, dove S.A. discese, e la girò tutta osservando i vestigi della dignità di quel Capitolo, dal cui collegio uscì il famoso Erasmus, al quale nella piazza vicina si vede eretta una bella statua di bronzo, in abito togale, con un gran libro aperto nelle mani”²⁵⁶

While Bassetti describes the characteristics of the statue, Moniglia’s account is more personal.²⁵⁷

Qui nacque Erasmo empio tirano, e infido
Al cattolico culto, ma nel mondo
Per le lettere umane Uomo di grido,

Ei fosse; tosto mi sudò la fronte
Evennemi in veder l’alto colosso
Desiderio di fargli oltraggio, ed’onte;

Oh quant’anime, of quante andaro al fondo
Per la voce di lui, che di Calvino
Parlò nell’Eresia troppo facondo.

Ma perché allora com’io vorrei non posso
Dargli un sfregio, non veduto almeno
Pian pian m’accosto, e te li pisciò addosso.

Statua di Bronzo, e di lavor più fino
Oh a quel di fidia s’adeguasce, in ponte
Stassi eretta a costui, quasi divino.

Bassetti frequently dwells on the restrictions on Catholic worship, which confined its services to inconspicuous hidden churches. When Cosimo and his entourage arrived in the Dutch Republic, less than 20 percent of the Dutch population was Catholic, while the largest part belonged to the Reformed Church. Tolerant as the Dutch Republic might be, the Reformed Church was the only public church, while the Roman Catholics were only allowed to gather in hidden chapels.²⁵⁸ Compared with the Reformed Church, which was sustained by the city government, the Catholics were distinctly at a disadvantage. When entering a Dominican church in Amsterdam, Bassetti witnessed the poor reality in which the Catholics priests were forced to live:

“Quei buoni padri li resero ogni rispetto, e mostrono la loro povertà, che fu tormentata largamente con elemosina. La chiesa apparisce quasi desolata: per la porta principale non vi

²⁵⁴ Viaggio Moniglia, f. 56, “The glorious temple where one honors, the wrong religion of that cult, whose name derives from that evil Calvin”.

²⁵⁵ ‘Standbeeld van Erasmus- Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies’, accessed 8 February 2019, https://www.erasmus.org/index.cfm?itm_name=statueoferasmus-NL.

²⁵⁶ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 56, “In the evening, he took the carriage to make a round around the main church, where Your Highness got off, and turned around it, observing the vestige of the Church, from which college the famous Erasmus spawns, and from whom in the square nearby one sees a beautiful statue made of bronze, in a gown, with a big book open in his hands.”

²⁵⁷ Viaggio Moniglia, f. 71.

²⁵⁸ Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806*, 129.

l'entra, essendo per di dentro contro a essa alzato un Muro, onde l'adito è per una porticella segreta laterale in posto indecente.”²⁵⁹

Concealment, thus, was a fundamental condition of the Dutch toleration. In Haarlem, Bassetti noted that the Catholics were “lasciati viver con libertà, salvo nel far pubbliche le lor sacre funzioni”, in Delft they were treated “con molta dolcezza” and in Leiden Bassetti observed that:²⁶⁰

“I Cattolici son lasciati viver con ogni tolleranza, e non è permesso loro l'uso publico della religione, e molti sono i luoghi privati ovi la esercitano, come molti quelli che la professano. Sono in tutti dieci i Predicanti eretici, mantenuti dalla città con buoni assegnamenti fin di 100 fiorini il mese. La chiesa maggiore detta Basilica Petrina, già consacrata a Cristiani, è ad uso riformato”²⁶¹

Throughout Bassetti's diary, Cosimo appeared to be curious and open to exploring the different religions and habits of the Dutch citizens. Yet, other sources indicate that Cosimo had also shown signs of hostility towards the Dutch tolerance. For instance, Jacob Gronovius, who travelled to France, Italy and Spain in the 1670s, wrote between the lines of his travel diary that the radical philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), after hearing that Cosimo viewed his publication negatively, desired to meet the prince, but was told that the latter preferred not to receive “such a man”.²⁶²

4. THE AFTERMATH OF THE GRAND TOUR

Although many studies call Cosimo's reign merely a disaster, failing to save the Medici court from its extinction, that does not detract from his evident involvement in the Dutch culture and society to help Tuscany profit culturally, technologically and economically to the fullest extent possible.²⁶³ In light of

²⁵⁹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, c. 122, “These good Fathers gave him every respect, and showed him their poverty, which was largely tormented by charity. The Church appears almost abandoned: one does not enter through the main door because from the inside a wall has been erected, whereby one enters through a very small, secret door on the side of the Church in an obscene place.”

²⁶⁰ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 25, “left free to live, except for making public their sacred functions” and c. 52, “gently”.

²⁶¹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, c. 29, “The Catholics are led free to live with every tolerance, and they are not allowed to practice their religion in public, and there are many private places where they practice it, as well as many persons that profess that faith. In total, there are ten heretic preachers, sustained by the city with good provisions of 100 Florins each month. The main church called *Basilica Petrina*, which was already consecrated by the Christians, is Reformed.”

²⁶² Jacob Gronovius, *Dagverhaal eener reis naar Spanje en Italië in 1672 en 1673*, UBL, LTK 859, f. 26, “Als Spinosa gehoort had, dat syn Exc. syn boeck mispresen had, sond hy icmant an syn Exc. om met hem daer van te spreken, doch kreeg tot antwoort, dat syn Exc. sulck een man niet begeerde over syn dorpel te syen”. This episode is extensively described by Giuseppina Totaro in, ‘Niels Stensen (1638-1686) e la prima diffusione della filosofia di Spinoza nella Firenze di Cosimo III,’ in Paolo Christofilini (eds.), *L'Herésie Spinoziste : La Discussion Sur Le Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, 1670-1677, Et La Reception Immédiate Du Spinozisme: Actes Du Colloque International de Cortona, 10-14 Avril 1991* (Amsterdam: APA- Holland University Press, 1995): 161. Cosimo's unwillingness to meet Spinoza is also mentioned in Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 44.

²⁶³ Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, 62-63. A positive reassessment of Cosimo's reign resulted in 1993 in the volume *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III*, edited by Franco Angiolini, Vieri Becagli and Marcello Verga, aimed at a reconsideration of Cosimo's reign. In this study, Marcello Verga holds a similar position as Van Veen and McCormick, arguing that deep-rooted images of Cosimo as an incompetent ruler “finiscono per non farci comprendere, e quasi dimenticare, la larghezza e la qualità dei rapporti intellettuali che Cosimo seppe intrecciare nei suoi viaggi europei” (Marcello Verga, ‘Appunti per una storia politica del Granducato di Cosimo III (1670-1723)’, in *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III: atti del convegno, Pisa-San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), 4-5 giugno 1990*, ed. Franco Angiolini, Vieri Becagli, and Marcello Verga (Florence: Edifir, 1993), 338. Moreover, Marcello Fantoni, for instance, has underlined that the interpretation of the Italian baroque as a decaying period for the Italian courts has hitherto obtained scarce consideration, though on the contrary it represents a central argument to interpret Cosimo's reign (Marcello Fantoni, ‘Il bigottismo di Cosimo III: da leggenda storiografica ad oggetto storico’, in *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III*, 390). This image is mainly related to the legacy of the eighteenth-century historian Jacopo Riguccio

this, it is therefore understandable that Cosimo and his closest and most qualified subjects tried to undertake, especially during their grand tour, an effective and careful evaluation of the Dutch Republic regarding its scholarly, political and economic abilities. Cosimo's reign seems to have been dominated by his commercial and political ambition that equally testifies to his great fascination for the Dutch Republic. For example, Cosimo desired to establish a Tuscan equivalent to the Dutch East-India company that would have operated from Livorno.²⁶⁴ As noted earlier, prior to his travel to the Dutch Republic, Cosimo had commissioned Pieter Blaeu to send him every book that concerned the Dutch trade with the East Indies, information that was augmented by what Cosimo had heard and experienced in Amsterdam during his grand tour. Once he returned to Florence, he officially granted Livorno the status of a free port after the example of Amsterdam, lowering the transactions costs associated with the deposit, transit and exchange of merchandise. In addition, Cosimo's fascination for the Dutch Republic might have found its ultimate expression in 1710, when he commissioned his envoy Carlo Rinucci to leave for the Dutch Republic to request for a design plan to be drawn up by Anthonie Heinsius, (1641-1720), Grand Pensionary to the Province of Holland, and the members of the States General, detailing how the once *Repubblica Fiorentina* (1115-1532) could be restored after the model of the Dutch Republic.²⁶⁵ Cosimo III hoped to prevent the Tuscan territories from falling into foreign hands after his death. Yet, this risk was remedied with the birth of Cosimo's son and successor Gian Gastone in 1671. Consequently, the plan to turn the Grand Duchy of Tuscany into a Republic faded into obscurity.

The increasing expansion of correspondence and interchange between the Medici court and the Dutch Republic that are a direct result of Cosimo's experience in the Dutch Republic, illustrates this zeal to keep up with the latest developments in religion, politics, art and learning that took place in the North. For instance, as has been shown by Henk Th. van Veen and Andrew McCormick, shortly after Cosimo ascended the grand ducal throne, the few agents Ferdinando II had maintained in Amsterdam, like the Dutch merchant Jan van der Nessen and Francesco Feroni, were replaced by an entire network of merchants, diplomats and scholars.²⁶⁶ This network was orchestrated by two individuals – Apollonio Bassetti and Antonio Magliabechi – who, each in their own quality, embodied Cosimo's ambitions. Cosimo, right after his appointment as Grand Duke, secured their position at the Medici court, nominating Bassetti as his *Segretario della Cifra* in 1670 and Magliabechi as his court librarian in 1673. While Magliabechi's centrality in the Tuscan-Dutch exchange will be addressed in detail in the next chapter, here we take a look at the role of Bassetti in the aftermath of Cosimo's Grand Tour.

Bassetti's travel experience established the personal credit upon which the exchange between Florence and the Dutch Republic could take place, paving the way for many of his later epistolary contacts and professional activities.²⁶⁷ In fact, during his visit in the Dutch Republic, he not only traded

Galluzzi (1739-1801), who had characterised Cosimo's reign as a complete failure for which its ruler was entirely to blame. Yet, Galluzzi, as the newly appointed court historian of the Lorraine dynasty – the new sovereign of Florence – needed to diminish the performance of their predecessors to enhance their reputation. The *Istoria* of Galluzzi, in fact, was dedicated in its entirety to Pietro Leopoldo d'Asburgo-Lorena (1747-1792), Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1765 to 1790, who had commissioned Galluzzi to compile the work. In addition, Paolo Malanima has shown that Cosimo III was committed to the development of rural areas. The population in the rural areas grew about twenty-five percent, a growth that was caused by the low grain prices at the time (Paolo Malanima, 'L'economia Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III', in *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III*, 3-19).

²⁶⁴ Van Veen, 'Cosimo de' Medici's reis naar de Republiek', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 102, no. 1, (1987): 49.

²⁶⁵ Van Veen, 'Cosimo de' Medici's reis naar de Republiek', 52. About Cosimo's plan to restore the Florentine Republic once his family had died out, see also Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, 46-49; Emilio Robiony, *Gli Ultimi Medici e la successione al Granducato di Toscana* (Florence: Bernardo Seeber, 1905), 105-114; Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici, 512-514*. On the Florentine republic, see Rudolf von Albertini, *Firenze dalla repubblica al principato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970).

²⁶⁶ Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, 62.

²⁶⁷ David S. Lux and Harold J. Cook, 'Closed Circles or Open Networks?: Communicating at a Distance during the Scientific Revolution', 183.

information, but he primarily judged the persons he met there, deciding whether to trust someone or not. Based on his diary, Bassetti appears to be a rather careful, systematic observer who carefully selected persons he could rely on once he returned to Florence. The Dutch scholar Nicolaas Heinsius, for instance, was a person “lentissimo nell’espressiva” and “di difficile comunicativa”, yet he appeared to be a “letterato grande”.²⁶⁸ The Florentine merchant Giovacchino Guasconi had made a good first impression on him during his stay in Utrecht, calling him a “uomo cortese, intelligente et di buona speranza”.²⁶⁹ After his return to Tuscany, Bassetti called regularly on the services of both Heinsius and Guasconi, who provided the Tuscan court with a wealth of information about the Dutch Republic.

From 1670 onwards, when his appointment as the grand ducal secretary officially commenced, Bassetti relied on the persons he had met in the Dutch Republic to execute any conceivable request by Cosimo III. Members of this network undertook diplomatic activities on his behalf, kept him informed about recent affairs by weekly newsletters and, most importantly it seems from his correspondence, supplied him with books, paintings, tapestries and other products to enrich the grand ducal collections. Trustworthy, up-to-date information was thus the lifeblood of his daily management practices. The wealth of information that Bassetti received from his network of informers is nowadays preserved in the State Archive of Florence, and contains thousands of letters and *avvisi* containing commercial, political, diplomatic, and military news from the Dutch Republic. These information collecting practices are rather similar, albeit on a much smaller scale, to the administrative techniques designed by his contemporary, the French minister of Finance Jean-Baptiste Colbert. According to his most recent biographer, Jacob Soll, Colbert was certainly not a man who knew everything, but he could find someone to give him answers and provide reports on a wide range of topics, drawing on his networks of scholars and agents all over Europe.²⁷⁰ Colbert believed that all knowledge had practical values for the government, being convinced that a minister of state could learn from humanist, ecclesiastical, commercial, military and engineering culture alike.²⁷¹ Like Colbert, Bassetti appeared to have the same qualities as an “information-master”, capable of managing the extensive accounts and administrative papers of the Medici reign.²⁷²

An example of how Bassetti systematically collected information is illustrated by the following case. In 1683, Bassetti wrote a series of letters to various of his subjects who were living in the most important, and well-connected cities in- and outside of Italy. Besides Venice, Genova, Naples, Livorno, Bologna and Milano, letters were addressed to his subjects living in France (Lyon and Paris), Germany (Hamburg and Augsburg), Spain (Madrid and Cádiz), Portugal (Lisbon), England (London), the Habsburg Empire (Vienna), Poland (Warsaw), the Ottoman Empire (Smirne) and the Dutch Republic (Amsterdam).²⁷³ He gave each of his agents the specific assignment to provide him with a simple account of what current standards of weights, measures and money were used in their respective countries. In Amsterdam, Bassetti enlisted the help of the merchant Giovacchino Guasconi who was asked to provide the following information:

²⁶⁸ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 2, f. 49, “very slow to express himself”; difficult to communicate with”; great learned man”.

²⁶⁹ Memorie Bassetti, vol. 1, f. 136, “polite, intelligent and hopefullness man.”

²⁷⁰ Jacob Soll, *The Information Master. Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s Secret State Intelligence System*, 8.

²⁷¹ Soll, 2–3.

²⁷² Soll, 67.

²⁷³ “Lettere scritte fuori per aver cognizione della natura de’pesi, misure e monete straniere”, ASF, MM, 367, cc. 1169-1202. Letters were destined for: Giovanni Targioni in Smirne, Alessandro Guasconi in Venice, Giovanni Battista Pucci in Vienna, Santi Bassi a Warsaw, Theodor Kerkring in Hamburg, Giulio Quaratesi a Lyon, Domenico Zipoli in Paris, Francesco Terriesi in London, Ottavio Tancredi in Madrid, Francesco Ginori in Cádiz, Lorenzo Ginori in Lisbon, Pietro Blaeu and Giovacchino Guasconi in Amsterdam, Annibale Ranuzzi in Bologna, Giovanni Pietro Cella in Naples, Francesco Bondicchi in Milan, Giovanni Battista Cinatti in Genova, Benedetto Tincher in Augsburg, Marco Alessandro del Borro e Lorenzo Gonieri in Livorno.

“Il Serenissimo Granduca nostro signore sempre intento ad arricchire il suo nobile intelletto colla cognizione piu individuale delle cose, proprietà e costumi delle genti straniere, vorrebbe adesso un’esatta e piena contezza di quanto vien ricercato nell’accluso foglio, circa le loro misure, pesi e monete, ad effetto di saper bene i nomi che hanno, le passioni, l’uso, il valore, come anche il ragguaglio loro a queste nostre d’Italia. Ha pero S.A. intrapreso a procurarlo da tutte le parti del mondo consociuto, sin dove arriva il commercio e pero manda in diversi luoghi un esemplare del medesimo foglio. E reputando che anche V.S.Ill.ma coll’opera sua possa contribuire all’intento, e per se stessa che si trova in una scala si principale d’Europa, e per mezzo di amici suoi o’ de corrispondenti loro, come pur coll’aiuto del signore suo fratello esistente in Moscovia vorrebbe l’A.S. da lei e da esso le notizie espresse nel foglio suddetto de seguenti paesi”²⁷⁴

1. Di tutte le provincie di Fiandra e Paese Basso, si degli Spagnoli che degli Olandesi e della Vestfalia ancora, Stati Luneborgo e loro adiacenze.

2. Di tutte le provincie sottoposte al dominio di Moscovia, e suoi scali maritimi dal mar Caspio, al mar bianco.

Onde S.A. dice che V.S.Ill.ma sia contenta di mettersi attentamente in questa pratica con scriverne al signore suo fratello di Moscovia, e far fare quante copie bisogneranno degli articoli della presente 1.2. e del foglio inserito per mandare alle persone che saranno credute abili a poter rendere in ciò sodisfatta S.A. la quale ne riceverà il piacere con aggrandimento singolare giache tutto quello che in tal genere è stampato su’i libri riesce molto fallace ed incerto.”

Giovacchino Guasconi closely followed these instructions and sent Bassetti the units of measurements desired by the Grand Duke.²⁷⁵ Cosimo III sent the same document to Pieter Blaeu, asking him to obtain information “di tutto il dominio che hanno le Provincie unite nella Bassa Germania” and “di tutti le stati isole e scali che posseggono le medesime fuora d’Europa, come Coste d’Africa, Indie Orientali, et Indie Occidentali”.²⁷⁶ During his stay in Amsterdam, it was Pieter who had revealed Bassetti insider’s information about the Dutch trade with the Indies and provided him with works and maps concerning the Orient.

From this example, we learn that Bassetti depicts Cosimo as someone who cared chiefly to the fundamental necessity to learn more about foreign cultures and habits which was invaluable for his trade

²⁷⁴ Cosimo III, but written by Bassetti, to Guasconi, Florence, 20 July 1683, ASF, MM, 367, c. 1192, “The Most Serene Grand Duke, our lord, who had always had the intention to enriching his noble intellect with the most individual knowledge of the things, properties and customs of foreign people, would now like an exact and full account of what is requested in the enclosed sheet, regarding the standards of weight, measurement and money, desiring to know well the names they have, *passioni*, the use, the value, as well as the information they give to these of ours in Italy. His Majesty, however, has undertaken to procure this information from all parts of the known world, as far as commerce arrives and however has sent in different places a copy of the same sheet. considering as well that, Your Illustrious Lordship, with your abilities, may contribute to the intent [of the Grand Duke], and because you find yourself in the principal layovers in Europe, and by means of your friends or correspondents, as well as with the help of your brother, who is currently in Moscow, would like the His Majesty from you and from him the account requested in the aforesaid sheet of the following countries: 1) of all the provinces of Flanders and the Low Countries, both of the Spaniards and of the Dutch, and also of Westphalia, the Luneborg States and their environs. 2) of all the provinces under the rule of Moscow and its maritime ports from the Caspian to the White Sea. Your Highness says that Your Illustrious Lordship gladly takes the efforts to execute this practice, and to write to your brother in Moscow, and making as many copies as necessary of the articles 1-2 of this attached sheet, to sent to the people you esteem able to satisfy Your Highness, who receives the considerable pleasure since everything concerning this matter that is printed in books is false and uncertain.

²⁷⁵ He did so in a most effective way, sending custom-made strips that correspond to each unit of measurement, in ASF, MM, 367, c. 1193.

²⁷⁶ Cosimo III, but written by Bassetti, to P. Blaeu, 20 July 1683, ASF, MM, 367, c. 1191, “Of all the domains that the United Provinces have in Lower Germany”; Of all the states and ports of call possessed by the same [United Provinces] outside Europe, such as the Coasts of Africa, the East Indies, and the West Indies”. I would like to thank Gloria Moorman for drawing my attention to the importance of Pieter Blaeu’s letter.

relations with the outside world. In the aftermath of his grand tour, the curiosity of Cosimo appears thus anything but inert. The Grand Duke esteemed Bleau's and Guasconi's extensive network of international contacts and its potential for the accumulation of knowledge, especially the kind of information Cosimo could not find in print. In fact, Bassetti noted in his letter to Guasconi that "tutto quello che in tal genere è stampato su' i libri riesce molto fallace ed incerto". In addition, Guasconi was asked specifically to send the instructions to his brother Francesco Guasconi, who was currently living in Moscow where he had established a branch of Guasconi trading company.

4.1. MERCHANTS AS CULTURAL AGENTS OF THE GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY

The crucial figure of the agent within the early modern distribution system of information and services has, in recent years, received some scholarly attention.²⁷⁷ The seventeenth century witnessed the rise of different kinds of agents from different professional backgrounds, including diplomats, scholars, artists, booksellers and merchants, that have played an intermediary role in the early modern distribution system of information, services and products. In this paragraph, I will address these issues by focusing on the role of merchants as agents of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Once Bassetti returned to Florence, he called regularly on the services of his new network of merchants with whom he had become acquainted in the Dutch Republic. During the reign of Cosimo's father, Ferdinando II, these merchants had played no role in the Grand Duchy's relations with the Dutch Republic whatsoever; it was only after Cosimo's appointment as Grand Duke, that the services of these merchants became of fundamental importance. Bassetti remained in contact with, amongst all, Giuseppe Marucelli, Giacinta del Vigna, Giovanni da Verrazzana, and, last but not least, Giovacchino Guasconi. From the correspondence of Bassetti, it appears that the role of Guasconi outweighed that of the other merchants, who was called upon almost weekly from 1673 until 1692 to fulfill the orders of the Grand Duke.²⁷⁸ Guasconi took over the position of Feroni as the official agent of Tuscany in Amsterdam, when the latter left Amsterdam for Florence in 1673. In his quality as agent, on average once a week he wrote to Bassetti, reporting his activities and informing the Grand Duchy about the latest political, technological, commercial, political and cultural developments in the Low Countries. Moreover, one can deduce from his letter that his chief responsibility was the acquisition of books, works of art and all sorts of other objects from the Dutch Republic and the East.

Our understanding of the activities and life of Giovacchino Guasconi is greatly hampered by a lack of primary source material.²⁷⁹ The family archive was seriously damaged by the disastrous flooding of the Arno in 1966, and is still today in complete disorder and without inventory. Yet, there are other sources that illustrate fragments of the life of Guasconi. This often fragmentary and sketchy information helps us to understand the activities of Guasconi and how he fulfilled his role as the official agent of Cosimo III in Amsterdam. He was born in Florence on the 9th of May 1636.²⁸⁰ His father descended from an old aristocratic Florentine family that had risen to prominence in Florence in the beginning of the fourteenth century, when family members held important positions in the governance of Florence. Later, as was usual in many Florentine noble families, they gained great success and wealth through their trading

²⁷⁷ Badeloch, Keblusek, and Cools, *Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe*; Keblusek and Noldus, *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe*.

²⁷⁸ Approximately six-hundred letters written by Guasconi between 1668 and 1692 have been preserved in ASF, *Mediceo del Principato*, 4260-4264.

²⁷⁹ Parts of this paragraph on the life and activities of the Florentine merchant Giovacchino Guasconi are based on Ingeborg van Vugt, *Bound by Books: Giovacchino Guasconi as book agent between the Dutch Republic and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany* (Master thesis, Leiden University, 2014), available online at <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/29756>, last accessed 2 April 2019.

²⁸⁰ "Giovacchino di Carlo del cavaliere Alessandro Guasconi, e di Lucrezia di Carlo Franceschi"; Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, baptismal register, inv. no. 41, no. 73 (27 April 1636–11 May 1636) and ASF, Raccolta Sebregondi, inv. no. 2785.

activities.²⁸¹ This success was partially guaranteed through the strong ties they maintained with the Medici family, who, as has been illustrated in the network study by John Padgett and Christopher Ansell, maintained strong relations with the Guasconi family as early as Cosimo de Medici's reign (1389-1464).²⁸² The first trading company of the Guasconi family established itself in a position of considerable commercial power in the first half of the seventeenth century.²⁸³ Consequently, their activities were extended to several European cities by several family members, being present in the most important trading centers, including Venice, Madrid, Paris, Moscow and of course, Amsterdam.²⁸⁴ In the 1660s, Giovacchino founded a company with his brother Lorenzo in Amsterdam, where they lived in the commercial center of the city, in a house on the Rozengracht.²⁸⁵ Giovacchino must have died prior to 1699 as can be deduced from a letter dated the 16th of July 1699, written by Pieter Blaeu, at that time secretary to the Orphans' Chamber in Amsterdam, to Apollonio Bassetti, in which Blaeu gives his permission for the departure of the widow and two children of Giovacchino to Florence.²⁸⁶

As argued by Marika Keblusek, merchants as Guasconi have to be taken into account as intermediaries in cultural and intellectual affairs in the early modern period.²⁸⁷ In his quality as a merchant, Guasconi occupied a strategic place in a network of social relations that were established at crucial points along the trade routes. He relied on a network of shippers, insurers, postmasters, booksellers, intellectuals and suppliers of political information. Guasconi's role in any of these networks was diverse: while he coordinated the transmission of books and auction catalogues on behalf of the bookseller Daniel Elsevier and Nicolaas Heinsius to Tuscany via a English convoy that was destined for Livorno,²⁸⁸ he contacted Andrew Vinius (1641-1717) in Moscow, Russian's first postmaster and son of a Dutch merchant, to supply him with carnivorous plants for the Grand Duke.²⁸⁹ While he negotiated the price of secret political news from the Hague with the Dutch diplomat Abraham Wicquefort (1606-1680), he had to bribe an English minister in Leiden for a Bible in the Icelandic language which was highly desired by

²⁸¹ In Florence, members of the Guasconi family lived in old houses in the Piazza Madonna degli Aldobrandini, besides owning an enormous Renaissance villa in the Via dei Tintori, now in front of the National Library of Florence. The coat of arms of the family can still be seen today above the entrance. It consists of three black inverted V shaped stripes with in the middle a red cross, which is symbol of the Florentine people. Various drafts of their coat of arms, as well as their family tree, can be found in ASF, Raccolta Ceramelli Papiani, inv. no. 40.

²⁸² John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (1993): 1280.

²⁸³ Maria Di Salvo and Alberto Alberti, *Italia, Russia e mondo slavo: studi filologici e letterari* (Firenze University Press, 2011), 138.

²⁸⁴ Guasconi's family tree shows that Carlo and Lucrezia had ten children: Anton Francesco, Alessandro, Giovacchino, Giovan Paolo, Andrea, Vincenzo, Lorenzo, Francesco, Ottavio and Filippo (ASF, Raccolta Sebregondi, inv. no. 2785).

²⁸⁵ The letters Guasconi received were addressed to "de Roozegraft tot Amsterdam."

²⁸⁶ P. Blaeu to A. Bassetti, Amsterdam, 16 July 1699, ASF, MdP, inv. no. 1036, filza 35/1036: S.A.S. Repubbliche e Comunità 1694-1699, f. 161. Giovacchino had married a Flemish woman named Maria Hoshaver from Zurich, from which marriage he had two children: Carlo (?-1748) and Antonio (?-1747). Dates in the genealogical register of the Guasconi family (ASF, Raccolta Sebregondi, inv. no. 2785) in the State Archive of Florence indicate that he married in 1700 and died in 1748. Yet, this letter of Pieter Bleau confirms that this is incorrect. When the permission was granted, Apollonio Bassetti thanked Blaeu and the Burgomasters of Amsterdam in November of that year (A. Bassetti to the burgomasters of Amsterdam, Florence, 3 November 1699, ASF, MdP, inv. no. 1036, filza 35/1036: S.A.S. Repubbliche e Comunità 1694-1699, f. 420).

²⁸⁷ Keblusek, 'Book Agents, Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', 97; Marika Keblusek, Badeloch Vera Noldus, and Hans Cools, eds., 'Mercator Sapiens: Merchants as Cultural Entrepreneurs', in *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill Publishers, 2011), 95-111.

²⁸⁸ Guasconi's correspondence with Nicolaas Heinsius is extant in the University Library of Leiden: UBL 1923, nos. 1.15. See, for example, Guasconi's letter to Heinsius dated the 14th of June 1674: "Monsieur je receu par le mains de cet monsieur Pluijmer un cataloghe de livres par lequel je luij paije 321 franc, e 3 souls, et des mesmes livres je ne observe asteur les ordres du Serenissime GrandDucque de Toscane au quel je n'en donne aussi l'advis, et demeurant. Toujours prompte a vost comandemens je suis"

²⁸⁹ See, for instance, Bassetti to Guasconi, 4 July 1684, ASF, MdP, 4263, no. 767, "Sua Altezza piglierebbe volentieri i semi della pianta Boranets o sia Pecorina, che è un virgulto mostruoso, mezzo animale e mezzo pianta".

Cosimo.²⁹⁰ He made sure that the goods of the Grand Duke were properly insured, while he was commissioned by the Grand Duke to buy a slave in Russia, with the help of his brother Francesco.²⁹¹ With his international connections he was pre-eminently suited as a cultural agent of the Medici family. For Bassetti, in fact, he was a point of reference that could be deployed to contact the rest of Europe, and beyond.

4.2. SPYING FOR KNOWLEDGE

The Dutch Republic served Cosimo III as an important source of inspiration in dealing with the many technological shortcomings present in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, such as problems involving water-management and the linen industry. According to an anonymous account of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Cosimo III “mantenne a sue spese frequentemente dei giovani toscani nei paesi stranieri per istruirgli in quelle cose che egli seppe che si facevano altrove con maggiore perfezione”.²⁹² After his return to Florence, he commissioned several technicians and engineers to travel to northern Europe, in particular the Dutch Republic, to spy on the latest technological innovations. For instance, in 1671, Cosimo called on the services of Cosimo Ciferi, an employer of the Florentine woolen industry, to observe the activities of the linen industry abroad.²⁹³ In October 1672, Ciferi left Florence for Bologna, from where he travelled to Milan and Basel. He then travelled to Germany and the Dutch Republic, where he visited, amongst all, Amsterdam, Leiden, The Hague, Delft and Rotterdam. Leaving Holland, he went to England and returned to Italy via Flanders and France. On the 13th of October 1671, Bassetti commissioned Francesco Feroni to assist Ciferi throughout his stay in the Dutch Republic, urging him

²⁹⁰ In 1662, Wicquefort had been commissioned by the States General to write a national history of the country for which he was granted access to highly confidential information.²⁹⁰ He used this position to start a secret news agency, providing foreign courts with political news from the Dutch Republic, for which he received a lot of money. Wicquefort provided Bassetti with secret newsletters from 1673 until 1675, when Wicquefort's agency was discovered by the authorities. After a trial that lasted 37 days, Wicquefort was imprisoned for life. In the account of the trial the names of Giovacchino and Lorenzo Guasconi appear on the sixth day of the trial, on the 26th of April 1675, as intermediaries of the newsletters to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. See, D. Everzwijn, *Wicquefort en zijn proces* (Leiden: Gebroeders van der Hoek, 1857), 52. Letters of Wicquefort to the Medici court can be found in ASF, MdP, 4262, no. 381 and 466. See also the letters between Guasconi and Bassetti, for example, ASF, MdP, 4262, no. 503, “Conformo V.S. Ill.ma per la sua gentilissima 17 dell'passato mi impone, scriverò all'Aija al monsieur Vicquefort acciò mi illumini sopra quello scrisse della resa di Narden supposta per una cosa miracolosa e conosciuta da poche persone”. For the letters between Bassetti and Guasconi regarding the Islandic Bible, see ASF, MdP, 4263, no. 693 (Sua Altezza vorrebbe che Vostra Signoria illustrissima per mezzo di qualche amico intelligente facesse comprare per suo conto senza nominar il Sua Altezza al più grato prezzo che sia possibile i due libri seguenti: Biblia in lingua islandica, notata nella pagina prima al numero 9 del catalogo de teologi in foglio [...]), no. 696, no. 699, no. 703, no. 705, no. 716.

²⁹¹ Guasconi relied on the services of the Antwerp merchant Henry Francois Schilders (1638-1680) for the insurance of his merchandise. These letters, written from 1664 until 1668, are extent in: Plantin-Moretus Archive, Antwerp, Archive related families, family and business archive of Henri François Schilders and Sibilla Bosschaert (1657-1693), inv. no. 69, nos. 1-433. Schilders lived in Amsterdam in the 1650s, where he worked for three years as a pupil of Francesco Feroni. After his apprenticeship he went back to Antwerp from where he established, in 1660, a very prosperous commercial business and became one of the most important figures in the insurance world in the middle of the seventeenth century. About him, see D. van Camp, ‘Onbekend Maakt Onbemind’, *De Gulden Passer* 87 (2009): 25–31. Schilders also corresponded directly with Apollonio Bassetti from 1667 until 1679. The letters show that he was responsible for the acquisition of paintings and books (ASF, MdP, inv. nos. 4260-4263). The slave must meet the following requirements of the Grand Duke: “Quanto al tartaro vorrei che fosse di umor facile e di natura docile, innocente al possibile e soprattutto non vizioso né cattivo, perché con difetti gravi non me ne potrei servire e se avesse un poco di lettera cioè sapesse leggere e scrivere all'uso del paese meglio sarebbe. Ma quando pure li manchi tale abilità poco importa. Non vorrebbe già essere tanto ragazzo che poi qua gli uscisse presto di mente, la lingua sua naturale ne anche tanto duro da rendersi incapace della nostra, onde il più a proposito parrebbe dai 18 ai 20 anni” (Bassetti to Francesco Guasconi, 5 October 1683, ASF, MdP, 4263, n. 724).

²⁹² Anonymous, *Memoria sopra il governo del Serenissimo Gran Duca Cosimo Terzo*, ASF, MdP, 2713, c. 226.

²⁹³ Martelli, *Il Viaggio in Europa Di Pietro Guerrini (1682-1686): Edizione Della Corrispondenza e Dei Disegni Di Un Inviato Di Cosimo III Dei Medici*, vol. 1: XV-XIX.

to help Ciferi as good as possible so that the Grand Duke “non habbia ad incontrar fastidi o imbarazzi per conto di esso”.²⁹⁴

The diary of Bassetti, which included descriptions of pilings, windmills, dams, fortresses, and other innovations, might have paved the way for the travels of these engineers. In 1682, Bassetti planned the voyage of the Florentine engineer Pietro Guerrini (1651-1716), who was commissioned by Cosimo III to tour through Northern Europe and to sketch and describe everything that seemed of technological interest. Guerrini worked in the service of the Florentine mathematician Vincenzo Viviani (1622-1703), at the time engineer of the *Capitani di Parte*, which had control over local town government in the Florentine dominions. In the 1680s, they carried several land-reclamation and water-control projects at the lake-marshes of Fucecchio, where Francesco Feroni had purchased a landholding known as Bellavista from Cosimo III. Feroni had commissioned them to drain and reclaim the surrounding land of his property, and to protect the grand ducal area from floods.²⁹⁵ To learn more about the manner in which water was managed in the Dutch Republic, Guerrini set off to northern Europe on the 22nd of September 1682.

To help Guerrini on his way, Cosimo let Bassetti write down in detail which places the young engineer had to visit and which people he could meet to obtain the required, often secret, technological information. It is most likely that the diary Bassetti had kept during his travels has helped him to compile the instructions of Guerrini, who visited the exact same places Cosimo had seen during his Grand Tour. In addition, Bassetti wrote letters of recommendation to the persons he had personally met during his stay in the Dutch Republic, asking Pieter Blaeu and Giovacchino Guasconi, to assist Guerrini throughout his stay.²⁹⁶ They ensured that Guerrini could visit poorly accessible workplaces, observing also the equipment the Dutch “non lo mostrano volentieri”.²⁹⁷ Along the way, Guerrini kept Bassetti informed about the progress of his travels, sketching and describing a large number of dredging machines, bridges, dams, windmills and other innovations. For instance, in Amsterdam, where he arrived in the beginning of April 1683, he paid particular attention to how the Dutch prevented the country from floods, sending Bassetti several drawing of windmills to drain water away from the fields.²⁹⁸

Another field that Cosimo was interested in advancing was the study of botany in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.²⁹⁹ While Guerrini and Ciferi were instructed to pay particular attention to Dutch technology, Jacopo Niccolò Guiducci was sent to the Netherlands to observe how the Dutch cultivated exotic plants, in particular regarding the cultivation of the pineapple. Towards the end of Cosimo’s III reign, in 1713, Guiducci travelled north to Düsseldorf, from where he travelled to the Dutch Republic. He first stopped in Utrecht, where he observed how the bakers managed to “levar l’amaro al lievito di birra”³⁰⁰. Leaving Utrecht, he went to Leiden and to Amsterdam where he was welcomed and assisted by the Florentine merchant Cesare Sardi. At that time, Sardi was Cosimo’s only agent, a clear sign of the Grand Duke’s diminishing involvement with the Dutch Republic.³⁰¹ Though Guiducci might have obtained less assistance than previous travelers, Sardi ensured that Guiducci came into contact with several outstanding scholars like the female scientists and illustrator Maria Sybille Merian (1646-1717),

²⁹⁴ Bassetti to Feroni, 13 October 1671, ASF, MdP, 4261, f. 318, “does not have to face annoyances or embarrassments on his behalf”.

²⁹⁵ Martelli, *Il Viaggio in Europa Di Pietro Guerrini (1682-1686): Edizione Della Corrispondenza e Dei Disegni Di Un Inviato Di Cosimo III Dei Medici*, 1, LX.

²⁹⁶ For these instructions and recommendations, see Martelli, 10-17.

²⁹⁷ Martelli, LXXIII, “do not shown him willingly”.

²⁹⁸ Martelli, vol. 2, 54 and 58a.

²⁹⁹ Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, 44.

³⁰⁰ Guiducci to Cosimo III, 20 March 1714, ASF, MM, 92, ins. 1, f. 50.

³⁰¹ Tammo Wallinga, ‘Laurentius Theodorus Gronovius (1648-1724) as a Traveller’, *Lias* 24 (1997a): 246.

the merchant and collector Levinus Vincent (1658-1727) and Caspar Commelijn (1668-1731), who was in charge of the *Hortus Medicus* in Amsterdam. It was Commelijn who provided Guiducci with the instructions to cultivate pineapple plants in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.³⁰² Yet, mention of a first pineapple to being cultivated in Florence is only in the 1720s, through the intermediation of the Dutch art collector and merchant Pieter de la Court van den Voort (1664-1739), who assisted the botanists Angiolo Giannetti and Antonio Morini during their stay in Amsterdam to “osservare le cose più rare, e più stimabili di codesti giardini”.³⁰³

Although the principal focus of Guiducci’s travels was botany, he also informed Bassetti with other matters of interest, ranging from the construction of fortresses to the living standards of the Dutch Catholics. On the 4th of May, for example, Guiducci reports to the Medici secretariat that he went to Mass “nell’unica Chiesa di Cattolici che vi è, la quale è una miserabile soffita d’una Casa”³⁰⁴. Then, on the 15th of June 1714, Guiducci remarked that the Dutch Catholic community had made a favorable impression on him, like they had on Cosimo, who had taken the difficulties of the Catholics to heart during his own travels in the country.³⁰⁵

In the aftermath of the Grand Tour, Cosimo continued to show interest in the Dutch Republic, as is attested by the diaries and correspondences of the several Tuscan agents that travelled north in search of information on every aspect of the Dutch cultural life. This interest was reciprocal. Indeed, in the same period several Dutch scholars profited from Cosimo’s benevolence towards them to visit Tuscany. For most of these scholars, the trip to Tuscany also had another unique objective: to meet the famous and legendary librarian Antonio Magliabechi.

³⁰² Guiducci to Cosimo III, Amsterdam, 20 April 1714, ASF, MM, 92, ins. 1, ff. 64-65. The detailed instructions to cultivate the pineapple plant can be found in ff. 115-117

³⁰³ Van den Voort to Cosimo III, 10 September 1720, UBA, Hs 121 Aq 1, “to observe the rarest and most estimable things of these gardens”. On the 30th of September 1720, Cosimo answered van den Voort and informed him that he received two pineapples and “di averle anche mangiatele e trovate a perfezione [eat him and found them perfect]” (UBA, hs 121 Aq 2). Later, Van den Voort would sent the Grand Duke a pineapple plant, for which see the letter between Van den Voort and Angiolo Giannetti, 14 April 1722, UBA, Hs 120 U, “supplico V.S.Ill.ma a mandarmi quattro piante di Anans di quelle grande che principino a fare il frutto e le faccia ben serrare in una scatoletta e mandarla per terra con le lettere che passano a Milano e da Milano, a Firenze e che le dette quattro piante di Anans siano dirette al Serenissimo Granduca il quale subito le farà pervenire nelle mie mani e se con esse manderà ancora quattro Corone con le quattro piante di Anans”. Other letter regarding the pineapple-exchange between the Dutch Republic and Tuscany: Morini to Van den Voort, 22 December 1720, UBA, Hs 121 Dd 1; Morini to Van den Voort, 19 July 1721, UBA, Hs 121 Dd 2; Cesare Sardi to Van den Voort, 24 April 1723, UBA, Hs 123 Cp.

³⁰⁴ Guiducci to Cosimo III, 4 May 1714, ASF, MM, 92, ins. 1, ff. 69 and 81.

³⁰⁵ Guiducci to Cosimo III, 15 June 1714, ASF, MM, 92, ins. 1, f. 103, “È certissimo che tutti questi Cattolici d’Olanda, e di queste Provincie, conforme la Reale A.V. ha la bontà di accennarmi che ha osservato ne’ suoi viaggi, sono esemplarissimi, e di grand’edificazione”.