

CHAPTER 9

Taking Over the Economy: Cosimo I de' Medici and the Management of the Wealth of the State

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1 The Duchy as the Prince's Treasure Trove*

For historians of 16th-century Italy, wealth and ruler have become inextricably linked. And yet, when it comes to Cosimo I de' Medici and his state, this association is less straightforward, frustrated by the complex history of Medici financial assets. These complications arose as soon as Cosimo became Duke of the Florentine Republic in 1537. Soon after the assassination of Duke Alessandro and Cosimo's elevation to the ducal throne, the Senato dei Quarantotto allocated the annual sum of 12,000 *scudi* for Cosimo's proper maintenance and magnificence.¹ In addition, Cosimo's personal wealth increased markedly with the resolution of a dispute over the property left by Alessandro, which involved Margaret of Austria, the widow of Alessandro and natural daughter of Charles V, and Catherine of France, half-sister of the murdered duke.² At first glance, the sum of money allocated by the Senate may have seemed considerable. After all, the seventeen-year-old Cosimo, the son of the late condottiere Giovanni de' Medici and Maria Salviati, did not belong to the politically pre-eminent branch of the Medici. As such, he had at his disposal only 700 *scudi* by the time he was made head of state.³ The financial support granted to him

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- 1 Stefano Dall'Aglio, *L'assassinio del duca: Esilio e morte di Lorenzo de' Medici* (Florence: 2011). For a comprehensive biographical profile of Cosimo, see Elena Fasano Guarini, "Cosimo I de' Medici, duca di Firenze, granduca di Toscana," in *DBI* 30 (Rome: 1984), 30–48. For an analysis of the political and administrative interventions of Cosimo in the new institutional context see the same author's classic study: *Lo Stato mediceo di Cosimo I* (Florence: 1973).
- 2 Giuseppe V. Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe: Funzione pubblica e privata del patrimonio del principe nel Cinquecento* (Florence: 1999), 25, 42–55.
- 3 Bruce Edelstein, "Eleonora di Toledo e la gestione dei beni familiari," in *Donne di potere nel Rinascimento*, ed. Letizia Arcangeli and Susanna Peyronel (Rome: 2008), 747. For a biographical profile of Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, see Maurizio Arfaioli, "Medici, Giovanni de' (Gio-

by the Florentine ruling class was possible thanks to this city's vibrant economy and its international links. Such prosperity was still based on a system of workshops and warehouses, commercial networks, and textile production. Furthermore, a well-organized agricultural system, based on the *mezzadria* model, provided a constant supply of wine and oil to the city and its hinterland. Mid-16th-century Florence continued to be one of the richest economies of Western Europe, thanks to this city's relations with other financial and trade centers.⁴

As it turned out, the *ottimati* (i.e. the Florentine elite)—intent as they were to prevent the rise of the *governo largo* or “rule of the many”—had made a serious miscalculation when they handed over control of the state to an inexperienced youth, whom they hoped could be easily manipulated for their own political ends.⁵ They were also mistaken as to the sum they had estimated for the needs of the duke: Cosimo would require much more than the set 12,000 *scudi* and would achieve his aims regardless of any opposition. Benvenuto Cellini, whose bronze *Perseus* holds up the head of the decapitated Medusa, was very well aware of this lack of political foresight when he observed: “they placed a youth upon a wonderful horse, then they gave him spurs, put the reins in his hands to do as he pleases, in the middle of a beautiful field full of flowers and fruit and many other delights, and then they told him not to go beyond certain limits. Now, you tell me: who is that person who can stop him from going anywhere he wishes? You cannot enforce rules on he who is the master of those rules.”⁶ Needless to say, the flowers (“fiori”) and fruit (“frutti”) represent power

vanni dalle Bande Nere,” in *DBI* 73 (2009), 67–70. To have an idea of the value of these sums, a monthly salary of one *scudo* in the middle of the 16th century was enough for the upkeep of an individual. See, Enrico Stumpo, “Il fisco e le finanze,” in *Storia della Civiltà toscana: Il principato mediceo*, ed. Elena Fasano Guarini (Florence: 2003), 184. Similar data appear in Paolo Malanima, *La fine del primato: Crisi e riconversione nell'Italia del Seicento* (Milan: 1998), 28–29.

4 Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Leconomia della Firenze rinascimentale* (Bologna: 2013); Jordan Goodman, “Tuscan Commercial Relations with Europe, 1550–1620: Florence and the European Textile Market,” in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 3 vols (Florence: 1983), vol. 1, 328–341; Sergio Tognetti, *I Gondi di Leone: Una banca d'affari fiorentina nella Francia del primo Cinquecento* (Florence: 2013); Andrea Caracausi, “Mercanti e banchieri fiorentini e genovesi nella Venezia della seconda metà del Cinquecento,” in *Imprenditorialità e sviluppo economico: Il caso italiano (secc. XIII–XX)*, ed. Franco Amatori and Andrea Coli (Milan: 2009), vol. 2, 1310–1328.

5 For a broader overview of the problems raised by the “governi larghi” and “governi stretti,” see Elena Fasano Guarini, “La crisi del modello repubblicano: Patriziati e oligarchie,” in *La Storia: I grandi problemi dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea*, ed. Massimo Firpo and Nicola Tranfaglia, 10 vols (Turin: 1987), vol. 3, 553–584.

6 The passage from Cellini's autobiography is from Elena Bonora, *Aspettando l'Imperatore: Principi italiani tra il papa e Carlo V* (Turin: 2014), 78: “hanno messo un giovane sopra un mer-

but also the wealth of the state. Giorgio Spini was one of the first scholars to foreground this connection identifying the prince as the greatest landowner and the wealthiest businessman in his territory, emphasizing the absence of a clear separation between Cosimo's public and private interests.⁷ Cellini provides a very revealing portrait of the duke's plundering of state resources, one that was first postulated by Spini and later confirmed by Diaz: in other words, public and private interests were consolidated under the aegis of the Medici duke.⁸

Therefore, seen as a whole, this appropriation of public assets turned out to be the very foundation of Cosimo's wealth—even more than the institutional salary that he received from the senate, or the 50,000 *scudi* dowry of his wife Eleonora de Toledo, daughter of Don Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, viceroy of Naples.⁹ Neither the prestigious Toledo family nor the Medici duke fulfilled their contractual obligations. Cosimo negotiated a loan of 10,000 *scudi* a year from his wife on the strength of his income from salt duty.¹⁰ If anything, it was Eleonora's entrepreneurial activity that had a significant impact on the ducal family's financial standing. Like the duke, she was directly involved in the grain monopoly and acquired real estate and land, which Cosimo inherited after her premature death. In order to appreciate economic policy, one needs to access a different level of economic strategy: that of locating and hoarding assets, which consistently and continuously outdo the sources of income mentioned above.

aviglioso cavallo, poi gli hanno messo gli sproni, datogli la briglia in mano in sua libertà, e messolo in sur un bellissimo campo, dove è fiori e frutti e moltissime delizie, poi gli hanno detto, ch'egli non passi certi contrassegnati termini: or ditemi voi, chi è quello che tener lo possa quando lui passar li voglia? Le leggi non si possono dare a chi è padrone di esse." See also Elena Fasano Guarini, "Francesco Guicciardini e Cosimo I: Il senso storico di una vicenda individuale," in *Repubbliche e principi: Istituzioni e pratiche di potere nella Toscana granducale del 500–600* (Bologna: 2010), 210.

7 Giorgio Spini, "Il principato e il sistema degli stati europei," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 3 vols (Florence: 1983), vol. 3, 185.

8 Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici* (Turin: 1976), 143–147.

9 Aurelio Musi, *L'impero dei viceré* (Bologna: 2013), 81–82.

10 Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, 102; Edelstein, *Eleonora di Toledo*, 744–745.

For a biographical profile of Duchess Eleonora de Toledo, see Vanna Arrighi, "Eleonora di Toledo duchessa di Firenze," in *DBI* 42 (Rome: 1993), 437–441.

2 The Monti and International Loans

Cosimo succeeded in accumulating and centralizing enough power and wealth to be able to spend 500,000 *scudi* a year.¹¹ The source of this great spending capacity has its origin in the thorough reorganization of state assets, as well as more direct control over the administration of his properties. From the very start, Cosimo knew that he would need exact financial, demographic and geographic information: such widespread data in turn produced a corpus of documentary material meant only for the duke's private use.¹² Consequently, information was not just a valuable asset but also a political tool.¹³ To achieve this autocratic goal, Cosimo appointed an inner circle of loyal court officials—including Francesco Campana, Lelio Torelli, Agnolo Niccolini, Cristiano Pagni and Bartolomeo Concini—to manage his state affairs. Surprisingly, the duke did not expand the size of the bureaucratic staff from the previous regime, nor did he immediately increase the costs of his court. On the other hand, he did introduce tighter fiscal, judicial and law enforcement measures, which became the very foundation of the development of the modern state.¹⁴

Admittedly, Cosimo also benefited from a certain amount of administrative and institutional continuity that had marked Alessandro's dukedom. For instance, he made use of the republican fiscal system based on the *decima* (tithe), which was developed during the Savonarolan period and which served for centuries as the foundation of the Florentine fiscal system.¹⁵ The 1551 *decima* was based on property (real estate and farmland) and not on income from professional activity (as with the previous *catasto*). These monies (totalling 26,000 *scudi*), which poured into the prince's coffers, were exacted from 8,509 Florentine citizens, while 16,815 *scudi* came from the tithe (*decima*) on farmlands. The net revenue to the state came down to a sum total of 367,902 *scudi*.¹⁶ It appears

11 Carol Bresnahan Menning, "Loans and Favors, Kin and Clients: Cosimo de' Medici and the Monte di Pietà," *The Journal of Modern History* 61/3 (1989), 489–490.

12 Arnaldo D'Addario, "Burocrazia, economia e finanze dello Stato Fiorentino alla metà del Cinquecento," *Archivio storico italiano* 121 (1963), 362–456.

13 Marilena Rossi, "Agnolo Niccolini primo governatore mediceo di Siena (1557–1567): Il carteggio con Cosimo I," *Ricerche storiche* 37/1 (2007), 69–100.

14 Stumpo, "Il fisco e le finanze," 181–204; Enrico Stumpo, "L'organizzazione degli stati: accentrimento e burocrazia," in *La Storia: I grandi problemi dal Medioevo all'Età Contemporanea*, ed. Massimo Firpo and Nicola Tranfaglia, 10 vols (Florence: 2003), vol. 3, 431–458.

15 Francesco Martelli, "Alcune considerazioni sull'introduzione della 'decima' a Firenze in epoca savonaroliana," in *Savonarola e la politica*, ed. Giancarlo Garfagnini (Florence: 1997), 131–146.

16 D'Addario, "Burocrazia, economia e finanze," 378. D'Addario identifies different typologies

clearly that the *decima* only covered 11% of the total income which was levied through a considerably large number of excise taxes and duties on goods and transport, as well as, especially at the start of the 1550s with the war on Siena, special taxes “a perdere,” namely, on which, unlike under the republic, no interest was paid.¹⁷ As a consequence of the change from a citizen-led to a prince-led state, and given the more ambitious and expensive foreign policy pursued by Cosimo as compared with that of his predecessor Alessandro, the tax burden imposed upon the population increased markedly. It was a strategy crowned with successes: from the investiture of Siena from the Spanish crown to the granting of the grand ducal title by the pope (though this title was only recognized by the Spanish and the Holy Roman Empire during the reign of Cosimo's successor, Francesco I).¹⁸ All of the prince's subjects, from the Florentines to those in the countryside and the other towns in the duchy, as well as those living in the remotest rural communities, were now subjected to an all pervasive taxation system under the responsibility of a new centralized magistracy, the *Nove Conservatori del Dominio e della Giurisdizione Fiorentina* (founded in 1560).¹⁹

of income, on the basis of contemporary balance sheets, from direct and excise taxes: i.e. customs, salt, excise taxes on contracts, in Pisa, Pistoia, the tithes on farmland, the Poll Tax, the tithe on universities, on the *Bande* and the treasury, the taxes on municipalities, on houses and doors, the duties on livestock, the *soldo per lira*, the *resti de camerlenghi*, the tax on horses, the tithes on arbitration (437).

- 17 Elio Conti, *L'imposta diretta a Firenze nel Quattrocento (1427–1494)* (Rome: 1984).
- 18 Elisa Panicucci, “La questione del titolo granducale: Il carteggio diplomatico tra Florence e Madrid,” in *Toscana e Spagna nel secolo XVI: Miscellanea di studi storici* (Pisa: 1996), 7–85; Stefano Moscadelli, “L'inf feudazione ai Medici,” in *Storia di Siena 1: Dalle origini alla fine della Repubblica*, ed. Roberto Barzanti, Giuliano Catoni and Mario De Gregorio (Siena: 1995), 469–482; Mario Ascheri, “Siena senza indipendenza: Repubblica continua,” in *I Libri dei Leoni: La nobiltà di Siena in età medicea (1557–1737)*, ed. Mario Ascheri (Siena: 1996), 9–69.
- 19 On the *Nove*, see Paola Benigni and Carlo Vivoli, “Progetti politici e organizzazione di archivi: Storia della documentazione dei Nove conservatori della giurisdizione e del dominio fiorentino,” *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato* 43 (1983), 32–82. On the new fiscal role taken up by the land holdings during the reign of the first duke, see Elena Fasano Guarini, “Camerlenghi ed esazione locale delle imposte nel granducato di Toscana del '500 e '600,” in *La Fiscalité et ses implications sociales en Italie et en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*. Actes du colloque de Florence (5–6 décembre 1978), ed. Philippe Levillain and Jean-Claude Waquet (Rome: 1980), 29–49. On the duke's applying his fiscal system throughout the extended territories, the best-known case is Arezzo, see Lauretta Carbone, *Economia e fiscalità ad Arezzo in epoca moderna: Conflitti e complicità tra centro e periferia nella Toscana dei Medici (1530–1737)* (Rome: 1999); Paola Benigni, “Oligarchia cittadina e pressione fiscale: Il caso di Arezzo nei secoli XVI e XVII,” in *La Fiscalité et ses implications sociales en Italie et en France*, 51–73. On taxation and public finance in Prato and on the limited freedom of local communities during Cosimo's reign, see Enrico Stumpo, “Le forme

Moreover, Cosimo's political manoeuvrings allowed him to obtain and maintain a certain degree of autonomy from the Empire. By entering the Sienese conflict to his advantage, he received the city's feudal subjugation from Philip II in 1557, thus allowing his coronation by Pope Pius V as Grand Duke of Tuscany and freeing himself from fetters of Spain. This multi-faceted and unscrupulous political strategy, while both risky and difficult, was extremely costly, and made itself felt immediately through the direct taxation of the prince's subjects. There were a variety of taxes imposed upon the entire state—i.e. before 1557, on the whole *stato vecchio* of Florence and its environs—but the way in which Cosimo made use of the Florentine *Monte di Pietà* is of particular interest.

Established towards the mid-fifteenth century on moral and religious foundations and endorsed by Dominicans and, especially, by the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena, the *Monte di Pietà* was present in many northern and central Italian cities. As far as its concrete effect on the everyday economy was concerned, the activities of this pawn-broking institution—set up with the support of the municipal authorities—was intended to counter the Jewish banks and the monopoly they held over offering short-term credit to the lowest strata of society.²⁰ In Florence, the *Monte di Pietà*, which had been set up with an endowment in 1495, presented itself as an anti-usury, non-profit institution functioning on the basis of loans calculated at the rate of two thirds of the estimated value of the goods offered as surety, with an interest of 5% to be paid on the value of the pawned object.²¹ The function of the Florentine *Monte* was considerably altered, not by Cosimo, but by the first duke, Alessandro, when he established that the institution should pay interest on the cash deposits paid into it (as was the case in other parts of Italy), thus changing the fundamental nature of the *Monte* from a merely charitable institution into a bank for deposit accounts.

The change in function caused a sharp increase in pawning, mostly by shopkeepers, craftsmen, widows, and farmers. As for Cosimo, he used the *Monte* as his exchequer for deposits and payment for the ducal magistracies, the first of which was the Depositeria which, having been established for the administration of the prince's institutional properties, operated essentially as an accountancy and administrative office which placed its money orders with the *Monte*. This enabled the duke to access the system of capital deposits made of the cit-

del governo cittadino," in *Prato storia di una città: Un microcosmo in movimento (1494–1815)*, ed. Elena Fasano Guarini (Florence: 1986), vol. 2, 290–291.

20 Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, *Il denaro e la salvezza: L'invenzione del Monte di Pietà* (Bologna: 2001).

21 Menning, *Loans and Favors*, 490.

izens of Florence, making use of them, together with the pre-existing *Monte delle Graticole*, in order to pay court bills and employees. In this way, the *Monte di Pietà* ended up replacing the *Monte Comune*, otherwise known as the *Monte delle Graticole*, which Cosimo had been using for short-term loans. As has been noted, the transformation of the *Monte di Pietà* into a public bank provided the Medici with an “impersonal institutional instrument” that worked like a loans and deposits repository used by the ducal administration to make its own deposits and access credit which thus entered into circulation as public finance.²²

Cosimo made extensive use of international credit, taking out loans from Italian and foreign bankers amounting to over 1,359,000 *scudi*. The period in which Cosimo made most use of this specific source of income was between 1548 and 1557, which, as has been noted elsewhere, coincided with both the crisis over Piombino (temporarily occupied by the duke) and the end of the war with Siena.²³ But Cosimo was himself an important moneylender, providing financial support for Maximilian I and Charles IX.²⁴ Between 1546 and 1556 (i.e. before the conquest of Siena), Cosimo obtained a loan from the Fugger family of 400,000 *scudi* to which he added another 700,000 received from numerous Genoese bankers, including the Grimaldi, Pallavicino, and Spinola families, accumulating a debt of over 2,516,000 *scudi*. Part of the debt was repaid through the income received from the public offices and the private monopolies belonging to the duke, including the tax on metal production (the *Magona del ferro*) and the salt duty, under his control in 1543 and 1550 respectively, while another part of the debt was transferred to the *Monte Comune* by issuing credit in the name of the lenders.²⁵ Public debts were collected by the *Monte Comune* or *Monte delle Graticole*, into which the *Monte delle Doti* had been merged, which took in deposits at an interest rate of 3%, 4%, and 7%.

Thanks to a relatively long period of peace from the battle of Montemurlo (1537) to the beginning of the war against Siena (1552), Cosimo and his successors were able to consolidate the financial basis of public debt and attract private investors. As we have already mentioned, they used the *Monte Comune*

22 Goldthwaite, *L'economia della Firenze rinascimentale*, 634–639 and 680.

23 D'Addario, “Burocrazia, economia, finanze,” 82; Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, 56–58; on the enduring importance of the small principate of Piombino in the history of modern Tuscany, see Ivan Tognarini, *Toscana in età moderna tra Medici e Lorena* (Florence: 2012).

24 Franco Angiolini, “Diplomazia e politica nell'Italia non spagnola nell'età di Filippo II. Osservazioni preliminari,” *Rivista storica italiana* 92/2 (1980), 462.

25 Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, 60, 69; Stumpo, “Il fisco e le finanze,” 186.

and the *Monte Pietà* as public banks from which to take out loans, freeing themselves from dangerous financial obligations to Florentine bankers who were only sporadically involved with the financial system created by the Medici.²⁶ It was above all the extraordinary levies, calculated on the value of the *decima* and in part *ad arbitrio*—in other words, at the discretion of the appointed officials who would make an approximate estimation of the taxpayer's wealth—that managed to collect fixed sums of money which were exceptionally high in comparison with amounts normally collected. These levies mitigated the risk of any financial shortcomings, as happened with the exceptional levies of 1554–1555 that alone yielded a revenue of 202,765 *scudi*, including 4,000 *scudi* collected from the *decima*.²⁷ Just from 1554 to 1558, forced loans provided the treasury with 662,944 *scudi*, drawn exclusively from the wealth of Florence, its hinterland and the rest of the *stato vecchio* (Pisa, Pistoia, Arezzo, and their land holdings).²⁸ All this enabled Cosimo to lend important sums of money, which between 1542 and 1572 totaled 857,895 *scudi*. Two distinct phases of financial activity can also be isolated. In the first, between 1542 and 1556, the increase in lending did not exceed 44,369 *scudi*; whereas between 1557 and 1572, at a time of peace and stability, it rose to 813,346 *scudi*. Amongst the many loans issued in this period, a number stand out in view of the political and institutional consolidation of Tuscany within the broader international context. 200,000 *scudi* were granted to Emperor Maximilian II for the defense of the Hungarian borderlands from the Ottomans. As Cosimo was beginning to broaden the scope of his influence beyond the Habsburg orbit, a loan of 100,000 *scudi* was issued to Charles IX of France in April 1569. Finally, monies were lent in 1572 to Philip II—which Cosimo went to great lengths to counterbalance by taking large sums of money from Flanders—that contributed to Spanish military spending against the Dutch and the Moriscos.²⁹

A number of studies have already argued that it was inappropriate to apply theories of political economy to historical contexts in which the science of economics did not yet exist. Nevertheless, a series of concrete interventions or projects undertaken by the duke in the economy of his state can still be analyzed, regardless of the applicability of contemporary macro-economic models.³⁰ This is evident in Cosimo's ability to access the financial resources of the

26 Goldthwaite, *Leconomia della Firenze rinascimentale*, 680.

27 ASF, Mediceo del Principato 632, folio not numbered.

28 Romolo Caggese, *Firenze dalla decadenza di Roma al Risorgimento* (Florence: 1912–1921), 3, 110.

29 Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, 83–89.

30 Judith C. Brown, "Concepts of a Political Economy: Cosimo I de' Medici in a Comparative

state, as can be seen during the war with Siena when the expenses of the duke were at an all-time high and the internal resources insufficient. It is important to address how Cosimo had at his disposal enough resources to wage such an expensive war.³¹ How did he end up spending half a million *scudi* a year, whilst being at the head of a small state which lacked the dynastic foundation which was what sustained many other Italian princes? Without doubt, the financial support of the Genoese bankers who loaned 2,156,000 *scudi* in the years between 1543 and 1570 was a determining factor. But access to credit, and the money-lending activities Cosimo himself was engaged in by loaning 857,985 *scudi* between 1542 and 1572, would not have been possible without the guarantee and support of the internal revenue derived from the Medici state.³² One example among many of how public wealth was redirected towards the needs of the duke concerned the maintenance of the court. We know from a relatively late document dated 1563 that the expenses of the court, both victuals and stipends, were paid for by the treasury (the *Camerlengo*) of Pistoia and the *decima* on land holdings levied by the *Nove Conservatori*.³³ Cosimo thus tapped into the wealth and productivity of the state by making use of the riches of its citizens and the labor of its inhabitants, often with recourse to coerced support from his subjects.

As has recently been demonstrated, the *comandate*—the mandatory civil service of ducal subjects—was the basis of a system to control and direct the territory's available workforce in the realization of the duke's projects.³⁴

European Context," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 3 vols (Florence: 1983), vol. 1, 281.

31 This was the question already posed by Anna Teicher, "Politics and Finance in the Age of Cosimo I: The Public and Private Face of Credit," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500*, vol. 1, 343–362.

32 Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, 64–65; 83.

33 ASF, Miscellanea Medicea 299/3, fol. 6^r. For recent scholarship of the topic of Cosimo's court, see Stefano Calonaci, "Cosimo I e la corte: Percorsi storiografici e alcune riflessioni," *Annali di storia di Firenze* 9 (2015), 57–76.

34 Such was the case with the building of Cosimo's palace at Cerreto Guidi, built on the remains of the ancient castle of the Conti Guidi. See Emanuela Ferretti, "La disciplina delle comandate e la costruzione del palazzo di Cosimo I de' Medici a Cerreto Guidi," *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa* 107 (2001), 9–33 and "Un grande cantiere nella Toscana del '500," in *Il palazzo di Cosimo a Cerreto Guidi: La Villa medicea dalla fabbrica di Davitte Fortini alla corte di Isabella*, ed. Emanuela Ferretti and Giovanni Micheli (Florence: 1998), 57–85. The *comandate* system also continued in the newly acquired Sienese lands, e.g. when building the fortress of Radicofani and the walls of Grosseto; Giovanni Roncaglia, "La Fortezza di Radicofani nelle testimonianze grafiche e nelle perizie tecniche del XVI–XVII secolo," in *La città fortificata di Radicofani: Storia, trasformazione e restauro di un castello toscano*, ed. Carlo Avetta (Siena: 1998), 119. On the fortifications in Grosseto, see

Given the critical situation that his state was facing, Cosimo hired the German Guardia dei Lanzi as his personal guard;³⁵ surrounded himself with foreign *condottieri* (from the Marche and the Perugia regions) and feudal lords from his territories (the Barbolani of Montauto and the Bourbon of Monte Santa Maria); and employed secretaries and notaries originally from the *contado*. In short, Cosimo, throughout practically all of his reign, avoided appealing to the Florentine nobility to occupy the seats of governmental offices and main magistracies, just as he avoided dealing with the Florentine bankers, preferring the Genoese. He made use of only a handful of trusted local bankers—the Antinori, Cavalcanti, and Girdali families of Florence, the Ubaldini and Salviati of Rome—using them as conduits for the transfer of funds and for paying his functionaries.³⁶ The tendency to put non-Florentines in charge was also manifested when it came to the privileges that Cosimo granted to foreign merchants³⁷ and other economic rights, such as the employment of specialized German miners who arrived in Tuscany in great numbers to work at the marble quarries and silver mines in Versilia and Massa di Maremma.

Carmen Borsarelli, “La Fortezza Medicea di Grosseto,” in *Archeologia e storia di un monumento mediceo: Gli scavi nel “cassero” senese della Fortezza di Grosseto*, ed. Riccardo Francovich and Sauro Gelichi (Bari: 1980), 19–40. On the importance of the *comandate* as part of the colonization of the Maremma, see Elena Fasano Guarini, “La Maremma senese nel granducato mediceo (dalle ‘visite’ e memorie del tardo Cinquecento),” in *Contadini e proprietari nella Toscana moderna*. Atti del Convegno di studi in onore di Giorgio Giorgetti, ed. Mario Mirri, 2 vols (Florence: 1979), vol. 1, 406–472.

- 35 The “German Guard”, also known as the *Lanzi*, began its service to the grand duke on 24 August 1541, three weeks after the baptism of Cosimo's first born, Francesco: ASF, Mediceo del Principato 600, fol. 6^r.
- 36 On the personal and professional relations between Alessandro Antinori and Cosimo, see Stefano Calonaci, “Tracce di una storia familiare,” in *Futuro antico: Storia della famiglia Antinori e del suo palazzo*, ed. Piero Antinori, Stefano Calonaci, and Luca Maccaferri (Florence: 2007), 175–223. On the operations carried out with the Girdali and Cavalcanti banks, see ASF, Mediceo del Principato 600, fol. 29^r.
- 37 Diaz reports on the monopoly privileges granted to the Venetians, Leonardo Malipiero and Bartolomeo Claudio, for the establishment in the duchy of a saltpeter plant, the mineral needed for the production of gunpowder. Permission was granted for twenty-five years whereby Cosimo had to cover the costs of raw materials, the required tools and the construction of the plants as well as providing living quarters in Florence for the workers. Cosimo also promised to buy 500,000 pounds of saltpeter in the first five years. See Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana*, 145.

3 The Strength of the Prince

This section will address the economic, territorial, and financial projects launched by Cosimo, before and after the war with Siena, that made extensive use of the state's financial resources in support of the emperor. From among the plethora of conclusions reached by historians, as well as from the abundance of new data, it is important to analyze the influence of the duke's economic activities and to attempt to discern whether Cosimo had a premeditated strategy by contextualizing his economic policies and their significance, in light of the history of Tuscany and of the broader international situation. In terms of economic policy, Cosimo was endowed with a universal and versatile intelligence. He was capable of resolving the most disparate problems, kept an open mind with regards to the application and innovation of technologies, and recognized the importance of discovering new resources.

Above all, Cosimo was focused on maintaining direct control of the administration of the state. Indeed, historian Jacopo Riguccio Galluzzi, who had access to the Medici archives while writing his *Storia del granducato di Toscana*, described the duke as:

Well informed of public expenditure and of his own, he used to control the administration on his own and used himself to correct the mishandlings and mismanagement of his administrators. Busy with an immense amount of correspondence from outside and inside his duchy, he would himself suggest, either in writing the whole letter or at the foot of a letter or in the summaries given to him what answer should be made in each case.³⁸

As Galluzzi had rightly noted, access to and control of information constituted one of the foundations of Cosimo's government, activities, and economic policies. Cosimo showed great acumen when it came to tackling economic matters, as can be seen when he had to contain the export of Tuscan currency beyond its borders in the first years of his duchy. The high intrinsic value of the

³⁸ Jacopo Riguccio Galluzzi, *Storia del Granducato di Toscana*, 11 vols (Florence: 1822), vol. 1, 218: "ben informato della pubblica economia e della sua propria, regolava da per se stesso le amministrazioni e correggeva gli abusi e le mancanze di chi amministrava. Occupato da un immenso numero di corrispondenze al di fuori e nell'interno del suo dominio suggeriva di propria mano o in piè delle lettere, o nei sommarj che gli erano presentati, la replica da farsi a ciascuno." On Galluzzi, see Carla Sodini, "Vincenzio Martinelli e la sua I storia della famiglia Medici," in *Il Granducato di Toscana e i Lorena nel secolo XVIII*, ed. Alessandra Contini and Maria Grazia Parri (Florence: 1999), 448–450.

metal in Florentine coins in comparison with foreign currencies prompted its export and melting down into bullion. Letters indicate how Cosimo intervened directly in the wording of the public announcements (*bandi*) that referred to the Maestri della Zecca, and established the detailed measures required to block any export of Florentine coinage.³⁹ Against the measure to block the movement of money by the Ufficiali dell'Abbondanza, Cosimo was still sensible enough to allow the continued flow of currency to be maintained in the border towns of Castelfiorentino and Castelfranco so as not to undermine the local judiciary and administration, adding that this was permitted only if less precious coins were used.⁴⁰ We may hypothesize that his talent for commercial dealings could have been inherited from Maria Salviati and Jacopo Salviati. His mother had to maintain the family's meagre finances during dire times, whilst his grandfather was the personal adviser and banker to Leo X, whose sister Lucrezia he had also married.⁴¹ Cosimo was such an extraordinary manager, careful to keep expenses under control as much as possible, both in his private life and in the administration of public affairs.⁴² His innate frugality became all the more evident when it was necessary to adjust his lifestyle to the higher standards expected of a prince.⁴³

Undoubtedly, the transformation from republic to principate was a fundamental turning point in Tuscan history. This has been a focal point of research for contemporary politicians and scholars of the Renaissance, and also more recently, historians of law and political thought.⁴⁴ While the recognition of this

39 ASF, Mediceo del Principato 638, fol. 25^r, 15 July 1540, Cosimo I to Pierfrancesco Riccio.

40 ASF, Mediceo del Principato 638, fol. 19^r, 11 July 1540, Cosimo I to Pierfrancesco Riccio.

41 Berta Felice, "Donne medicee avanti il principato: Maria Salviati, moglie di Giovanni delle Bande Nere," *Rassegna nazionale* 152 (1906), 620–645; Maria Fubini Leuzzi, "Tra biografia ed elogio funebre: Le principesse medicee (sec. XVI)," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 113 (2001), 217–232.

42 In the summer of 1540 Cosimo reduced available funds to a mere 400 *scudi* for the fortress of Arezzo, that just enough needed for the work on the gates. See ASF, Mediceo del Principato 638, 7 July 1540, Cosimo I to Pierfrancesco Riccio, Cafaggiuolo, fols 11^r and ff.

43 For instance, when Cosimo had to prepare a retinue, an endowment of funds and furnishings for his sons who were intended for cardinalship. For Cardinal Ferdinando's expenses in 1571, Cosimo bought in Rome 70,000 *scudi* worth of so-called "venal offices" (i.e. positions of responsibility which were up for sale and could bring in profits for the purchaser), which would only come to fruition in 1573. In 1574 he left Ferdinando a life annuity of 80,000 *scudi*. See Stefano Calonaci, "Ferdinando dei Medici: La formazione di un cardinale principe (1563–1572)," *Archivio storico italiano* 104 (1996), 635–683; Stefano Calonaci, "Accordar lo spirito col mondo: Il cardinal Ferdinando de Medici a Roma negli anni di Pio V e Gregorio XIII," *Rivista storica italiana* 112/1 (2000), 30–31.

44 Luca Mannori, "Il pensiero giuridico e storico-politico," in *Storia della civiltà toscana: Il principato mediceo*, ed. Elena Fasano Guarini (Florence: 2003), 311–332.

change is rightly considered pivotal, this interpretation should not be limited to a mere administrative and institutional reorganization, seen as part of the paradigm shift from late medieval society in Italy and Europe to the constitution of a new model of government in the form of the regional state. Princely rule took on a decidedly more centralized character, despite the complex internal tensions that arose between the duke and the central magistracies, provincial officials, and local communities.

As part of this policy, strict laws were promulgated against crimes with the greatest social, moral and religious impact such as blasphemy, sodomy, usury—“serious evildoings, homicide, murder, theft, sacrilege, rape, incest and nefarious fornication” (1542) as well as the important law on the crime of lèse-majesté, namely the *lex Polverina* (1549), on rape (1558), and on duelling (1570).⁴⁵ This intense legislative agenda was accompanied by tighter control of the administration of the territory and the military, as expressed through Cosimo’s self-representation as a protector of his subjects. Whether with respect to the state magistracy or the legislation itself, both became subordinate to the decisions of the sovereign, who approved the laws and promulgated their enforcement.⁴⁶

Along with Cosimo’s paternalistic and conciliatory political tendencies, a fundamental aspect of his government was his acquisition of the state’s wealth, which had hitherto been under the control of the republican oligarchy. This was not a painless process, as evidenced in the trials studied by Giuseppe Vittorio Parigino that clearly exemplify the nature of Cosimo’s policies. The case in question regarded a citizen of Arezzo of high social standing who had to stand trial for having offended the duke. By making a reference to his government with the phrase “blood of the Medusa-republic” (“sangue della medusa-repubblica”), this man had poetically juxtaposed various symbols to describe the uninterrupted flow of gold (i.e. *sangue*/blood) which Cosimo was drawing from his clueless subjects in such a painless way, just like Medusa with her vic-

45 Fasano Guarini, *La fondazione del Principato*, 15: “malefici gravi [...] omicidi assassina-menti furti sacrilegij violenze incesti e coiti nefari.” See also Daniele Edigati’s chapter in the present volume.

46 Luca Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore: Pluralismo istituzionale e accentramento amministrativo nel principato dei Medici (secc. xv–xviii)* (Milan: 1994). With the merging of preexisting magistracies in 1560, the new office of the Nove Conservatori della Giurisdizione e del Dominio Fiorentino was created, endowed with more functions. As for the *Bande* (militia), the military system created by Duke Alessandro for conscription in Tuscany, their number increased from nine at the start of Cosimo’s reign to eighteen in 1547, then thirty-six in 1571 to a total of over 25,000 men compared to the 15,000 in 1547. See Fasano Guarini, *La fondazione del Principato*, 17. See also Maurizio Arfaio’s chapter in the present volume.

tims.⁴⁷ The man on trial, who had the impudence to utter such brazen words, was condemned to two years imprisonment in Volterra, a much stricter punishment than the usual fine.

4 The State as the Prince's Treasure Trove

We cannot, however, reduce the duke's economic policies simply to the higher taxation that was implemented indiscriminately over the Tuscan state. Some of the economic developments that underpin Cosimo's rule were already underway at the end of the 14th century and had launched a continual process of economic and territorial integration between the various areas of Florentine territory, allowing for a division of labor between the different areas.⁴⁸ Cosimo did not inherit an impoverished state, even though Florence and its citizens had suffered during the wars of 1527–1530. The overall structure of the Florentine economy was still functioning, supported by investments from its nobility, but also from a stratum of small-scale workers and craftsmen whose ongoing activity is recorded in the census ordered by Cosimo.⁴⁹ Thanks to diversified financial investments, the number and wealth of major and minor merchants, the areas of production and the international business of some of its banks, the economy demonstrated a remarkable capacity to regenerate over a ten year time-frame: spanning from the imperial siege (1529–1530) and the rise of Alessandro, to the utterly unexpected investiture of Cosimo (1537) with the rank of second duke of the Republic of Florence. Most of all, the Florentines remained protagonists of the international economy, more so even than in their local economy, remaining notably wealthy as evidenced by their commodities and cash savings more so than their farms and palaces. And yet, even their real estate, as the Venetian ambassador Suriano recalled in 1533, was worth a treasure.⁵⁰

47 Giuseppe V. Parigino, "Il sangue d'oro di Medusa: Flussi di risorse da Arezzo a Firenze durante il granducato mediceo," *Annali aretini* 33 (2015), 213–240.

48 Paolo Malanima, "Le attività industriali," in *Prato storia di una città: Un microcosmo in movimento (1494–1815)*, ed. Elena Fasano Guarini (Florence: 1986), vol. 2, 217.

49 Pietro Battara, "Botteghe e pigioni nella Firenze del '500: Un censimento industriale e commerciale all'epoca del Granducato mediceo," *Archivio storico italiano* 2 (1937), 3–28; Paolo Malanima, "Firenze tra '500 e '700: L'andamento dell'industria cittadina nel lungo periodo," *Società e storia* 2 (1978), 231–256. On the regional economic situation, Paolo Malanima, "Politica ed economia nella formazione dello stato regionale: Il caso toscano," *Studi veneziani* 11 (1986), 61–72.

50 Gino Luzzatto, *Storia economica dell'età moderna e contemporanea* (Padua: 1932), 145–146;

With regards to the transition from republic to principate, the institutional changes—both the transformation of the main governing bodies and the reorganization of administrative structures—have been the particular focus of historians who have examined the changing status of the Florentine patricians and their traditional participation in government as public officeholders.⁵¹ From an institutional point of view, the move was from a corporate structure based on elected councils and judiciaries on a strict rotational basis, to a system which, while maintaining in part the ancient skeleton of the republican institutions, placed at the head of the Florentine Republic a duke who had received from the emperor the right to pass on the title and the governance of the city to his descendants.⁵² In this transformation, the new feature of the economy was precisely this commingling of the traditionally distinct private and public spheres.

This fundamental overlap of the prince's own property with the wealth of the state has been brought to the attention both by contemporary sources and historians. In 1566, the Venetian ambassador in Florence, Lorenzo Priuli, in an important account noted that “the wealth of the individual citizens could be said to be the wealth of the prince for at a time of need, the latter makes free use of individual capacities, either by borrowing or through some form of exchange.”⁵³ In the late 18th century, Galluzzi, exalting Cosimo's abilities, emphasized the latter's involvement in the “metal trade” for which he had established the Ufficio della Magona devoted to metal production through which he maintained a trade monopoly. It is the very existence of these monopolies in the prince's hands that accounts for the imbalance between the personal benefits received by the prince and those lost by the subjugated communities. On the mountainsides of Pistoia, the transition from the established metal industries to the duke's *Magona* system impoverished the surrounding woodlands, thus damaging local cottage industries that relied on the fragile balance of the Apennine ecosystem.⁵⁴ These negative consequences worsened with further legislation aimed at defending the privileges of the *Magona*,

Claudia Tripodi, “I fiorentini quinto elemento dell'universo: Un'invenzione al servizio di più tradizioni encomiastiche,” *Archivio storico italiano* 3 (2010), 491–519.

51 Robert Burr Litchfield, *Emergence of a Bureaucracy: The Florentine Patricians* (Princeton: 1986); Elena Fasano Guarini, *Lo stato mediceo di Cosimo I* (Florence: 1973).

52 On this crucial period of the history of Florence, see Rudolf von Albertini, *Firenze dalla Repubblica al principato: Storia e coscienza politica* (Turin: 1995).

53 See Furio Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici* (Turin: 1976), 143: “la ricchezza dei particolari si può dir esser la ricchezza del principe, perché nei bisogni si vale delle facoltà particolari, o per via d'imprestiti o per via di cambi.”

54 For both references, see Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici*, 143.

undermining the protection and distribution of the local water sources.⁵⁵ In his seminal work on the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Furio Diaz devoted a lengthy section to the economic management of the state, while finding in general that the commingling of interests was typical of the patrimonial state in early modern Europe, in the case of the Medici Duchy there were also idiosyncratic features that resulted from the institutional structures inherited from a century of oligarchic government. The characteristics of the prince's government were thus identified as the specific commercial activities of the duke; the acquisition of a noteworthy amount of landed property; the emphasis on taxation; and the granting of monopolies to specific enterprises, which often included the participation of the duke. It should be said that these latter activities often blurred the lines between public interest and personal benefit. All this meant that access to public resources, through the frequent reshuffling of administrative roles—even the most important ones—was not the monopoly of a single private individual and his family, but remained the property of the republic.⁵⁶ In his book, *Il tesoro del principe*, Giuseppe Parigino pursued a line of research which identified a further substantial area in which public and private wealth were commingled, allowing for direct ducal control over resources which had hitherto been at the disposal of a broader and less distinct governing body. Parigino identified an even more marked example of the appropriation of assets by the prince that went above and beyond the concept of commingling and confusing the separation of public and private utility.⁵⁷ Cosimo as “prince-protector” not only became guarantor of the rights of his subjects and his community, but also the figure overseeing the authoritarian transformation of the republican structure by means of the creation of new Medici-run magistracies.⁵⁸ The construction of a dynastic state also implied a transition from a state system

55 Francesco Mineccia, “Dinamiche demografiche e strutture economiche tra XIV e XVIII secolo,” in *Storia di Pistoia III: Dentro lo Stato fiorentino. Dalla metà del XIV secolo alla fine del XVIII secolo*, ed. Giuliano Pinto (Florence: 1999), 163–165.

56 Diaz, 143–151. See also D'Addario, “Burocrazia, economia e finanze.”

57 Giuseppe Vittorio Parigino, “Il crinale nelle leggi e nel patrimonio dei Medici. Alcuni esempi di concentrazione monopolistica delle risorse naturali nel Granducato di Toscana,” *Annali aretini* 32 (2014), 317–340.

58 Of fundamental importance as far as the analysis of the administrative structures of Cosimo's state is concerned is Elena Fasano Guarini, *Lo Stato mediceo di Cosimo I* (Florence: 1973). On Cosimo's role as protector of his subjects and community, see Luca Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore: Pluralismo istituzionale e accentramento amministrativo nel principato dei Medici (secc. XVI–XVIII)* (Milan: 1994). On Cosimo's “sense of a state,” see Furio Diaz, “Cosimo I e il consolidarsi dello Stato assoluto,” in *Potere e società negli stati regionali italiani del '500 e '600*, ed. Elena Fasano Guarini (Bologna: 1978), 74–97.

centered around the sovereignty of the city of Florence over its territory,⁵⁹ to a system which, by curtailing the centuries-old economic and juridical privileges of the capital city, moved towards a more balanced relationship between all of the subordinated cities and the outlying rural communities within the territory ruled by the prince.⁶⁰

This transformation of Tuscany can to a great extent be attributed to Cosimo. At the same time, the state administration was hallmarked by its marked deficiency of an overall articulated structure, as reflected in Cosimo's incoming correspondence, comprised in the Carteggio Universale section of the *Mediceo del Principato*.⁶¹ The letters to and from Cosimo demonstrate how he was at the center of the decision-making process for a vast range of issues. This protocol overruled the expertise and influence of employees and magistrates, placing in his own hands the power to make ad hoc executive decisions, which were determined by both the contingencies of the moment and his own personal intuitions. The establishment of the new administrative bodies of the Nove Conservatori del Dominio e della Giurisdizione Fiorentina (1560) and the Quattro Conservatori della Città e dello Stato di Siena (1561), whose jurisdictions extended over the territory of the Florentine State (*stato vecchio*) and the conquered Sienese State (*stato nuovo*) respectively, should be considered crucial moments of this consolidation of authority. Just as crucial, however, was the capacity to withdraw political power from local representatives in favor of the new magistracies.⁶²

As a result, the balance of power changed considerably between center and periphery, between Florence and local communities and territories. This turned out to be an irreversible process: never again would Florence reflect the

59 See Judith C. Brown, *Pescia nel Rinascimento: All'ombra di Firenze* (Pescia: 1987).

60 For an overview of the relation between central power and peripheral areas in Tuscany from the Middle Ages to the early modern times, see Giuliano Pinto and Lorenzo Tanzini (eds), *Poteri centrali e autonomie nella Toscana medievale e moderna* (Florence: 2012).

61 Rossi, "Agnolo Niccolini primo governatore," 69 and 74–75. On the central role played by the Niccolini family under Cosimo I, Francesco, and Ferdinando I Medici, see Andrea Zagli, "'Un poco di castello con un titolo.' Servizio del principe e strategie nobiliari di un casato fiorentino alla fine del '500: Il caso Niccolini," in *Feudalesimi nella Toscana moderna*, ed. Stefano Calonaci and Aurora Savelli, *Ricerche storiche* 44/2–3 (2014), 233–236.

62 Luca Mannori, "Le città e il principe: L'equilibrio territoriale dello Stato mediceo," in *Poteri centrali e autonomie nella Toscana medievale e moderna*, ed. Giuliano Pinto and Lorenzo Tanzini (Florence: 2012), 174–175. On the governments of local communities which were under Cosimo's aegis, see Elena Fasano Guarini, "Potere centrale e comunità soggette nel granducato di Cosimo I: Potere centrale e comunità soggette," *Rivista storica italiana* 89/3–4 (1977), 490–538.

administrative status it had under the republican regime. The duke was now able to interfere as he wished, presenting himself either as the protector of the weakest in open cases with the state magistracies, or as the supreme judge in all private matters concerning honor or property.⁶³ Despite this power, Cosimo eventually ceased to meddle in factional disputes and internecine conflicts, often taking advantage of these situations to his own benefit. His consolidation of political power and balance was instead asserted through a greater control over the judiciary.⁶⁴

Cosimo's elevation to Grand Duke of Tuscany clearly marked the decline of the hegemony of the city over the territory. This title laid emphasis on the prince's personal power over the subjects of both the *stato vecchio* and the *stato nuovo*, i.e. the newly incorporated Siennese territory that Philip II of Spain had awarded to Cosimo by feoffment, along with the Isola del Giglio, Portoferraio on Elba, and the coastal zone of Castiglione della Pescaia.⁶⁵ The turning point for the consolidation of Cosimo's supremacy came in 1543. Before then, the duke lacked solid foundations, due to the precarious dynastic legitimacy over a state still hosting pockets of political hostility both in Florence and in other smaller centers. This vulnerability was evidenced by the turmoil triggered in Pistoia, Arezzo, Sansepolcro, and Castrocaro shortly after the news of Alessandro's death.⁶⁶ In 1543, in exchange for 150,000 *scudi* (a sum of money raised

63 Maria Pia Paoli, "I Medici arbitri d'onore: Duelli, vertenze cavalleresche e 'paci aggiustate' negli antichi Stati italiani," in *Stringere la pace: Teorie e pratiche della conciliazione nell'Europa moderna (secoli XV–XVIII)*, ed. Paolo Broggio and Maria Pia Paoli (Rome: 2011), 129–200.

64 von Albertini, *Firenze dalla repubblica al principato*, 282.

65 On Siena under Medici rule, see Danilo Marrara, *Studi giuridici sulla Toscana Medicea: Contributo alla storia degli stati assoluti in Italia* (Milan: 1965). Castiglione (today Castiglione della Pescaia), an ancient stronghold from the time of the Piccolomini, was sold by Inico Piccolomini Aragona and Silvia Piccolomini (the Siennese branch) to Eleonora de Toledo on 20 January 1559 for 32,162 *scudi*. See Giuseppe V. Parigino, *Per mare e per palude: L'organizzazione della pesca a Castiglione della Pescaia nella seconda metà del Settecento* (Florence: 2003), 18.

66 On the civil turmoil of 1537, see Olivier Rouchon, "Les troubles de 1537 dans le domaine florentin," *Histoire, Économie et Société* 19 (2000), 25–48; Elena Fasano Guarini, "La fondazione del Principato: Da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530–1609)," in *Storia della civiltà toscana*, vol. 2, 15. On the relations between Cosimo and Paul III, see Roberto Cantagalli, *Cosimo I de' Medici granduca di Toscana* (Milan: 1985), 89–92. See also Massimo Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo a San Lorenzo: Eresia, politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Turin: 1997), 311–327; Gigliola Fragnito, "Arte e religione nel consolidamento del principato mediceo," in *Rivista storica italiana* 111 (1999), 235–249. On the relations between Cosimo and Paul IV Carafa, see Gustavo Bertoli, "Luterani e anabattisti processati a Firenze nel 1552," in *Archivio storico italiano* 154 (1996), 59–122.

through exceptional measures), Charles v returned the territory's strongholds to Cosimo, effectively putting an end to a period of internal conflict.⁶⁷

5 Taxation

Many of Cosimo's accomplishments in the field of international politics, from the departure of the imperial troops from Tuscany, to the investiture of the grand ducal title from the pope, were the result of an incessant activity of conferral and sale of privileges, offices, titles, and honors which the duke was able to undertake thanks to his strict financial discipline. In addition to the exceptional tax levies, a new fiscal policy was introduced, which existed alongside the regular *decima* and was calculated on the basis of the real estate owned by Florentine citizens. This eventually evolved into a series of duties and levies on goods for consumption and transport. It is important to visualize the progression of these taxes, in light of the institution of the Ufficio dell'Auditore Fiscale in 1543, whose function was to oversee the particular interests of the duke.⁶⁸ In 1545, what came to be known as the *chiesto dei Nove* (or "universal tax") was established and imposed by the Nove Conservatori del Dominio.⁶⁹ After the *chiesto*, three other important taxes on consumption were instituted: the tax on the slaughter of animals for meat (1551), the general levy on flour (1552) and the tax on bread (1553).

As for direct taxation, this remained unchanged within the city and was only slightly altered with respect to the Florentine *dominio*. Between 1547 and 1551, reforms on the property estimate in Pisan *contado* were implemented. This information became necessary to ensure that taxation in this region was both fairer and, most importantly, more effective.⁷⁰ These measures, supported at times also by the powerful addition of exceptional tax collection, would provide the tools necessary for establishing stability in the duchy. They also helped strengthen an ambitious and successful international policy which led, among other things, to the bestowal of the title of grand duke. It is significant that, from amongst the surviving republican magistracies, those that were thoroughly remodelled by the prince were the ones endowed with power of

67 Parigino, "Il sangue d'oro di Medusa," 216.

68 Idem, 216–217.

69 On the *Chiesto dei Nove* and its application to the territory of Arezzo, see Benigni, "Oligarchia cittadina e pressione fiscale," 51–72; Carbone, *Economia e fiscalità ad Arezzo in epoca moderna*.

70 Diaz, *Il granducato di Toscana: I Medici*, 152–153.

decision over economic matters—i.e. over commerce (the *Mercanzia*) and the industries (the *Arti*). The duke was able to strip them from political influence and completely reform them to the extent that their power was limited solely over legal issues.⁷¹

Special attention should be paid to the measures on the confiscation of the goods and properties of rebels. In 1551, Cosimo established that the treasury had the authority to confiscate their possessions—including concessions or those subject to endowments through *fideicommissum*—on the legal basis of a special dispensation originating from the tradition of Roman law. These measures were subsequently rendered more inflexible once it became established that children and the wards of dissidents under twelve years of age were still condemned to exile even after reaching legal adulthood (i.e. eighteen years of age).⁷²

6 Absolute Power of the Prince and the Evolution of the State

All of these actions do not necessarily imply the duke's predatory policy on the wealth of his realm. Noteworthy were his initiatives as a cultural entrepreneur, as well as his improvement and reclamation of arable land; planting of mulberry trees to support the local silk industry; granting privileges for various new manufactories; artistic and architectural commissions; and special attention to new inventions and engineering projects.⁷³ Many of these initiatives were endowed with the strong sense of 'state identity' demonstrated by Cosimo as both prince and guarantor of the peace, order and well-being of his subjects. Pisa and Livorno were subject to special legislation, and substantial investments intended to help these cities free themselves from the fetters of Florence and its corporations. A number of public works were launched to improve infrastructure of the Florentine and Pisan countryside, particularly the use of waterways which cut across the Arno between Empoli and Montelupo. In Vicopisano, he constructed the Navicelli canal between Pisa and Livorno, while in Florence he built the *canale macinante*. Still in Florence, the duke inaugurated public works that glorified his rule, but managed to do so by providing significant improvements for his subjects, as for instance, the construction of a new aqueduct. This was an important project, begun in 1551 and completed

⁷¹ Goldthwaite, *Leconomia della Firenze rinascimentale*, 66o.

⁷² Galluzzi, *Storia del granducato di Toscana*, vol. 1, 228.

⁷³ Idem, 668.

in 1557, that constituted a highly useful public service for the city which had historically relied for its water supply on an inefficient system of wells and fountains.⁷⁴

As mentioned above, the duke's implementation and administration of water supply both inside the city and in *dominio* cannot be dismissed solely as a celebration of his supreme power. In 1546 an imposing public structure, the *Loggia del Mercato Nuovo*, was built as an "ornament to the city as also a great convenience for Florentine merchants and foreigners" and was funded through an exceptional levy of 1,058 florins.⁷⁵ His direct involvement with public works intensified after the victory of the Sienese war. The construction of Palazzo degli Uffizi (1560) allowed Cosimo to centralize political power by gathering the main magistracies into one single space. Such a variety of public works and initiatives undermined the assumption that Cosimo's rule was exclusively predatory.

The Florentine aristocracy, though marginalized politically from the highest offices of the administration, was still able to maintain its own financial and social gravitas. The possibility of handing down one's property, transmitted at will along a familial line of succession or to other beneficiaries, remained a practice over which the treasury had only a limited influence. It was thus possible to maintain a pattern of inheritance for real estate that had been in place since the end of the 14th century.⁷⁶ The affluent oligarchy was encouraged to direct its own funds towards land investments, in the tradition of the models set out by the noblemen and knights of other Italian states of the times. According to the 18th-century historian Francesco Inghirami, even the creation of the Order of the Knights of Saint Stephen, established by Cosimo with papal approval in 1561, had as its true aim to discourage the Tuscan aristocracy from pursuing trade enterprises, their traditional sphere of activity.⁷⁷ According to

74 Emanuela Ferretti, "Cosimo I, la magnificenza dell'acque e la celebrazione del potere: La nuova capitale dello Stato fiorentino tra architettura, città e infrastrutture," *Annali di storia di Firenze* 9 (2014), 12–15.

75 The announcement establishing its construction is dated 23 November 1546. On the *Loggia del Mercato Nuovo*, see ASF, Mediceo del Principato 629, folio not numbered: "ornamento di detta città et chomodo de' merchanti fiorentini et forestieri insieme." The important and lesser known questions concerning the Florentine aqueduct are now covered in Emanuela Ferretti, *Acquedotti e fontane del Rinascimento in Toscana: Acqua, architettura e città al tempo di Cosimo I dei Medici* (Florence: 2016).

On the exile of the *fuoriusciti*, see Paolo Simoncelli, *Fuoriuscitismo repubblicano fiorentino 1530–1554* (Milan: 2006).

76 Stefano Calonaci, *Dietro lo scudo incantato: I fedecommissi di famiglia e il trionfo della borghesia fiorentina (1400 ca–1750)* (Florence: 2005).

77 Giuseppina Carla Romby, *Abitare la campagna: 'Possessioni', 'case da signore', 'case di villa*

Inghirami's contention, which was accepted by later historians, the politics of 'social ennobling' triggered the decline of the Arte della Lana, the once powerful corporation at the heart of the old Florentine economy.⁷⁸

As for the management of his private estates, the duke followed traditional agricultural tenets, employing a sharecropping system as found in any patrician estate of the time. Cosimo was careful to choose the personnel employed for this task in order to keep tight control over his property and accounts. He took great care to place in the government offices, from the tax collection to military administration, many of his relatives and friends. Vieri de' Medici was governor of Pisa and the Maremma, Carlo de' Medici chamberlain of customs duties, and Giovan Battista de' Medici overseer of the fortresses (end of the 1550s). Francesco de' Medici was employed as overseer of the state monopoly over salt. Ottaviano de' Medici, Tommaso de Medici, and their father, Jacopo de' Medici, all held high positions in the offices of the Depositeria and the Guardaroba, as well as in the fiscal administration of the outlying territories. This overwhelming employment of Medici family members is found throughout the 1540s to 1560s, but also in the following years when many family members joined the courts attending to the Medici princes.

The prince's role in maintaining a balance in the trade of essential goods was not insignificant. Thanks to his monopoly of the wheat trade, Cosimo acquired a large reserve of grain with which to supply his state, in an attempt to counter the private speculators who were hoarding it. Taking over the grain supply and making it a state monopoly allowed Cosimo to sell the grain at a stable fixed price to provide for his people. This was especially effective during the dearth of 1539 and 1540 when rationing was enforced. It is important to note that the two magistracies of republican origin, the *Abbondanza* and *Grascia*, were those which were traditionally concerned with the purveyance of grain, meat, and other such provisions for the poorest sectors of the population during dire times. During the dearth of 1539, as the price of grain increased considerably, and continued to do so also in the following year, Cosimo was able to operate independently from these magistracies. When their annual term was over in July 1540, he designated four commissioners from the Florentine citizenry who acquired 4% of the total grain production taken as a tithe from all property owners, so that the state had a strategic reserve with which to supply citizens

nella Toscana' del Cinquecento (Florence: 2014), 11. On Cosimo's creation of Order of the Knights of Saint Stephen, see Franco Angiolini, *I cavalieri e il principe: L'Ordine di Santo Stefano e la società toscana in età moderna* (Florence: 1996), 10–20.

78 Cantagalli, *Cosimo I de' Medici*, 163–165.

when the market fell short.⁷⁹ At the same time, Cosimo himself proceeded to buy a substantial quantity of wheat from foreign markets. It is clear that he wanted to come to the aid of his people and, at the same time, secure his monopoly. The Venetian ambassador Lorenzo Priuli claimed that Eleonora de Toledo had probably engineered the institution of this monopoly in order to recover the debts that Cosimo had accumulated with her during the early years of his rule.⁸⁰ This made the duke the sole provider of this most basic foodstuff, countering speculators in times of rationing.

As for the internal structure of the *Grascia*, Cosimo stuck to form, forcing his way into its activities. While leaving the five officials in control which were instituted under the republican government, Cosimo reserved for himself the right to elect one of them (1542). Thus, even the *provveditore* of the *Grascia*—who choose these five officials, along with a notary and a chamberlain—was ultimately appointed by the prince. The terms of office were also no longer inflexibly set on an annual rotational basis but were again dependent on the wishes of the sovereign.⁸¹

7 Distribution of Real Estate, the Prince's Wealth and the Development of the Territory

One obvious aspect of how the duke came to control the wealth of the state is the gradual acquisition of land. Cosimo and Eleonora purchased property from nobility (such as the Guidi and Cibo families), but also from farmers and religious institutions. During the first phase of his rule, Cosimo acquired land mainly in areas around the Mugello, Castello, and Fiesole, where the family already possessed significant real estate, as well as around the Upper Valdarno. This first phase can also be divided into two distinct stages: during the first, from 1540 to 1562, acquisitions did not exceed 14,738 *scudi*; but during the second phase, from 1563 to 1573, after the duke began to distance himself from

79 Anna Maria Pult Quaglia, *Per provvedere ai popoli: Il sistema annonario nella Toscana dei Medici* (Florence: 1990), 57–58.

80 ASF, Mediceo del Principato 638, fol. 21^r, 12 July 1540, Cosimo I to Pierfrancesco Riccio. Twenty-six years later, Priuli would note how “his Excellency gets everything bought in his name and sells it off at the price that he likes: this practice was introduced at the time of the late duchess and used to be carried out in her name; nothing has changed since her death. His Excellency has continued the practice [...]”; Diaz, *Il Granducato di Toscana*, 143.

81 Pult Quaglia, *Per provvedere ai popoli*, 48–49.

direct government of the state, there was a substantial increase in spending, reaching an amount of 43,455 *scudi*.⁸²

For the most part, Cosimo acquired land and property which expanded the ones already owned by the Medici, as in the case of the Mugello and in the surrounding areas of Castello. In the 1550s, his interest seems to have moved towards the Lower Valdarno, triggered by his passion for hunting which found favorable grounds in the lower valley and soft slopes. One such estate the Medici owned was around Cerreto Guidi, which was perhaps Cosimo's favorite hunting residence, ensconced in a patch of land taken over from the diocese of Lucca. In the same years, Cosimo bought land in the Pisa area, his preferred destination for the summer months. These properties faced Rosignano to the south and the Val del Serchio to the North and were nested in between the Pisan countryside and the planes around Lucca. After 1559, the duke became the owner of a vast area of pasture in the Sienese territory where there were opportunities for wheat fields, raising livestock and pursuing various other agricultural activities.

The overall impression, however, is that Cosimo as a private landowner stayed rooted mostly to the lands contained in the *stato vecchio*, i.e. the territories around Florence and Pisa. To the north of Florence, in the Mugello, he successfully expanded the estates inherited from his mother by adding a number of properties which clearly marked the ducal presence over the whole valley, impacting the local economies of Scarperia and Barberino. The account books of the land owned by the duke in 1562 list fourteen farms to which we should add a large number of estates and allotments of land located predominately in the Pisan territory, interspersed in such a way as to establish the presence of the duke throughout this large area. More precisely, Cosimo's real estate was concentrated around the following centers of production: the estates at Fiesole, Castello, Petraia and Cafaggiolo, the farmstead at Panna, which was a dependency of the estate of Cafaggiolo, and the estate at Trebbio.⁸³ Each of these were managed by a farmer. These production centers were located in the valley of the Arno around Florence and the Mugello. The farms of Trebbio and Cafaggiolo especially stand out for their productivity as landed estates: Trebbio comprised thirty-five farmsteads (*poderi*), while at Cafaggiolo and Panna there were nineteen, dispersed throughout the Scarperia and Barberino territories. In the Valdarno, Cosimo owned the estate of San Mezzano which covered twenty-

82 Parigino, *Il tesoro del principe*, 75–76.

83 On the Medici villa in Fiesole, see Christoph L. Frommel, "La villa Medici a Fiesole e la nascita della villa rinascimentale," in *Colloqui d'architettura*, ed. Augusto Roca De Amicis (Rome: 2005), 30–59.

five farmsteads; whereas to the south of Arezzo, he owned the estate of Chiane which contained a very fertile stretch of land which he rented out. In the *stato nuovo*, two properties are noteworthy: the estate at Castelluccio di Pienza in Val d'Orcia comprising twenty farmsteads, and the estate of Marsiliana near Massa which was bought from the local bishop.

As long as she lived, Eleonora was in charge of these estates (having accrued personal wealth of over 40,000 *scudi*) and was an especially active seller of grain and skilled real-estate investor.⁸⁴ Overall, the income from this landed property was considerable. In 1553 the revenue from the harvest from the farms in the Mugello reached 6,000 *scudi*, which went straight to the duchess's coffers. These monies paid back only part of the debt Cosimo had contracted with her. More substantial payments were made to Eleonora from 1553, when he used the dividends from the income collected from taxes on salt and consumption.⁸⁵

The ducal couple's role as producers of grain extended far beyond the mere dimensions of direct income. Given the necessity of providing such an essential resource, they held a central role in the monopoly of the rationing system of the duchy. This was not the only way in which Cosimo marked his conquest of the territory and his status as the major landowner. Seen as a hunter-prince, his display of power became more far-reaching and highly evocative. It also situated him with the fabric of a rural system, allowing him to exploit the established civic customs which were the backbone of agricultural communities. Cosimo took over these customs but also kept a magnanimous patronage over them. Indeed, the appropriation of collective resources of rural communities is one of the main characteristics of Cosimo's rule, especially when it came to the economy. The duke became the sole manager of the resources of some of the communities under his rule—communities that were forced to rent their goods and rights to the sovereign because they lacked the means and resources to directly exploit and improve their land themselves. This situation indebted the local communities (especially the Livornese provinces of Campiglia, Bibbona, Ripabella, and Fauglia), which were unable to pay the expensive charges requested by the *chiesto dei Nove*.⁸⁶

84 Edelstein, "Eleonora di Toledo," 743.

85 Idem, 750–752.

86 In Campiglia in 1563 the duke possessed: "Tutte le terre lavorative et sode et bestie e pasture, terre montuose, piani e paludi acque con due mulini, ghianda herba foglia legnami e tutti e frutti che hoggi si posseggono per detta Comunità e tutti quelli beni ch per tempo avenire si acquistassino quando si siano per misura si conducono a fitto di detta comunità e huomini, per fitto ogni anno di scudi 740;" and in Bibbona: "Il Pasco herba foglia et

In light of the duke's impact on the Tuscan territory, which was expanded after 1559, the political economy of Cosimo had uneven results in some areas of the duchy (later grand duchy). For example, in the *stato nuovo* there was a weakening of the rights of smaller communities in favor of larger landowners. This caused unfair access to resources, increased the creation of new feudal estates, and forced the abandonment of entire villages.⁸⁷ This fragility ultimately characterized the economic system of the southern territories of the *stato nuovo*, especially the coastal area around Grosseto known as the Maremma. The oligarchy from the time of the Sienese Republic employed these areas as pasture or for planting cereals: no efforts were made to develop a more diversified and autonomous economy for the local population.⁸⁸

The Maremma was an underdeveloped territory—with no major cities villages spread out throughout a vast area⁸⁹—but with great potential.⁹⁰ Cosimo had acquired an extensive knowledge of this land ever since Grosseto and its environs had become military headquarters for hostile French troops. He furthered this knowledge with visits in March 1560 and October 1562.⁹¹ Subsequently, thanks to his entrepreneurial savvy, the duke understood immediately how urgent it was to make new investments in the fortifications of Grosseto as well as in the maintenance of the Ombrone river and the surrounding

acqua di dicto Comune di Bibbona et i terratici della terra detta e a esso in qualunque modo aspettanti e pertinenti quando si sieno per misura, si conducono a fitto perpetuo da detta comunità e pagasene l'anno scudi 230." ASF, Mediceo del Principato 642, folio not numbered.

87 Lucia Bonelli Conenna, "Cenni sulle comunità del contado senese dopo la conquista medicea," in *I Medici e lo Stato senese, 1555–1609: Storia e territorio*, ed. Leonardo Rombai (Rome: 1980), 225.

88 Andrea Zagli, "Il territorio grossetano nel principato mediceo (seconda metà del XVI secolo)," in *La costa maremmana: Uomo e ambiente tra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, ed. Marco Paperini (Livorno: 2009), 125–146.

89 Roberto Farinelli, *I castelli nella Toscana delle "città deboli": Dinamiche del popolamento e del potere rurale nella Toscana meridionale (secoli VII–XIV)* (Florence: 2007). On the importance of the villages of Buonconvento, Sinalunga, Asciano, but also of the more remote ones in the Maremma mountains: Arcidosso, Piancastagnaio, Abbadia San Salvatore, which possessed age-old judiciary traditions, economic supremacy, social dynamism, and modern cultural models, see Stefano Calonaci, "Promesse da realizzare: I fedecommissi nello 'Stato Nuovo' di Siena (secc. XVI–XVIII)," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 124/2 (2012), 551–577.

90 On the Maremma in the Middle Ages, see Didier Bousseuil, "La Maremma, spazio di confine nella Toscana medievale (VIII–XIV secolo)," *Archivio storico italiano* 156 (2008), 615–631; Gabriella Garzella and Michele Luzzati (eds), *Etruria, Tuscia, Toscana: L'identità di una regione attraverso i secoli*, 2 vols (Pisa: 1998).

91 Zagli, *Il territorio grossetano nel principato mediceo*, 128–129.

countryside. In particular, it was imperative that these interventions without the involvement of the local elite, generally Sieneſe patricians who had business arrangements in the Maremma and would take advantage of their well-established network of friends and clients. Such a “pesce grosso”—to put in Cosimo’s words—was capable of swallowing the resources intended for the “universale.”⁹² The duke was not alone in realizing the extraordinary potential of the fertile lands of the *stato nuovo* as “giardino d’Italia,” as reported by Venetian ambassadors, Vincenzo Fedeli and Lorenzo Priuli.⁹³

As Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo was also *signore* of Portoferraio, the Isola del Giglio and Castiglione della Pescaia, all of which had great economic potential but also were of great strategic importance thanks to their access to the sea. Indeed, Cosimo’s new territories expanded his maritime presence significantly, located between the State of the *Presidi*, strategic ports under Spanish control, and the principate of Piombino, which was still in the hands of the Appiano family, despite Cosimo’s constant attempts at annexation. His presence in the Maremma would enable him to advance his territorial ambitions in the direction of the border lands with the Papal States: above all, the fief of Pitigliano and Sorano held by the Orsini.⁹⁴ With the hope of embarking on new political initiatives and expanding his interests, at the start of the 1560s, Cosimo decided to take his personal territorial ambitions a step further by investing in and planning agricultural activities as a private citizen on the lands located near Grosseto and in Montepescali. Aiming to have a better grip on this area, he began to make recurrent visit to the Maremma, though he would later ask the tax auditors of Siena or their employees go in his stead.⁹⁵

Cosimo’s economic policy can be certainly considered successful as long as one takes into account the political consequences that impacted the Medici grand duchy and dynasty, which included the annexation of Siena and the acquisition of its many riches. The prestige earned by the duke had a positive effect, as was also the title of grand duke that established his preeminence

92 Idem, 130.

93 Idem, 130–131.

94 Angelo Biondi, “Lo Stato di Pitigliano e i Medici da Cosimo a Ferdinando I,” in *I Medici e lo Stato senese, 1555–1609: Storia e territorio*, ed. Leonardo Rombai (Rome: 1980), 75–88.

95 These are particularly interesting documents which have long attracted the attention of historians. On Cosimo’s interest for the agricultural importance of the Maremma and on the visit paid in 1573 by the Sieneſe tax auditor Francesco Rasi, see Fasano Guarini, “La Maremma senese nel granducato mediceo,” 413–415. On the work carried out in Montepescali and Grosseto, Cosimo wrote to Agnolo Niccolini: “habbiam disegnato di fare imprese di lavorecci almeno per cinquanta para di buoi o nella corte di Montepescali o di Grosseto.” See Zagli, *Il territorio grossetano nel principato mediceo*, 130.

and power over the other Italian princes who were not directly subordinate to Spain. As for the concrete application of economic measures, Cosimo's initiatives seem to have been undoubtedly effective when it came to farming and, as we shall see shortly, metallurgy. On the other hand, his policies to recover (mostly swampy) land and to repopulate territories were pursued more effectively and successfully by his successors. His attempts at an "internal colonization" of the neglected parts of the Maremma serves a perfect case study. Cosimo only managed to build a drainage system in the marshes of Montepescali.⁹⁶ The tax benefits that were promised to those who moved to the Maremma did not resolve the depopulation crisis that was in effect large areas of the *dominio*. The southern territories of the *stato nuovo* remained the designated area for deporting convicted criminals. As for the textile industry, the silk workshops greatly benefited from the establishment and development of local mulberry bushes, in contrast to the wool industry, which did not overcome its long-term crisis under Cosimo. The duke also completed numerous building projects, which were practical but also served to impose his presence in these newly acquired territories, as was the case of the fortifications of Grosseto and Radicofani.

As mentioned earlier, an important aspect of Cosimo's economic initiatives involved mining and metallurgy. Modern-day Tuscany owes its mining heritage to the duke's capacity to open up "new" areas of investment. Moreover, Cosimo had a sound knowledge of the techniques and methods of the latest technological inventions. Silver and lead were extracted in Tuscany since the Middle Ages—or even since Late Antiquity—along with the iron and alum, the latter being an essential element for the fixing of color pigments on textile. Initially, important attention was given to the extraction of silver, especially from the mines of Pietrasanta, which began as early as 1539. Cosimo hired skilled laborers from Germany—at the time the center of the world's most highly qualified miners and metalworkers—to work at Pietrasanta and Versilia.⁹⁷ These were expert mine supervisors and other trained craftsmen, who had been working in the mines belonging to the Fugger. This was made possible thanks to his good relations with this banking family from Augsburg, from whom Cosimo was able to obtain access to international credit, so essential to his politics.

96 Danilo Barsanti, "Bonifiche e colonizzazione della Maremma senese sotto i primi Medici," in *I Medici e lo Stato senese, 1555–1609: Storia e territorio*, ed. Leonardo Rombai (Rome: 1980), 264–265.

97 The superintendents of the mines were Cristofano Degler and, from 1548, Antoni Gleggl, who had previously managed the mines of the Fugger for over fifteen years. See Madga Fabretti and Anna Guidarelli, "Ricerche sulle iniziative dei Medici in campo minerario da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I," in *Potere centrale e strutture periferiche nella Toscana del '500*, ed. Giorgio Spini (Florence: 1985), 145–149.

In order to follow closely work on the mines and local marble quarries, Cosimo resided at the villa of Seravezza, which was completed in 1563 after two years of construction. These mining initiatives were exorbitantly expensive (and not always profitable), even if only a handful of local workmen were hired and their salaries were covered by the income generated from the *Capitanato*.⁹⁸ In 1549, the duke reassigned these German experts to Campiglia, from which, along with the Versilia and Massa di Maremma in the south, silver could be extracted. Here, the duke's intention was to revitalize the silver mining industry that had been active for centuries. Coincidentally, the discovery of marble quarries in the surrounding territories had an impact on both the local and ducal economy.

From 1540, Cosimo's initiatives focused on alum, which was among the principal assets of commercial banking networks of the time.⁹⁹ In 1540, he took a lease on the mines of Valle and Montioni in the territory of the Appiano family, but he never succeeded in exploiting them because of the opposition of Paul III and the Camera Apostolica who also claimed the exclusive rights over the very same mines.¹⁰⁰ It was in this context that we can situate the efforts made by Cosimo and his son, Cardinal Ferdinando (later Grand Duke Ferdinand I), to obtain the bishopric of Massa (today Massa Marittima) for Antonio Angeli da Barga, a member of the Medici trusted inner circle. Jurisdiction over the important large diocese of Massa and Populonia overlapped with a part of the Appiano family territory.¹⁰¹ After the conquest of Siena, Cosimo succeeded in launching the development of the alum mines located in Massa di Maremma, very close to those situated in Valle and Montioni. In this case too, these projects were financed by state funds from the Depositeria, in other words, drawn from the deposits made by the offices of the chamberlains in charge of the flour levies from Lari, Colle Val d'Elsa, San Gimignano, Certaldo, Florence, and also from the Arte della Lana. Cosimo was thus in control of a commercial activity that was crucial to the Arte della Lana and financially supported the exploitation of the mines. In order to sustain this venture, Cosimo took advantage of the changes that occurred in the administration of the *Arte*, which, since its reorganization in 1550, was controlled by a figurehead nominated by the duke.¹⁰² Unlike silver, the extraction of alum seemed to have produced significant margins of profit judging by the rapid increase in produc-

98 Fabretti and Guidarelli, "Ricerche sulle iniziative dei Medici in campo minerario," 153.

99 Jean Delumeau, *L'alun de Rome: xv^e-xix^e siècle* (Paris: 1962).

100 Fabretti and Guidarelli, "Ricerche sulle iniziative dei Medici in campo minerario," 177-179.

101 Calonaci, "'Accordar lo spirito col mondo,'" 55-56.

102 Fabretti and Guidarelli, "Ricerche sulle iniziative dei Medici in campo minerario," 190-195.

tion in Massa di Maremma from about 535 *cantara* in 1560 when production began, to 3160 *cantara* in 1563, and then 4600 in 1564 (i.e. over 216 tons).¹⁰³

The appropriation and exploitation of the marble quarries at Pietrasanta constitute another interesting case. Cosimo only began to invest in Versilia in 1563, in search of an alternative to the Carrara marble which belonged to the local marquis of Massa, who regulated marble prices on the markets. In this case, the duke succeeded in acquiring control of a valuable public collective resource over the heads of the centuries-old owner of the quarry—the local community—who donated it to the republic of Florence in 1513.

Cosimo was extraordinarily skilful at taking advantage of opportunities, exploiting networks of production and commerce, taking control of economic mechanisms through legislation, selecting workforce, and overseeing arbitration and mediation. These were modes of manifestation of political power in Tuscany. On the other hand, his economic policies revealed notable limitations, both in terms of the financial success of his projects and of the ambitious spirit with which they were initially approached. Most importantly, they failed to benefit his subjects as a whole. The skilled workers from Germany, Brescia, and Bergamo took up much of the available employment. The urbanization works in the countryside and over the whole territory were to a large extent realized thanks to the *comandate*, i.e. the service forced on local inhabitants. The communities of the *stato nuovo* did not, generally speaking, receive any conspicuous benefits by passing under the Medici regime. Indeed, it is probably fair to say that their financial situation deteriorated.

8 Conclusion

The grand dukes who came after Cosimo surely manifested a particular concern for the management of the territory: paying special attention to the water supply, the recovery of marshland and the repopulation of abandoned farms.¹⁰⁴ This was possible because these policies had been sketched out by the first grand duke himself. Even the policy of feudal subordination, for all it was worth, came down to a handful of fiefs that trace their foundation to the years of Cosimo's reign.¹⁰⁵ He tightened his grip over the territory: the new borders

103 Idem, 193. The *cantaro* is a unit of measure corresponding to about 47 kg.

104 Rombai, "Lassetto del territorio," 11–13.

105 For a history of infeudation in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, see Giuseppe Pansini, "Per una storia del feudalesimo nel Granducato di Toscana durante il periodo mediceo," *Quaderni storici* 7 (1972), 131–186. The creation of new fiefs became the object of a precise economic

of the *stato nuovo* required more vigilant control than the ones of the *stato vecchio*. His involvement with metal extraction was of far greater importance (and the concept “industrial system,” in this case, is most appropriate).¹⁰⁶ Cosimo acquired the monopoly over all iron extraction and production in 1543 as part of the agreement with Jacopo v Appiano, lord of Piombino, in which he conceded to Cosimo the exclusive use of the iron mines on Elba. That same year, the kiln at Isola Santa was built in Garfagnana and cast iron was no longer produced less efficiently. This innovative method was possible thanks to the specialized knowledge of workers from Bergamo and Brescia, the main areas in Italy for ironworking. Significant progress in the field of metallurgy was made with the establishment of new furnaces in Pracchia (Pistoia), Campiglia, Fosse delle Caldan (Livorno), and Pietrasanta.¹⁰⁷

As for the rest, Cosimo’s most successful initiatives pertain more directly to matters of defense than economics. Tuscan shipping and the protection of the coasts benefited from the surveillance carried out by the fleet of the Order of the Knights of Saint Stephen. It is clear that an increase in taxes was consistently sought which weighed down heavily on the Tuscan communities, such as Arezzo and Prato.¹⁰⁸ The ruling classes were able to maintain economic power, turning to more prestigious fields and taking advantage of the paths to ennoblement that the duke had made possible (as well as the concessions of the first land titles which the Medici bestowed upon them as territorial sovereigns).

Archival and literary sources describe Cosimo as a paragon of frugality and simplicity, reluctant to indulge in superfluous expenses and only slightly inclined towards comfort and luxuries. This derived from his military and hunting interests that he cultivated since his youth.¹⁰⁹ Cosimo was an intelligent and capable ruler, well prepared to tackle a multitude of sundry questions concerning governance and often exhibiting an autocratic approach to decision-

program only under Ferdinando I, see Irene Polverini Fosi, “Un programma di politica economica: Le infeudazioni nel Senese durante il principato mediceo,” *Critica Storica* 13/4 (1976), 660–672.

106 On metal extraction in Tuscany during the first half of the sixteenth century, see Ivan Tognarini, “La questione del ferro nella Toscana del XVI secolo” in *I Medici e lo Stato senese, 1555–1609: Storia e territorio*, ed. Leonardo Rombai (Rome: 1980), 239–261.

107 Tognarini, “La questione del ferro nella Toscana del XVI secolo,” 250.

108 On the overall loss of autonomy of local communities under Cosimo’s rule and new taxation, see E. Stumpo, “Le forme del governo cittadino,” in *Prato storia di una città: Un microcosmo in movimento (1494–1815)*, ed. Elena Fasano Guarini (Florence: 1986), vol. 2, 290–291.

109 Sergio Bertelli, “Palazzo Pitti dai Medici ai Savoia,” in *La Corte di Toscana dai Medici ai Lorena*, ed. Anna Bellinazzi and Alessandra Contini (Rome: 2002), 11–103.

making. Cosimo was also very lucky. During his rule, there were hardly any famines; this was also partly due to the conquest of the Sienese lands that guaranteed regular supplies of grain to the inhabitants of the *stato vecchio*. He was despotic and strict, reserving for himself the right to intervene on matters of law so as to modify any economic imbalances through legislation. The example of Pescia in the Val di Nievole, examined by Judith C. Brown, is case in point. In 1545, Cosimo had abolished the privileges and exemptions belonging to small communities, but two years later these were almost all reestablished with the addendum that the prince now reserved for himself the right to impose new tariffs and ban the import of any goods he deemed fit to forbid. And yet, despite the declarations made by local officials, the effects on local commerce were not entirely negative: from 1547 to 1567 the inhabitants of Pescia were able to sell their wine and oil without paying any tax or suffering from bans on export.¹¹⁰

Cosimo's economic policy should not be modelled on his political success and theorized according to clear economic strategies. Rather, it needs to be surveyed on the basis of the vast field of research set out by the scrutiny of the actual state of commerce and production: a balance of private interests and public benefit.

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¹¹⁰ Brown, *Pescia nel Rinascimento*, 194–195.

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