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General editors:

David J. Burn

Sarah Ann Long

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Theme



An Itinerant Patronage: Margaret of Parma and Music

Guest Editor:
Francesco Zimei

Introduction

FRANCESCO ZIMEI

Margaret of Parma (1522-86) was a key figure in the political scene of sixteenth-century Europe, despite being the illegitimate daughter of a young commoner from Oudenaarde and the twenty-one-year-old Charles V of Habsburg.¹ Raised in Brussels as a princess under the watchful care of her great-aunt Margaret, duchess of Savoy, and later her aunt Mary of Hungary, Margaret was soon destined by Charles V to be a valuable tool in his marriage strategy to establish a strong network of alliances for the imperial crown. To that end, she was first married to Alessandro de' Medici (1536), the nephew of Pope Clement VII and the future first duke of Florence, which also helped to restore relations between Charles V and the Holy See after the sack of Rome. After Alessandro's assassination, Margaret was married again (1538), this time to the thirteen-year-old Ottavio Farnese, the nephew of the new pontiff Paul III and the future duke of Parma (1545). Although Margaret bore him an heir (the condottiero Alessandro Farnese), she was not happy in her marriage. As a result, she decided to relocate her own court to Piacenza (1557), where she stayed until the summer of 1559, when she accepted the invitation from her stepbrother Philip II of Spain to assume the regency of the Habsburg Netherlands. After eight challenging years spent dealing with religious conflicts and the ruthless repression of the Spanish government in the Low Countries, Margaret returned to Italy. This time she decided to retire to her fiefdoms in the mountains of Abruzzi (1569) and then to the nearby city of Aquila, where she became the permanent governor in 1572, all the while continuing to cultivate her extensive international relations. Apart from another mission to the Netherlands in 1580-82, she remained in Abruzzi until her death on 18 January 1586 at her winter residence in Ortona.²

During such an itinerant life, one of the stable interests that Margaret—or 'Madama', as her subjects affectionately called her—had the opportunity to cultivate was music, an art for which she had a genuine passion from her childhood. This is evident from her special attention to chapel affairs, her personal connections with prominent composers, the numerous dedications of collections and individual works of secular vocal music, and the quantity and variety of musical performances given in her honour during ceremonial entrances to the various cities that welcomed her. However, Margaret's ties to music have only been partially explored so far. Among the few specific contributions published on the topic, an article by the late Seishiro Niwa dating back almost twenty

¹ In accordance with her father's wishes, she was always officially called 'Margaret of Austria', both in contemporary sources as well as in general historiography. However, in musicological literature, she is usually referred to as Margaret of Parma, to avoid confusion with the emperor's aunt of the same name, who was regent of the Habsburg Netherlands. This convention has also been followed in the articles published here.

² Scholarship on Margaret's life includes Renato Lefevre, *'Madama' Margarita d'Austria: Vita d'una grande dama del Cinquecento, figlia di Carlo V, sposa sfortunata di Alessandro de' Medici e duchessa di Parma e Piacenza con Ottavio Farnese, governatrice dell'Aquila e delle Fiandre, signora di città del Lazio e dell'Abruzzo* (Rome, 1986); Romano Canosa, *Vita di Margherita d'Austria* (Ortona, 1998); Georges-Henri Dumont, *Marguerite de Parme: Bâtarde de Charles Quint, 1522-1586* (Brussels, 1999); *Margherita d'Austria, 1522-1586: Costruzioni politiche e diplomazia, tra corte Farnese e monarchia spagnola*, ed. Silvia Mantini (Rome, 2003); and Charles R. Steen, *Margaret of Parma: A Life* (Leiden, 2013).

years provides a valuable overview of the subject.³ Nonetheless, the possibility of addressing her relationship to music over her lifetime and in a variety of circumstances has yet to receive the attention it deserves.

The articles included in this themed issue are based on a special panel presented by the four authors on 5 July 2022—500th anniversary of Margaret's birth—at the 50th Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in Uppsala. They examine some notable aspects of her musical patronage across different time periods and locations, with the aim of conducting a systematic study on the topic. Each of the articles offers new insights and an analysis of her musical patronage that frequently reveals consistent attitudes and trends, despite the wide geographic and chronological scope.

Margaret's presence in Italy was marked by a tradition of madrigals that celebrated events from throughout her life, beginning with her arrival in Florence in 1533. The articles by Marco Mangani and Jessie Ann Owens offer a comprehensive examination of texts dedicated to Margaret from before her return to Italy from Flanders (1568) that were set to music. Originating in different contexts and situations, these texts nevertheless share common features, due especially to 'Madama's' connection to the House of Farnese. Mangani first emphasizes the dual meaning of the Italian word *margherita*, which, in addition to indicating the daisy, indicates the pearl and the precious stone, in accordance with its own etymology. After examining the two texts for Margaret set to music by Arcadelt, the essay goes on to examine two important dedications to Margaret of Parma: the second book of madrigals by Giovanni Francesco Alcarotti and the canzone *Questo sì ch'è felice e lieto giorno*, set to music by several hands as part of the collection *I dolci frutti*, edited by Cornelio Antonelli, known as 'Il Turturino'.

Owens explores Margaret's patronage of her compatriot, the Flemish composer Cipriano de Rore, and his musical tributes to her. A careful reading of the texts of three madrigals that can securely be connected with Farnese patronage enables speculation about the chronology of their connection. Another madrigal, long associated with the 1565 wedding of Alessandro Farnese and Maria of Portugal and thought to be by Cipriano, can be shown to be the work of one of Cipriano's students and was unrelated to the wedding.

The last two articles consider two specific moments of Margaret's life: her residencies in Piacenza and Aquila. Given their link to particular cities and their institutions, the articles discuss several common topics such as triumphal entries, local festivities, and the rhetoric of sovereignty. As discussed by Lucia Marchi, Margaret spent two years in Piacenza in 1557-59, returned in 1568, and left her mark with the construction of a family residence, the Palazzo Farnese. Perhaps more significantly, she chose the city as her burial place, and a solemn funeral with polyphonic music was celebrated in 1586 in the Cassinese monastery of San Sisto.

My article explores, in turn, the reasons and circumstances of 'Madama's' last residence in Aquila and her fiefdoms in Abruzzi (1569-80, 1583-86), with a focus on the main musical events and significant episodes that occurred during that time. In particular, the analysis of features and symbols related to her ceremonial entries has led to the identification of new works and their contexts, such as the two five-voice madrigals

³ Seishiro Niwa, "'Madama' Margaret of Parma's patronage of music', in *Early Music* 33 (2005), 25-37. Other publications, including those by some of the authors involved here, are cited later in this issue.

composed for her arrivals in Aquila in 1569 and 1572, respectively, which are published in the Appendix. A comparative study of local sources has also revealed interesting artistic and professional interactions between Margaret's chapel and musicians active in the territory.

We hope that these contributions shed light on this important figure and her patronage, and enhance our understanding of musical networks in Europe, particularly between Flanders and Italy, during the decades from the 1540s to the 1580s.