

= Marguerite Louise d'Orléans =

Marguerite Louise d'Orléans ( 28 July 1645 ? 17 September 1721 ) was Grand Duchess of Tuscany , as the wife of Grand Duke Cosimo III de ' Medici . Deprived of her lover , Charles V of Lorraine , and yearning for France , Marguerite Louise despised her husband and his family , whom she often quarrelled with and falsely suspected of attempting to poison her . Marguerite Louise reconciled with the Medici on more than one occasion , however , only to promptly resume hostilities .

Having become Grand Duke of Tuscany upon his father 's death , in 1670 , Cosimo III , under the sway of his mother , Vittoria della Rovere , refused to grant Marguerite Louise entry to the Consulta ( Privy Council ) . Thus without political influence , Marguerite Louise oversaw the education of her eldest son , Grand Prince Ferdinando . Two more children followed : Anna Maria Luisa , Electress Palatine , and Gian Gastone , the last Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany .

In June 1675 , having signed a contract with Cosimo III the previous December stipulating an 80 @, @ 000 livres pension , Marguerite Louise was allowed to return to France , on the condition she reside in the Abbaye Saint Pierre de Montmartre , near Paris . A daughter of Gaston de France , Duke of Orléans , Marguerite Louise was obliged to surrender her rights as Princess of France in Cosimo 's contract . Although the contract , too , banned her from leaving the convent , Marguerite Louise often went to her cousin Louis XIV 's court at Versailles , where she gambled for high stakes . She was at the centre of many scandals at the convent , including an attempt to burn it down , which greatly irritated her husband , who , despite the separation , took great interest in Marguerite Louise 's life . While still technically married , Marguerite Louise had several affairs .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life : 1645 @-@ 1661 = = =

Marguerite Louise , the eldest child of Gaston of France , Duke of Orléans , and of his second wife , Marguerite of Lorraine , was born on 18 July 1645 . Born at the Château de Blois , she was the oldest of five children born to Gaston by his second wife . Her other sisters included Élisabeth Marguerite , future Duchess of Guise and the Duchess of Savoy .

Marguerite Louise received a rudimentary education at her father 's court at Blois , where he retreated to after his failed insurrection against his nephew Louis XIV of France , the Fronde . Marguerite Louise enjoyed a close relationship with her half @-@ sister , Anne Marie Louise , Duchess of Montpensier , La Grande Mademoiselle , who took her and her friends to the theatre and royal balls ; Marguerite Louise reciprocated her sister 's affection , attending daily Anne Marie Louise 's salon and seeking her guidance in court matters . Madame de Choisy , Marguerite Louise believed , poorly advised her mother in matters of court and ruined her marriage negotiations with Charles Emmanuel II , Duke of Savoy . Therefore , when another proposal came , this time from Cosimo de ' Medici , Grand Prince of Tuscany , in 1658 , Marguerite Louise asked her half @-@ sister to ensure its fulfilment . Her own younger sister Françoise Madeleine d 'Orléans married Charles Emmanuel II in 1663 .

Initially overjoyed at the prospect of marrying , Marguerite Louise 's ebullience faded to dismay when she discovered her half @-@ sister no longer favoured the Tuscan match , as she did before . After this rebut , Marguerite Louise 's behaviour became erratic : she shocked the court by going out unaccompanied , a grievous offence in contemporary French society , with her cousin Prince Charles of Lorraine , who soon became her lover . Her marriage by proxy , on 19 April 1661 , did nothing to change her attitude , much to Louis XIV 's ministers ' discontentment ; on the day she was supposed to meet diplomats offering their congratulations on the wedding , she attempted to abscond and go hunting , only to be stopped by the Duchess of Montpensier .

= = Life in Tuscany : 1661 @-@ 1670 = =

= = = Grand Princess of Tuscany = = =

Mattias de ' Medici , the incumbent Grand Duke 's brother , brought Marguerite Louise to Tuscany in a fleet comprising nine galleys , three Tuscan , three on loan from the Republic of Genoa and another three from the Papal States . She arrived in Tuscany on 12 June , disembarking at Livorno , and , to much pageantry , made her formal entry to Florence on 20 June . Their wedding , the most lavish spectacle Florence had hitherto seen , was composed of a retinue of over three @-@ hundred carriages . As a wedding gift , Grand Duke Ferdinando , the bridegroom 's father , presented her with a pearl the " size of a small pigeon 's egg " .

Marguerite Louise and Cosimo greeted each other with indifference , and , according to Sophia , Electress of Hanover , they only slept together once a week . Marguerite Louise , two days after their marriage , demanded possession of the Tuscan crown jewels from Cosimo , who replied that he did not have the authority to give them . The jewels that she did manage to get from Cosimo she tried to smuggle out of Tuscany , only to be stopped by the Grand Duke . Marguerite Louise 's indifference , after this incident , turned to hatred , compounded by her love for Charles of Lorraine , from whom she was forced to part at Marseilles . On one occasion , she threatened to break a bottle over Cosimo 's head if he did not leave her chamber . Her hatred of Cosimo , however , did not get in the way of children : Grand Prince Ferdinando in 1663 , Anna Maria Luisa in 1667 and Gian Gastone in 1671 . Cosimo 's family , too , were the victims of Marguerite Louise 's caprices : she argued with the Grand Duchess Vittoria over precedence , Grand Duke Ferdinando over her profligacy . Marguerite Louise 's spending habits not only made her unpopular with the Grand Duke , but with the Florentines , who were tired of her lax etiquette , two grooms frequented her chamber at all hours .

= = = Entreaties to Louis XIV = = =

Following Charles of Lorraine 's brief visit to Florence , during which he was entertained by the Grand Ducal family in Palazzo Pitti , the Grand Ducal palace , the tone of Marguerite Louise 's letters to Charles compelled the Grand Duke and Cosimo to spy on her . In response , she begged Louis XIV to intervene , but he stealthily declined . Both Marguerite Louise and the Grand Duke sent entreaties to Louis XIV following the dismissal of Marguerite Louise 's French staff , the former complaining of her maltreatment , the latter asking for Marguerite Louise 's behaviour to be curbed .

To placate both the Grand Duke and Marguerite Louise , he sent the comte de Saint Mesme . Marguerite Louise wanted to return to France , and Mesme sympathised with this , as did much of the French court , so he left without finding a solution to the heir 's domestic disharmony , incensing both Ferdinando and Louis XIV . Now , she humiliated Cosimo at every chance she got : she insisted on employing French cooks only as she feared the Medici were out to poison her and branded Cosimo " a poor groom " in front of the Papal nuncio .

After several more attempts at French conciliation failed , in September 1664 Marguerite Louise left her apartment in Palazzo Pitti , refusing to return ; therefore , Cosimo moved her into Villa di Lappoggi. where she was watched by forty soldiers , and six courtiers , appointed by Cosimo , had to follow her everywhere because it was feared she would abscond . The next year , she changed tack , and reconciled with the Grand Ducal family . The delicate rapprochement that existed between Marguerite Louise and the rest of the family collapsed after Anna Maria Luisa 's birth , in 1667 , when she caught smallpox .

= = Grand Duchess of Tuscany : 1670 @-@ 1721 = =

In May 1670 , with the death of Grand Duke Ferdinando II , Marguerite Louise became Grand Duchess of Tuscany . The old tradition of admitting the Grand Duke 's mother to the Consulta , or Privy Council , was reinstituted at Cosimo III 's accession . Loathing Marguerite Louise for her

treatment of Cosimo and herself , Vittoria della Rovere , Cosimo III 's mother , ensured that Marguerite Louise was excluded from politics , leaving her with nothing else to do but supervise her son the Grand Prince Ferdinando 's education . The Grand Duchess , furious at her exclusion , fought with Vittoria over precedence and demanded entry to the Consulta . Cosimo III sided with his mother . By early 1671 , fighting between Marguerite Louise and Vittoria became so heated that a contemporary remarked that " the Pitti Palace has become the devil 's own abode , and from morn till midnight only the noise of wrangling and abuse could be heard " .

= = = Return to France = = =

At the start of 1672 , Marguerite Louise wrote to Louis XIV , begging him for medical assistance as she believed she had breast cancer . Louis XIV sent Alliot le Vieux , Anne of Austria 's personal physician , to tend to her . Alliot , unlike Mesme , did not completely comply with Marguerite Louise 's plot to be sent to France , under the guise of illness , pronouncing that the tumour was " nonwise malignant " , though he did recommend thermal waters . Frustrated with the failure of her plan , Marguerite Louise began flirting with a cook in her household , tickling him and having pillow fights , to upset Cosimo .

To restore domestic harmony , Cosimo III sent for Madame du Deffand , Marguerite Louise 's childhood governess who had tried , but failed , to help the Grand Duke before . However , because of a string of deaths in the Orléans family , she arrived late , in December 1672 . By then , Marguerite Louise was in the depths of despair , and asked to be allowed visit Villa Poggio a Caiano , a Medici villa , ostensibly for worship at a nearby shrine . Once there , she refused to return , which resulted in a two @-@ year stand off between herself and the Grand Duke , for he would not consent to her return to France , a return she begged for in her parting letter to him . Madame du Deffand 's mission having failed , Louis XIV made one final attempt to reconcile the Grand Ducal couple , to no avail . Therefore , all attempts at conciliation having failed , Cosimo capitulated to Marguerite Louise , in a contract signed on 26 December 1674 : Marguerite Louise , provided for with a pension of 80 @,@ 000 livres , was allowed to leave for France , but she had to confine herself to the Saint Pierre Abbey of Montmartre and surrender her rights as a Royal Princess of France . Overjoyed , the Grand Duchess departed for France laden down with the fixtures and furniture of Villa Poggio a Caiano , for , in her own words , she had no intention " of setting forth without her proper wages " .

= = = Montmartre = = =

News of Marguerite Louise 's departure from Livorno on the 12 July 1675 was greeted with " a great displeasure " by the Florentines . The nobility , too , sympathised with her , falsely believing Cosimo was to blame for driving Marguerite Louise from Tuscany . Marguerite Louise , initially , patronised charitable works at Montmartre and bore herself with " an air of piety " , but soon reverted to her profligate ways , wearing heavy rouge and bright yellow periwigs , and embarking on an affair with the Count of Lovigny , and later with two members of the Luxembourg regiment . Louis XIV , ignoring the 1674 contract 's article banning Marguerite Louise from stepping foot outside the convent , allowed the Grand Duchess to court , where she gambled for high stakes .

Because of her " shabby " retinue and short visits , Marguerite Louise garnered the reputation of a Bohemian among the courtiers of Versailles , and , therefore , was compelled to allow " those of insignificant birth " into her circle . The Tuscan envoy , Gondi , issued frequent protests to the French court of Marguerite Louise 's behaviour , to no avail . Eventually , the Abbess of Montmartre , Françoise Renée de Lorraine , ( 1621 ? 1682 ) , when quizzed by the King about Marguerite Louise 's latest affair with a groom , interceded , saying , " A conspiracy of silence is the sole antidote to the depravity and excesses of [ Marguerite Louise ] " ; this explains Marguerite Louise 's absence from memoirs of the time .

Back in Florence , Cosimo III had the Tuscan envoy report on Marguerite Louise 's every movement , which he closely scrutinised . If he deemed a particular action of hers to be offensive , he wrote to

Louis XIV , demanding an explanation . Initially sympathetic with Cosimo , Louis XIV , tiring of his endless stream of protests , said , " Since Cosimo had consented to the retirement of his wife to France , he had virtually relinquished all right to interfere in her conduct " . That Cosimo III ceased meddling in the affairs of his wife was the result of Louis XIV 's rebut . Marguerite Louise was informed of Cosimo III 's ensuing illness by her eldest son , Grand Prince Ferdinando , who espoused his mother 's cause and corresponded with her . Marguerite Louise , confident of her husband 's imminent death , told the French court that " at the first notice of her detested husband 's demise , she would fly to Florence to banish all hypocrites and hypocrisy and establish a new government " . This , however , was not to be , and Cosimo III actually outlived her two years .

In 1688 , saturated in debt , Marguerite Louise wrote to Cosimo , begging for 20 @, @ 000 crowns . When Cosimo was not initially forthcoming , she switched her focus to her son the Grand Prince , in the hope he would help her , but he feigned he could not , for fear of upsetting his father . Eventually , Cosimo paid off her debts , and her financial security was assured when she inherited a large sum of money from a relative in 1696 .

While Marguerite Louise 's behaviour ? at its worst when she threatened to burn down the convent ? was tolerated by the previous Abbess of Montmartre , the new Abbess , Madame d 'Harcourt , frequently complained of her to the Grand Duke and the King . In retaliation , Marguerite Louise threatened to kill her with a hatchet and a pistol , and formed a clique against her . Therefore , in line with her wishes , Cosimo III consented to Marguerite Louise 's departure for a new convent , Saint @-@ Mandé , on the condition she only leave with the King Louis XIV 's explicit permission and be attended to by a chamberlain of his choice . Since she would not assent to these prerequisites , the payment of her pension was suspended , only to be resumed when Louis XIV compelled her to yield .

= = = Saint @-@ Mandé = = =

At Saint @-@ Mandé , Marguerite Louise underwent a transformation : she no longer cared for " excesses " , and busied herself with reforming the convent , which she called a " spiritual brothel " ; the absentee mother superior , who wore men 's clothing , was sent away , non @-@ conformist nuns were removed and it is because of these deeds her behaviour no longer proved a bone of contention with Florence . Marguerite Louise 's health began to decline in 1712 , with an attack of apoplexy , which left her with a paralysed left arm and foaming mouth . She soon recovered , only to suffer another attack the next year ; the death of the only one of her three children she cared for , Grand Prince Ferdinando , contributed to the second attack of apoplexy , which briefly paralysed her eyes and made speech difficult . The Regent of France , Philippe d 'Orléans , allowed Marguerite Louise to buy a house in Paris , 15 Place des Vosges , where she spent her final years . She corresponded with the Regent 's mother , Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate , and gave assiduously to charity . Marguerite Louise d 'Orléans , Princess of France and Grand Duchess of Tuscany , died in September 1721 , and was buried in Picpus Cemetery , in Paris .

= = Issue = =

Cosimo III and Marguerite Louise had three children :

Ferdinando de ' Medici , Grand Prince of Tuscany ( b.1663 d.1713 ) married Violante Beatrice of Bavaria , no issue ;

Anna Maria Luisa de ' Medici , Electress Palatine ( b.1667 d.1743 ) married Johann Wilhelm , Elector Palatine , no issue ;

Gian Gastone de ' Medici , Grand Duke of Tuscany ( b.1671 d.1737 ) married Anna Maria Franziska of Saxe @-@ Lauenburg , no issue .

= = Ancestors = =

= = Titles , styles , honours and arms = =

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28 July 1645 ? 12 June 1661 Her Royal Highness Mademoiselle d 'Orléans

12 June 1661 ? 23 May 1670 Her Royal Highness The Grand Princess of Tuscany

23 May 1670 ? 17 September 1721 Her Royal Highness The Grand Duchess of Tuscany