Marriage in Italy, 1300–1650

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Introduction: issues in the history of marriage

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Why are historians interested in marriage? And why was marriage so important in past societies? Marriage is important because it heralded change: it brought the birth of a new family group (and often of a new household), involved the transfer of property, changed the status of the couple, attracted large amounts of legislation, implicated the wider kin, acted as an occasion for expenditure and consumption, facilitated social mobility, and served as an analogy in both the religious and political fields.[1] The history of marriage thus touches on demographic, legal, religious, economic and social history. This explains both the significance of marriage historically and its importance to historians.

Because marriage affected so many areas of life, historians approach it from many different perspectives. Among recent publications on marriage in Italy, for example, two collections of essays offer complementary approaches to those presented here: one edited by Michaela De Giorgio and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber and entitled *Storia del matrimonio*, in the series Storia delle donne in Italia published in 1996, and the other edited by Claudie Balavoine and entitled *Représentations et célébrations: le mariage à la Renaissance*, to be published in Tours. The former focuses in the main upon marriage in Italy between the eleventh and the twentieth centuries, being separated into sections on medieval, modern and contemporary times; it is thematic and aims to provide an overview. The latter, the proceedings of the annual Tours conference of 1995, addresses the subject by examining western Europe, rather than Italy alone, and by restricting its attention to the Renaissance; its especial concern is the iconography of marriage.

However, the present volume offers new material and arguments which

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[1] S. Sogner and J. Dupâquier, 'Introduction' to *Marriage and Remarriage in Populations of the Past*, ed. J. Dupâquier *et al.* (London, 1981), p. 3; R. B. Outhwaite, 'Problems and perspectives in the history of marriage', in *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London, 1981), p. 11.

together suggest some new directions for research. We are concerned not just with marriage, but with underlying assumptions about it and the consequences of those assumptions. One of those assumptions relates to gender: marriage was understood to be a different act for women and men, and is therefore a fruitful point at which to investigate Italian Renaissance views on gender and on female and male roles. An attempt has been made to address questions arising from variations in social status and in local and regional conditions. Attention has also been focused on what kind of evidence, documentary, material and visual, is available for analysis. The four sections of this book correspond to four of the main areas of importance with regard to the historical study of marriage. With a subject as vast as this, there can be no notion of exhaustive inclusiveness. Instead we have commissioned articles on a variety of connected issues, from a range of disciplines, spread over a relatively long period of time and over the Italian peninsula. It should be stressed, however, that the majority of contributors are historians.

The first section contains articles on marriage ceremonies and festivities, which were often the most flamboyant part of the process. Before the strictures of the Council of Trent, most lay people perceived marriage as a social rather than a religious affair. They also knew it was a public rather than a private matter, and consequently weddings were celebrated in style whenever possible, both because they were thought of as an opportunity for entertainment and because publicity was vital. Family hospitality and repayment of old obligations sat happily with conspicuous consumption and lavish display at the top end of the social scale, but everyone with any means at all at their disposal celebrated after their own fashion. Patricia Allerston's piece here on wedding finery in sixteenth-century Venice makes this point more vividly by discussing the use of borrowing, hiring and buying second-hand as mechanisms that allowed a certain level of display at a smaller outlay than ordinary purchase. The components of a good wedding ranged from gastronomic treats and erudite drama to appropriate songs and music.

These customs of celebration were accompanied by the production of functional and artistic objects. These included jewellery, clothes, portraits, maiolica, silver and furniture; that is, they covered a large spectrum of type, but were restricted in detail and in iconographical subject matter. Some artists specialized in ornaments for weddings and made their names in this way. The best-known example is Apollonio di Giovanni, whose workshop produced a very large number of marriage-chests (*cassoni*),[2] but others, such as Andrea di Feltrini who was employed at the marriages of

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[2] E. Callman, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford, 1974) and Callman, 'Apollonio di Giovanni and painting for the early Renaissance room', *Antichità viva*, 27 (1988).

Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, worked only part-time on objects for marriage celebrations.[3] Jacqueline Musacchio's piece examines one theme portrayed on Tuscan marriage-chests and wainscoting in the fifteenth century, the rape of the Sabine women, in an attempt to unravel its message and popularity. In an article on the representation of Lucretia on similar objects, Cristelle Baskins found that the images reinforced 'cultural assumptions about the role of men and women'.[4] These paintings of rapes and their aftermaths were commissioned by men, either as fathers or husbands,[5] to adorn the bedchambers of their daughters or wives, and however beautiful their execution or scholarly their allusion, their main purpose must have been to reinforce a message of female submission. But the issue is not wholly straightforward, for the stories of the rapes of both Lucretia and the Sabine women resulted in decisive female reaction, a far cry from the stereotypical passive behaviour of a 'model' wife. What were women to make of this contradictory message?

Representations in art of weddings and marriage were relatively rarer than commemorative or exhortatory objects, although a few marriage-chests may have been decorated with wedding scenes.[6] The first place in terms of numbers of paintings goes to 'The betrothal [sposalizio] of the virgin' which was a popular subject for much of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[7] Artists such as Giotto, Raphael and Rosso Fiorentino were all attracted by the subject, as were numerous others of lesser stature, so the demand for representations must have been great. It would be interesting to know if the commission of any of these paintings can be connected to contemporary Renaissance weddings or whether their religious content overrode other facets. Aspects of other biblical weddings, such as the wedding feast at Cana, and classical weddings, such as that of Dido and Aeneas, also found favour as themes. Representations of actual betrothals or weddings do exist but in smaller numbers (one famous example is the depiction by Pinturicchio in the Piccolomini Library in Siena Cathedral of the betrothal of the Emperor Frederick III and Leonora of Portugal in 1452) as do marriage scenes of unknown

[3] L. Monnas, 'The artists and the weavers: the design of woven silks in Italy, 1350–1550', *Apollo*, 125 (1987), p. 421.
[4] C. Baskins, 'Corporeal authority in the speaking picture: the representation of Lucretia in Tuscan domestic painting', in *Gender Rhetorics: Postures of Dominance and Submission in History*, ed. R. Trexler (Binghamton, 1994), p. 190.
[5] C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Les femmes dans les rituels de l'alliance et de la naissance à Florence', in *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali*, ed. J. Chiffoleau, L. Martines and A. Paravicini Baglioni (Spoleto, 1994), pp. 6–8.
[6] But see B. Witthoft, 'Riti nuziali e loro iconografia', in *Storia del matrimonio*, ed. M. De Giorgio and C. Klapisch-Zuber (Rome and Bari, 1996), p. 138.
[7] S. Matthews Grieco, 'Matrimonio e vita coniugale nell'arte dell'Italia moderna', *ibid.*, pp. 258–9.

people in secular cycles. There are also curiously few examples of married couples without children where the accent is on the couple, as opposed to scenes involving well-known biblical and classical husbands and wives. An exception to this is Niccolò di Segna's *The Joys of Married Life* in the Palazzo Comunale in San Gimignano. Overall, Renaissance marriage scenes emphasized the historical at the expense of the contemporary.

On the other hand, images of symbolic marriages can be found in abundance. Their proliferation points to an ideology of marriage so central to the society that it was continually applied to other areas of life to describe or enshrine particularly important relationships. The metaphor of contractual relations based on consent, which supposedly existed between husband and wife, originally taken from the image of Christ and his church as bridegroom and bride, was then used to classify the relation of pope to church and bishop to diocese, where the pope and bishop were the head and husband in a mystical union with their flocks. Later in the Middle Ages it was extended to relations between secular rulers and their countries.[8] Kate Lowe's article looks at yet another form of symbolic marriage, that between Christ and nuns, and compares the wedding rituals for brides of Christ to those for secular brides, since complex rituals grew up around all these symbolic marriages.

Two of the clearest examples can be seen in the celebrations surrounding the marriage of the bishop of Florence to the abbess of S. Pier Maggiore, symbolizing his marriage to the Florentine church, and those surrounding the marriage of the doge of Venice to the sea, symbolizing his marriage to the republic. Both these ceremonies contained elements familiar from secular wedding ritual. The bishop of Florence, amid rich decorations, gave the abbess a ring, hosted an impressive banquet in the convent and originally spent the night there in a specially prepared bed.[9] The doge of Venice on board his ceremonial boat, the *Bucentaur*, threw a ring into the sea while repeating a formula of marriage: 'In signum veri perpetuique dominii' ('As a sign of true and perpetual dominion'); later he too gave the equivalent of a public wedding banquet.[10] Obviously the ideology of marriage contained within it the expression of a power relation which was convenient and pervasive in late medieval and early modern Italy, to the detriment of other configurations of partnership. There is never any doubt who is dominant in any of the relationships under discussion. From this, it can be deduced that the most important

[8] E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 207–18.
[9] G. Conti, *Fatti e aneddoti di storia fiorentina* (Florence, 1902), pp. 95–9; E. Viviani della Robbia, *Nei monasteri fiorentini* (Florence, 1947), pp. 43–6.
[10] E. Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 119–34; A. Boholm, *The Doge of Venice: The Symbolism of State Power in the Renaissance* (Gothenburg, 1990), pp. 225, 236–7.

element of an ordinary marriage was thought to be the domination of one party, the female, by the other, the male. Alternative forms of symbolic marriage occasionally stress other features, it should be pointed out: for example, representations of St Francis marrying poverty, in which poverty is personified as a bride,[11] can be interpreted as expressions of choice over marriage partners.

The second section of the book includes various articles on intervention by church and state in the marriage process. This has traditionally been an area of strength in studies of marriage, as the legal basis of marriage ensured the keeping of records, and governments and relevant organs of the church generated their own paperwork. City statutes in late medieval Italy protected and promoted matrimony in various ways. For reasons of public order, they protected newly wed couples from physical and other injury. In order to curtail the costs to the parents or, later, to encourage more marriages to take place, they limited the size of dowries, wedding gifts and wedding banquets. They also created secular penalties for crimes against matrimony, that is for adultery, bigamy, abduction/fornication and clandestine marriage. Much time and energy was expended on sumptuary laws regulating excess in all forms, but especially luxury items. Some of this excess attached itself to marriage practices and celebrations which therefore became exposed to further legislation and interference.[12] Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century infractions which were later prosecuted included the giving of too many rings to the bride, failing to notify officials about a wedding banquet, serving forbidden foods and commissioning an over-expensive marriage-chest.[13] Stanley Chojnacki examines successive dowry laws in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice and draws out the intimate connection between such legislation and definitions of nobility and propriety. These centuries also saw a successive tightening in the secular laws regarding matrimonial 'crimes', as investigated here by Trevor Dean. Extensive interference by the state in these areas ran counter to an ecclesiastical legal preserve and was perhaps partially responsible for the new level of church control of marriage promulgated at Trent.

Intervention by church authorities was another matter. Although revisionist histories exist which question the innovatory nature of much of the work of the Council of Trent, its pronouncements on marriage changed

[11] D. Gagnan, 'Typologie de la pauvreté chez St François d'Assisi: l'épouse, la dame, la mère', *Laurentianum*, 18 (1977), pp. 469ff.
[12] A. Esposito, 'Matrimoni "in regola" nella Roma del Quattrocento: tra leggi suntuarie e pratica dotale', *Archivi e cultura*, 25–6 (1992–3).
[13] C. Kovesi Killerby, 'Practical problems in the enforcement of Italian sumptuary law, 1200–1500', in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. T. Dean and K. Lowe (Cambridge, 1994), p. 114.

the course of that institution by labelling it primarily ecclesiastical and by demanding exclusive church competence to regulate it.[14] The relevant texts of the council included a doctrinal preamble, twelve canons and a long decree entitled 'de reformatione matrimonii'. The most important canons declared marriage to be a sacrament, to be indissoluble, and that the church had exclusive competence over marriage cases. The decree regulated the norms for the celebration of marriage, most notably insisting upon the presence of the parish priest, upon prior publicity of the marriage by banns, upon witnesses and registration. Clandestine marriage received sharper definition, and public consent was required of the two main participants.[15] These changes both instigated the take-over of control of many aspects of matrimonial practice from the competence of the state or from nebulous dictates of local custom, and demanded strict enforcement of pre-existing regulations that had been allowed to lapse. David d'Avray's article investigates ecclesiastical requirements concerning the presence of a parish priest at marriages in northern Italy in the period after 1215 but before Trent. Much of the work carried out hitherto has focused on ascertaining whether the regulations promulgated at Trent represented a sea-change for the church or whether the council was exceptional in documenting the codification of already occurring behaviour.

What came to the fore at the Council of Trent was the struggle for control of the laity, exemplified here by contestation with secular authorities over the regulation of marriage. The kernel of this lay in the desire to administer and register marriages. In Italy prior to Trent, for example, notaries had registered marriages; after Trent, parish priests kept the books. Trent tightened the church's grip on lay behaviour regarding marriage in other ways too: the acquisition of dispensations in cases of marriage between the prohibited degrees, which theoretically had been a matter for the Penitentiary in the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries, but which had been dealt with effectively in Italy by the secular authorities, passed completely under church control.[16] This contest over control of marriage in a variety of situations intensified rather than died down in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, peaking in the late eighteenth when the secular authorities scored notable triumphs.[17]

[14] J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1985), p. 25.
[15] A. Turchini, 'Dalla disciplina alla "creanza" del matrimonio all'indomani del concilio di Trento', in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal xv al xvii secolo*, ed. G. Zarri (Rome, 1996), pp. 205–6.
[16] G. Brucker, 'Religious sensibilities in early-modern Europe: examples from the records of the Holy Penitentiary', *Historical Reflections*, 15 (1988), pp. 19–20.
[17] D. Lombardi, 'Intervention by church and state in marriage disputes in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Florence', in *Crime, Society and the Law*, pp. 142, 156; Lombardi, 'Fidanzamenti e matrimoni dal concilio di Trento alle riforme settecentesche', in *Storia del matrimonio*.

Piet van Boxel's article, on the other hand, highlights some of the mechanisms employed by the church after Trent to coerce unbelievers (in this case Jews) into Catholic orthodoxy; here the struggle was between the Catholic authorities and Jews, and the reward for conformity was a reasonable dowry for an impecunious Jewish woman prepared to renounce her culture and religion in order to be able to marry. It is a welcome reminder of how wide the scope for intervention by unscrupulous parties in marriage was, when custom demanded the payment of a dowry, and it emphasizes yet again just how crucial marriage was for women. As one Renaissance legal writer in England declared, 'all women are understood either married, or to be married'.[18] Given this attitude, it is easier to see why desperate girls and women faced with a marriageless future might have felt compelled to forswear everything to obtain a husband.

The third section of the book examines patterns of intermarriage and views on the functionality of marriage. Sam Cohn's article examines endogamy and exogamy in the Tuscan countryside in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, showing that mountainous areas were less inward-looking in their marriage patterns than is usually supposed. In addition to such questions, this section asks: in whose interests did marriage take place? Although the jurists believed the state of marriage to be more advantageous to women that to men,[19] there is little evidence to support the view that marriages were arranged for the benefit of women. The article by Irene Fosi and Maria Antonietta Visceglia answers this question decisively in the case of national groupings, and curial and papal families in Rome, by a rigorous investigation of the alliances contracted by them in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: marriage, they say, was conducted by men in the interests of family strategy, and not in the interests of individuals, male or female.

This is, however, a point of controversy among historians, between those giving emphasis to strategy and those giving emphasis to individual behaviour, and it deserves rather more extended treatment here. One of the firmest and most influential statements of the strategic point of view was made in the 1970s by Lawrence Stone, and although his focus was on early modern England, his outline is worth rehearsing for its general relevance and influence. For Stone, only in the eighteenth century did the modern family evolve, based on personal choice of partner and strong emotional ties within the nuclear family. In the later Middle Ages and early sixteenth century, by contrast, marriage was controlled by the wider kin in the interests of the family. Such 'family planning' had three objectives:

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[18] Anon., 'The lawes resolutions of women's rights', p. 6, cited in I. Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 75.
[19] Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, p. 75.

continuity of the male line, preservation intact of inherited property, and acquisition through marriage of further property or useful political alliances. Although these objectives were not, as Stone argues, always compatible, they had numerous consequences. First, families dictated the marriages and nuptiality of their children, delaying marriage for some, or denying marriage altogether for others, as nunneries absorbed unmarried women. Second, however, where property was absent as among the rural poor so was family strategy and control. Among the propertyless, parental control of marriage was weak, as children left home early to work as servants or apprentices. Third, the general emotional context, which both resulted from and partly explained controlled marriage, was one of coolness, of 'low affect'. This in turn was largely caused by demographic factors: marriages were concluded late in life and dissolved early by death, such that the conjugal family was short-lived and unstable, 'a loose association of transients'; childrearing was the main function of marriage, at the expense of elements of companionship; high infant mortality reduced parents' emotional commitment to their children; affection was spread thinly across the wider kin rather than concentrated in the conjugal unit; sentiment responded to social command.[20]

This has become a familiar interpretation. One Italian study of the 'models and rules for choice of marriage partner' uncritically took on the whole of Stone's interpretation.[21] However, elsewhere it has been criticized in many ways. Alan Macfarlane quickly responded, arguing for the existence of individualism and sentiment in marriage already by 1500; indeed, both Michael Sheehan and Judith Bennett have found couples already in the fourteenth century making personal choices of partner.[22] For the early modern period, Martin Ingram has argued that the family, far from overriding individual choice, carefully took account of it.[23] The notion that companionate marriage originated only in the Protestant Reformation has been systematically undermined.[24] Medievalists have demolished the idea that childhood and parental love for children were inventions of the early modern period.[25] Stone's limitation of strategy to

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[20] L. Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (London, 1977), pp. 3–119.

[21] *Le funzioni sociali del matrimonio: modelli e regole della scelta del coniuge dal XIV al XX secolo*, ed. M. Buonanno (Milan, 1980), pp. 9–11.

[22] M. M. Sheehan, 'Choice of marriage partner in the Middle Ages: development and mode of application of a theory of marriage', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, new ser., 1 (1978), p. 18; J. M. Bennett, 'Medieval peasant marriage: an examination of marriage license fines in the *Liber Gersumarum*', in *Pathways to Medieval Peasants*, ed. J. A. Raftis (Toronto, 1981), pp. 212–14.

[23] M. Ingram, 'Spousals litigation in the English ecclesiastical courts, *c*. 1350–*c*. 1640', in *Marriage and Society*, ed. Outhwaite, pp. 49–50.

[24] K. M. Davies, 'Continuity and change in literary advice on marriage', *ibid*.

[25] S. Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London, 1990), pp. 1–4.

the propertied classes has also been challenged by those who perceive strategies even among the peasantry.[26] However, if some of the outer supports of Stone's interpretation have been stripped away, the essential core, of family strategies that controlled access to marriage, has remained largely in place, reinforced by the work of other influential historians such as Georges Duby.[27]

In Italy there is certainly plentiful evidence for parental control of children's marriages. Church court documents regarding disputed marriages often show parents promising their daughters contrary to their will, or imposing their will by force, or using beatings to persuade daughters to deny their own marriage promises of which parents disapproved.[28] This conforms to the picture elsewhere in Europe in which mothers, aunts and uncles threatened curses and physical harm to persuade daughters into marriages they did not want,[29] and parents thought that marriages concluded without their consent could be undone.[30] Even judicial practice in the ecclesiastical courts could favour parents, by construing a daughter's silence as tacit consent to a marriage, especially if accompanied by other signs such as the kiss and the ring.[31]

However, there is also evidence against parental control. At one level this comes, again, from church court records: individuals could persist in their choices against the pressure of parents and friends.[32] Girls could say no to proposals of marriage.[33] The proliferation of clandestine marriages in the later Middle Ages has been seen as evidence that, no matter what the church or secular authorities did, children's reaction against control could not be overcome.[34] One well-known Italian poem ('Mama, the time has come when I want to get married to a boy I like so much') thus portrays a mother unable to dissuade her daughter on the grounds of her young age, of the opposition of her friends and relatives, or of the risks.[35]

[26] G. Delille, 'Classi sociali e scambi matrimoniali nel Salernitano: 1500–1600 circa', *Quaderni storici*, 33 (1976), p. 991.

[27] G. Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-century France* (Baltimore, 1978).

[28] P. Rasi, 'La conclusione del matrimonio prima del Concilio di Trento', *Rivista di storia del diritto italiano*, 16 (1943), pp. 247–56; 'Documenti del secolo XIV tratti dall'Archivio notarile di Milano', *Bollettino storico della Svizzera italiana*, 12 (1890), p. 234.

[29] D. M. Owen, 'White Annays and others', in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford 1978), pp. 335–9.

[30] A. Wall, 'For love, money or politics? A clandestine marriage and the Elizabethan Court of Arches', *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), pp. 520–1, 528–9.

[31] Rasi, 'Conclusione', pp. 260, 270, 289; G. Zanetti, 'La stipulazione del matrimonio a Trento nel sec. XIII', *Rivista di storia del diritto italiano*, 16 (1943), p. 30, n. 7.

[32] Rasi, 'Conclusione', pp. 241–2.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 263; F. Fossati, 'Nuove spigolature d'archivio', *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 8, 7 (1957), p. 375.

[34] J. M. Turlan, 'Recherches sur le mariage dans la pratique coutumière (XIIe–XVIe s.)', *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, ser. 4, 35 (1957), pp. 503–4.

[35] G. Carducci, 'Intorno ad alcune rime dei secoli XIII e XIV ritrovate nei memoriali

At another level there is the evidence of law and theology: the consensual theory of marriage had, it is argued by some legal historians, the consequence of recognizing women's capacity to act for themselves, as the marriage act had to be completed by them.[36] The exchange of consent was between two individuals, not between two families, and the woman was the subject, not the object, of the contract.[37] A frequently heard maxim was that 'unwilling marriages usually have bad results',[38] and churchmen tried to redress the 'gender asymmetry' of medieval marriage through the ideas of consensual marriage and of the reciprocal conjugal debt.[39] Clerics stressed the importance of free will in marriage, on the argument that political marriages, and marriages by children too young to know what they were doing, led to wars.[40]

Both of these positions of parental control and of parental impotence are in themselves flawed. Examples of parents forcing children into marriage could just as well represent the exception as the rule, and the fact that cases came to court could be taken as evidence for the capacity of the victims to resort to the law.[41] On the other hand, too much attention to legal theory without an understanding of its social context can produce a distorted picture. In Florence, at least, the exchange of consent between the couple was firmly embedded within controlling contracts between the elder male kin of either side.[42]

It is also arguable, however, that marriage as family strategy fails to take account of other factors involved in deciding on marriage partners, astrology for example. Astrologers were consulted not only regarding the suitability of unions, but also regarding the most auspicious dates for weddings.[43] Then there is the activity of marriage brokers: did these

dell'Archivio notarile di Bologna', *Atti e memorie della Deputazione di storia patria per la Romagna*, ser. 2, 2 (1876), pp. 197–8.

[36] F. Brandileone, 'L'intervento dello stato nella celebrazione del matrimonio in Italia prima del concilio di Trento', *Atti dell'Accademia di scienze morali e politiche [di Napoli]*, 27 (1894–5), pp. 327, 335.

[37] A. Marongiu, 'Matrimonio medievale e matrimonio postmedievale: spunti storico-critici', *Rivista di storia del diritto italiano*, 57 (1984), p. 11.

[38] Sheehan, 'Choice of marriage partner', p. 9.

[39] J. W. Baldwin, 'Consent and the marital debt: five discourses in northern France around 1200', in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, ed. A. E. Laiou (Washington, D.C., 1993), pp. 258–60.

[40] E.g. J. B. Williamson, 'Philippe de Mézière's book for married ladies: a book from the entourage of the court of Charles VI', in *The Spirit of the Court*, ed. G. S. Burgess and R. A. Taylor (Cambridge, 1985), p. 404.

[41] F. Pedersen, 'Did the medieval laity know the canon rules on marriage? Some evidence from fourteenth-century York cause papers', *Mediaeval Studies*, 56 (1994).

[42] C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Zacharie, ou le père évincé. Les rites nuptiaux toscans entre Giotto et le concile de Trente', *Annales*, 34 (1979), pp. 1219–26.

[43] H. R. Lemay, 'Guido Bonatti: astrology, society and marriage in thirteenth-century Italy', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 17:4 (1984), pp. 82–5; A. Luzio, 'Isabella d'Este e

always operate within family strategies, or were brokers, as apparently alleged in a case from Udine in 1480, persons of low morality, who dishonestly persuaded people into matrimony, while living off the fees?[44] Moreover, 'family strategy' was clearly not an uncontentious issue. In Padua at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a grandfather instigated a court case, for nullity of his grandson's marriage, on the grounds that it had been imposed by the boy's mother.[45] In another case, the brother of a girl forced into marriage by her father refused to assent to it, or to stay in the same house as his new brother-in-law.[46] Relatives could thus differ over the marriage of children: the strategy often belonged to just one parent, not the whole family. One well-documented example of this is Francesco Guicciardini's marriage to Maria Salviati in 1506. Francesco married without his father's consent or approval, he recalls in his *Ricordanze*, but rather out of a different strategy, not out of love. His father had three objections to the Salviati marriage: close ties to the Salviati were dangerous given their enmity with the current political leader of Florence, Piero Soderini; Francesco's father needed him to obtain a larger dowry, as he had to find husbands for six daughters; and the Salviati had been brought up 'with too much pomp and indulgence'.[47] These objections were essentially political and financial: the political dangers of alliance to the Salviati outweighed any benefits; the marriage brought in too little in dowry, and would cost too much in expenditure. Francesco's reasoning was simpler and purely political: he wanted an alliance with the Salviati because their wealth, goodwill, reputation and in-laws from other marriages exceeded, in his view, those of all other Florentine families. Strategies were thus not always familial, but could be individual, just as, conversely, some families did not react with hostility to their children's individual choices based on love.[48] Strategy and individuality were thus not mutually exclusive; parents were not always opposed to love-matches. Marriages were concluded for a variety of reasons, and it does not always make sense to elevate a reason to the level of strategy.

The article by Gérard Delille discusses the use made of marriage alliance to dampen down or quell vendetta in Altamura in Apulia. His

Francesco Gonzaga, promessi sposi', *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 4, 9 (1908), pp. 61–2; G. Porro, 'Nozze di Beatrice d'Este e di Anna Sforza', *Archivio storico lombardo*, 9 (1882), p. 491.
[44] Rasi, 'Conclusione del matrimonio', pp. 242–3.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 284–5.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 279–81; Rasi, 'I rapporti tra l'autorità ecclesiastica e l'autorità civile in Feltre', *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 13 (1933), p. 104.
[47] Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi diari memorie*, ed. M. Spinella (Rome, 1981), p. 83.
[48] Boccaccio, *Decameron*, II.8, V.4; Rasi, 'Conclusione', p. 253.