Introduction

During the past thirty years the very validity of the historiographical term "Reformation" has come under attack as never before. To a large degree, the controversy reflects the declining preeminence of the periodizations of intellectual history as well as the simultaneous rising popularity of "social history." During the preceding half-century, the French *Annales* school of historians in particular with its focus on larger impersonal social and economic changes has succeeded in gradually redefining our understanding of the entire period.[1] As historians increasingly scrutinize aspects of sixteenth-century society other than religious doctrine, the significance of the Protestant Reformation as a defining event continues to recede accordingly. More recently, scholars such as Gerald Strauss have questioned the very social impact or "success" of sixteenth-century religious reforms, concluding that the effects of Lutheran attempts at popular indoctrination were minimal at best.[2] One need only consult the latest job bulletin of the American Historical Association to confirm that "Reformation" teaching posts (invariably paired with the intellectual sister, "Renaissance") are increasingly replaced by the more inclusive "Early Modern Europe."[3]

[1] Cf. Lucien Febvre's own work on the subject, especially *Au coeur religieux du XVIème siècle* (Paris, 1957); and *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass., 1982). On the preceding influence of Marx, Engels, Weber, Tawney, and especially Troeltsch, see summaries in P. Wichelhaus, *Kirchengeschichtsschreibung und Soziologie im neunzehnten Jahrhundert und bei Ernst Troeltsch* (Heidelberg, 1965), and Thomas Brady, "Social History of the Reformation," in *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. Steven Ozment (St. Louis, 1982), 161–81.

[2] *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, 1978).

[3] See also R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550–1750* (London, 1989), 1–9; and cf. William Bouwsma for a similar reevaluation of "Renaissance" as a distinct historical period in "The Renaissance and the Drama of Western Civilization," *American*

Another striking and apparently inevitable consequence of the *Annales* influence has been the almost universal compulsion among Reformation historians of all varieties – intellectual, legal, as well as economic – to address in some way the issue of social context in discussing almost any aspect of sixteenth-century religion.[4] Most researchers have welcomed the departure from narrow theological and confessional evaluations of the Reformation, particularly in German scholarship, but at least one early advocate of historiographical change in this area has more recently questioned whether the "socialization" of Reformation scholarship has gone too far, creating a "sociologistic" monster worse than its predecessor.[5] For some, the importance of the "Reformation" as a historical watershed risks being lost in a sea of other "more significant" social changes regarding family and demography, State and political power, gender relations, and so forth.

At a deeper level, the decline of the Reformation in modern historiography also represents an ancient and insoluble philosophical division on the role of human agency in history. The school of interpretation that has sometimes been unfairly characterized as the "great men" approach in fact represents a more universal confidence in all individuals and their ability to significantly affect the course of social developments. This could be called a dynamic or "revolutionary" interpretation of history that predictably views the leaders and ideas of the Reformation as distinctively creative and influential. At the other end of the historiographical spectrum, we encounter a more collective, gradual, and "evolutionary" version of social change. Here, the *longue durée* of Fernand Braudel provides the central paradigm with the lasting impact of individual action much less likely in comparison to larger collective changes. Here too the Protestant Reformation represents only one aspect of a much more gradual social transformation and certainly not an abrupt divergence resulting from the ideas and actions of a few outstanding individuals.

Despite the somewhat artificial polarization of these two approaches,

Historical Review 84 (1979), 1–16; also Lewis Spitz, "Periodization in History: Renaissance and Reformation," in *The Future of History*, ed. Gordon Connell-Smith (Hull, 1975), 189–217.

[4] See historiographical overviews of all Reformation fields in Ozment, *Reformation Europe*.

[5] Cf. original call of Bernd Moeller for study of the "Reformation movement as a whole" in "Probleme der Reformationsgeschichtsforschung," *Zeitschrift für Reformationsgeschichte* 14 (1965), 246–57, and later reconsideration of the resulting historiography in "Stadt und Buch. Bemerkungen zur Struktur der reformatorischen Bewegung in Deutschland," in *Stadtbürgertum und Adel in der Reformation*, ed. W. J. Mommsen (Stuttgart, 1979), 25–40.

this interpretative division continues to shape our understanding of the peoples and societies of the sixteenth century. My purpose here is not to sway the reader to my own preference (like most, somewhere between the two poles) but to address the question of the historical significance of "Reformation." I believe that the term remains valid for discussions of sixteenth-century historical change, but not in terms of the immediate or broad-ranging social implications often associated with it. The religious reformers of this period did have an impact on the ideas and practices of their societies but not always in the manner intended. Nor were their own perceptions formed in an intellectual void. The right balance between long-term "evolutionary" and short-term "revolutionary" change therefore must be our objective, and I can think of no more suitable candidate for establishing this equilibrium than the institution of marriage.

Marriage in the sixteenth century – as today – defied easy categorization: It was at the same time a social, economic, religious, and legal institution. As a public joining of two individuals, it represented the fundamental link between the private and the public, making it for many contemporaries the very basis of all social order. Most important for our question of "Reformation" and social change, it was the focus of very specific criticisms and programs of secular and religious reform among all denominations. Clearly an evaluation of evolutionary and revolutionary change in sixteenth-century marriage would contribute greatly toward putting the Reformation in its proper social context. First, however, we must establish our historiographical and geographical perspectives.

The historiographical perspective

Despite a long historiographical tradition, the question of the Reformation's impact on marriage has consistently suffered from a fundamental problem of perspective. On the one hand, we confront a documentational obstacle familiar to medievalists and modernists alike, namely, limited access to sixteenth-century perspectives. Despite its rich social complexity, the institution of marriage during this period remains accessible to us in the twentieth century mainly through two kinds of sources: legal or administrative records and published literary or intellectual sources. On the other hand, we who study the development of this still extant social institution are often hampered by too much information about what

happens after the Reformation. No matter how diligently we attempt to suspend such knowledge, five centuries of subsequent changes in Western marriage cannot help but influence our most basic questions about the Reformation's impact.

Though in some ways typical of all historical study, these two problems of primary sources and of teleological inclinations have produced an especially polarized approach to the question of marriage and the Reformation, similar to the more general historiographical debate already mentioned. At one end of the interpretational spectrum, we find those who theorize broadly using the limited primary sources and thus, not surprisingly, tend to support a revolutionary version of the Reformation's effects on marriage. At the opposite end of the same spectrum, we confront supporters of evolutionary explanations of changes in marriage, wherein individual reformers and the Reformation play only minor or peripheral roles. In both instances, moreover, interpretations of the nature and direction of all changes in marriage remain perceptibly shaped by the teleological preferences of the historians themselves.

Revolutionary interpretations of the Reformation's impact, for example, may have expanded considerably in scope over the past century, but have changed little in their basic disposition. For such scholars, the Protestant Reformation produced a marriage doctrine and practice fundamentally different from that of pre- and post-Tridentine Catholics, thus initiating a long process of "confessional formation" (*Konfessionsbildung*) in German society.[6] Ironically, in attempting to move beyond the boundaries of traditional works on marriage law[7] and theolo-

[6] Cf. influential interpretation of Ernst W. Zeeden, *Die Enstehung der Konfessionen. Grundlagen und Formen der Konfessionsbildung* (Munich, 1965); and *Konfessionsbildung* (Stuttgart, 1985).

[7] Most modern German legal scholarship on the subject of *Eheschließung*, or marriage formation and completion finds its origin in the debate between Emil Friedberg, *Das Recht der Eheschliessung in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig, 1865; reprint: Aalen, 1965), and Rudolph Sohm, *Das Recht der Eheschliessung aus dem deutschen und canonischen Recht geschichtlich entwickelt* (Weimar, 1875). See especially the heated exchange between the two in Friedberg, *Verlobung und Trauung* (Leipzig, 1876), and Sohm, *Trauung und Verlobung: Eine Entgegnung auf Friedberg: Verlobung und Trauung* (Weimar, 1876); also Adolf von Scheurl, *Die Entwicklung des kirchlichen Eheschließungsrechts* (Erlangen, 1877); Hans von Schubert, *Die evangelische Trauung, ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und gegenwärtige Bedeutung* (Berlin, 1890); and the more recent Siegfried Reicke, "Geschichtliche Grundlagen des deutschen Eheschließungsrechts, weltliche Eheschließung und kirchliche Eheschließung," in *Beiträge zur Frage des Eheschließungsrechts*, ed. Hans Adolf Dombois and Friedreich Karl Schumann (Gladbeck, 1953). On the development of German marital property law, see Richard Schroeder, *Geschichte des ehelichen Güterrechts in Deutschland*, 3 vols. (Stettin, 1863–74).

The classic on the Church's marriage law is still indisputably Adhémar Esmein, *Le mariage en*

gy,[8] many recent historians have produced an even more source-biased "social" representation than all of their predecessors. Steven Ozment, for instance, acknowledges that his evidence is "heavily-weighted toward self-conscious assessments by contemporary observers and participants."[9] Yet he proceeds to argue for the widespread emergence of a new Protestant married religious ideal in place of the traditional Catholic celibate ideal, resulting in fewer clerical abuses and a more affectionate view of the family overall.[10] Thomas Safley rejects a confessional distinction based on theology for one founded in law enforcement, particularly in the Protestant introduction of divorce.[11] Again, though, the

droit canonique, 2 vols. (Paris, 1891). Also valuable are Joseph Freisen, *Geschichte des kanonischen Eherechtes bis zum Verfall der Glossenliteratur* (1893; reprint: Paderborn, 1963); Jean Dauvillier, *Le mariage dans le droit classique de l'Eglise depuis le Décret de Gratian (1140) jusqu'à mort de Clement V (1314)* (Paris, 1933); and on the Protestant adaptation of the same: Rudolf Schäfer, "Die Geltung des kanonischen Rechts in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands von Luther bis zur Gegenwart. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Quellen, der Literatur und der Rechtsprechung des evangelischen Kirchenrechts," in *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung* 36/5 (1915), 165–413.

Two recent works provide excellent syntheses on marriage law during the period. But while exhaustively researched, both Hartweg Dieterich, *Das Protestantische Eherecht in Deutschland bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1970), and James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), overwhelmingly focus on the writings of contemporary jurists and other scholars alone.

[8] The writings of Luther on marriage have expectedly received the greatest attention. Among the most thorough modern analyses of Luther's teachings on marriage: Olavi Lähteenmäki, *Sexus und Ehe bei Luther* (Turku, 1955); Ernst Kinder, "Luthers Auffassung von der Ehe," in *Bekenntnis zur Kirche. Festgabe für Ernst Sommerlath zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Ernst Heinz Amberg (Berlin, 1960); and Dieterich chap. 1. See also the earlier uncompleted work by Sigmund Baranowski, *Luthers Lehre von der Ehe* (Poznan, 1906). On other reformers and humanists, see Emile Telle, *Erasme de Rotterdam et le septième sacrament* (Geneva, 1954); Andre Biéler, *L'homme et la femme dans la morale calvaniste: La doctrine reformée sur l'amour, le mariage, le célibat, le divorce, l'adultère et la prostitution, considerée dans son cadre historique* (Geneva, 1963); Charles Pfeiffer, "Heinrich Bullinger and Marriage" (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1981); Herman Selderhuis, *Huwelijk en entscheiding bij Martin Bucer* (Leidem, 1994), forthcoming in English in the *Sixteenth Century Studies* series.

On the medieval doctrinal precedents, see Gabriel LeBras, "La doctrine du mariage chez les théologiens et les canonistes depuis l'An Mille," in *DTC* 9:2123–220; Jean Leclerq, *Monks on Marriage: A Twelfth-Century View* (New York, 1982); and James Brundage, "Carnal Delight: Canonistic Theories of Sexuality," in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. S. Kuttner and K. Pennington (Vatican City, 1980), 361–85.

[9] Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 2. Cf. similar criticisms of Ozment's use of such sources in reviews by Thomas Safley, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15/1 (1984), 126–28, and Lyndal Roper, *Journal of Modern History* 58/1 (1986), 263–64.

[10] See also Thomas Fischer Miller, "Mirror for Marriage: Lutheran Views of Marriage and the Family, 1520–1600" (Ph.D diss., University of Virginia, 1981); as well as the widespread influence of the Protestant Whig model of marriage in surveys and textbooks, evident even in the scholarly Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 574–75.

[11] Thomas M. Safley, *Let No Man Put Asunder: The Control of Marriage in the German Southwest: A Comparative Study, 1550–1600* (Kirkville, Mo., 1984). Safley's argument of confessional forma-

narrow and limited basis for generalization results in some distortions. For even Safley's more empirically founded conclusion that "Protestants achieved a more comprehensive and effective regulation of marriage in early modern Europe [than Catholics]" is unfortunately based on an unequal comparison of marriage litigation in the sprawling Catholic diocese of Constance with that of the highly centralized Reformed city-state of Basel.[12]

While most of these modern historians resist the simplistic confessional generalizations of earlier polemic,[13] many also resist establishing the full social context in which such reform agendas were formulated. Long-term development in any area other than the traditional concerns of law and theology is often hostilely discounted as dehumanizing.[14] The result is more of a caricature of social history in which the only role of Protestant and Catholic peoples is largely one of reactive acceptance or rejection of "new" marriage teachings, with almost all initiative for the timing and direction of change belonging to their religious and political leaders. Such scholars may differ on the legal or theological basis for confessional formation, but the elite source of change remains unchallenged.

Long-term developments in marriage constitute the almost exclusive concern of evolutionary interpretations of the Reformation's significance. Since the pioneering work of Philippe Ariès on childhood and the family, scholarship on the demographic and economic dimensions of

tion based on legal jurisdiction in many ways echoes the conclusions of Esmein, Wendel, Köhler, and Staehlin (see n.35 and also my discussion in Chapter 3). See also Judith Walters Harvey, "The Influence of the Reformation on Nürnberg Marriage Laws, 1520–1535" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1972).

[12] *Let No Man Put Asunder,* 195. See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of his arguments and methodology.

[13] The revolutionary view of sixteenth-century marriage reforms in fact builds on a long tradition of confessional revision already current by the seventeenth century. Köhler, certainly no Catholic apologist, notes such historical revision in the Zurich *Ehesatzung* of 1698, which ahistorically attributes the city's long-anticipated break with the bishop's marriage jurisdiction to pious, Evangelical motives. In view of the pervasiveness of such assumptions, he writes, "Der erkannte Zusammenhang mit der Reformationsbewegung muß umgrenzt worden" (Kö I:2).

[14] Ozment approaches the animus expressed by other antiquantitative Reformation historians such as Hugh Trevor-Roper (*Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* [London, 1967]) when he firmly rejects an approach "that holds unconscious demographic and economic forces in such awe that we learn little more about the human family than what it has in common with herding animals" (*When Fathers Ruled,* vii).

marriage has flourished.[15] Generally employing quantitative and statistical methodologies, historians have focused on long-term European marriage patterns in various areas, including age, social status, and other characteristics of marrying couples; the property transactions involved (principally dowry and inheritance); and the role and interests of parents, other relatives, and members of the community in the entire marriage procedure. Despite many differences in interests and interpretations, almost all of these scholars agree that the early modern period (fifteenth to eighteenth centuries) was a time of crucial transition in marital law and practice,[16] closely tied to the new economic and demographic forces of market capitalism.[17]

Without a doubt the most controversial theory in this respect has been the "great transformation" of European marriage and family proposed by Lawrence Stone and Edward Shorter.[18] While Stone prefers a more structuralist and elitist definition of the transformation than Shorter,[19]

[15] *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York, 1962). See historiographical overviews in Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500–1914* (London, 1980); Richard Wall, "Introduction" in *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, ed. Robin Wall and Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 1982), 1–64; Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder, *From Patriarcy to Partnership: The European Family from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Karla Oosterveen and Manfred Horzinger (Chicago, 1982), 178–226; and Barbara Diefendorf, "Family Culture, Renaissance Culture," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 40/4 (1987), 661–81.

[16] Alan MacFarlane (*Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300–1840* [New York, 1986]) identifies the beginning of the modern nuclear family in England with the onset of Malthusian restraint in marriage age and procreation, a development he places in the thirteenth century. Jack Goody (*The Development of Family and Marriage in Europe* [Cambridge, 1983]) attributes the breakdown of large kinship networks to a much earlier transformation during the fifth to eighth centuries and self-conscious ecclesiastical policies, aimed at bringing more land to the Church. Other historians differ on the exact point of transition but agree that it was most certainly not during the early modern period. See especially Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450–1700* (London, 1984).

[17] In this key respect, they echo recent neo-Weberian and Marxist connections of new religious forms and social structures with economic change. Cf. R. H. Hilton, ed., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London, 1978); S. Hoyer, *Reform, Reformation, Revolution* (Leipzig, 1980); O. Rammstedt, *Sekte und soziale Bewegung* (Cologne, 1966); P. M. Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544–69* (Cambridge, 1978).

[18] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (New York, 1977); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York, 1975).

[19] Shorter's "great transformation" of the family from the "bad old days" is described generally and essentially engenders three "modern innovations": romantic love, domesticity, and maternal love. Since it involved the substitution of love for economic considerations in marriage, the first occurrence would have been among those least encumbered by property and preservation of social status – the poor. Stone, on the other hand, sets out with much more ambitious goals: "to chart and document, to analyse and explain, some massive shifts in world views and value

both argue that the economically induced change from a communal, or "open lineage," family structure to that of the modern nuclear family resulted in a dramatic transformation of marriage and family life in England, particularly in the innovative concepts of romantic love, domesticity, and maternal love. The early modern transformation of marriage and the family, Stone argues, was not an isolated event but merely one aspect of the greater social transformation of local, agrarian, kinship-based community (*Gemeinschaft*) to the larger, impersonal, capitalist society (*Gesellschaft*) of the modern West.[20]

In the midst of the heated debate stirred by such sweeping theories, some social historians have opted to set their sights somewhat more narrowly in examining changes in European marital practice. Focusing on the key element of the "great transformation" debate – the transition from extended to nuclear families in Europe – scholars such as John Hajnal, Peter Laslett, and André Burgière have attempted to define which European familial models apply where and when.[21] As a result, both the general applicability and chronology of Stone's and Shorter's theories have been widely criticized, with such criticisms casting similar

systems that occurred in England over a period of some three hundred years, from 1500 to 1800" (p. 3). The three phases which he subsequently discerns – Open Lineage (1450–1630), Restricted Patriarchial Nuclear Family (1550–1770), and Closed Domesticated Nuclear Family (1620–1800) – are all initiated by the propertied elite (see esp. 134ff.) and eventually trickle down to all parts of society.

John R. Gillis, *For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York, 1985), offers a subtler and more anthropologically inspired version of the same "transformation."

[20] Stone draws heavily on the "rise of individualism" tradition, most recently presented in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, eds., *Histoire de la vie privée,* especially vol. II: *Le Moyen Age,* ed. Georges Duby (Paris, 1986).

On the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft,* see Chapter 5.

[21] Scholarship on family typology finds its roots in the works of several nineteenth-century European sociologists, most notably Frederick LePlay, *L'organisation de la famille selon le vrai modèle. . .* (Paris, 1875). LePlay introduced the theory of the modern nuclear ("unstable") family as the product of social decline, ultimately reaching fruition in the French Revolution.

Recent scholarship has seen a variety of typological theories, from a basic division between western Europe and everywhere else (J. Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective," in *Population in History,* ed. D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley [London, 1965], 101ff; also "Two Kinds of Pre-industrial Household Formation System," in Wall, et al., *Family Forms in Historic Europe,* 65–104), to four major geographical groupings (western, middle western, mediterranean, eastern: Peter Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations* [Cambridge, 1977]), to three different types based on cohabitation, inheritance, and labor force need – nuclear, stem, and communitarian – in Andrée Burgière, "Pour une typologie des formes d'organisation domestique de l'Europe Moderne (XVI^{e}–XIX^{e} s.)," *Annales* 41 (1986), 639–55.

aspersions on any general "European" marriage pattern for the early modern period.[22]

Still others have chosen to examine more carefully changes in what they consider the most crucial component to understanding shifting marriage patterns – dowry and inheritance.[23] Some have taken a broader and more anthropological approach, demonstrating powerful connections between legal authority, social restrictions, religious ideology, and popular culture.[24] Research of this kind has especially contributed to related discussions of flexible "marriage strategies" among individuals and families of the period, recognizing a much broader variety of economic, social, and political factors in the choice to marry than the more general "transformation" or "familial model" theories suggest.

Nonetheless, for all the enormous progress made during the past thirty years in such previously unexplored aspects of European marriage development, this type of research also displays shortcomings. Most important – in direct contrast to the confessional formation approach –

[22] In addition to their own misgivings on the early modern "beginning" of the nuclear family in England, MacFarlane (*Marriage and Love in England,* 3ff.) and Goody (*Family and Marriage in Europe,* 2ff.) express reservations (rare in Stone and Shorter) about the general applicability of English marital and familial patterns to all of Europe. Many historians agree that the search for a universal "European model" of marriage seems to have run its course. See especially the recent summary of family historiography in Tamara K. Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review* 96/1 (February 1991), 95–124; and David Sabean *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1990), 89–101, on historiographical attempts to define *Haus.*

[23] See especially David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Les toscans et leur familles: Une étude du catasto florentin de 1427* (Paris, 1978); Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "'The Cruel Mother': Maternity, Widowhood, and Dowry in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy,* trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago, 1985), 117–31; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "The Griselda Complex: Dowry and Marriage Gifts in the Quattrocento," in ibid., 213–46; Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe," *Journal of Family History* 3 (1978), 262-96; Stanley Chojnacki, "Dowries and Kinsmen in Early Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1975), 571–600; Jacques Lafon, *Les époux bordelais (1450-1550): Régimes matrimoniaux et mutations sociales* (Paris, 1972); and Goody, *Family and Marriage in Europe.* See also my discussion in Chapter 4.

[24] John Bossy, "Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries," in *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World,* ed. D. Baker (Cambridge, 1973); Natalie Zemon Davis, "Ghost, Kin, and Progeny: Some Features of Family Life in Early Modern France," *Daedalus* 106/2 (1977), 87–114; André Burgière, "Le rituel du mariage en France: Pratiques ecclésiastiques et pratiques populaires (XVI^{e}–XVIII^{e} s.)," *Annales* 33 (1978), 637–49; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "Zacharias, or the Ousting of the Father: The Rites of Marriage in Tuscany from Giotto to the Council of Trent," in *Women, Family, and Ritual,* 178–212; Barbara Diefendorf, "Widowhood and Remarriage in Sixteenth-Century Paris," *Journal of Family History* 7/4 (1982), 379–95.

the roles of religious reformers in such long-term change are often handled in an overtly mechanistic and even dismissive manner. While many scholars reject as reductionist the sweeping formulations of Shorter, Stone, and Ariès, more specialized researchers rarely cast more than a cursory glance at contemporary religious and legal developments.[25] Once again we confront the same problem of historiographical perspective described in the first approach but in this case resulting in the opposite kind of imbalance, asking historians of marriage to choose between all-embracing theoretical structures and narrow, exclusively demographic or economic monographs.

This book seeks to combine the best of both approaches, fairly assessing the social effects of both revolutionary and evolutionary changes on marriage in sixteenth-century Germany. Beyond differences in sources and methods, the greatest obstacle to a balanced evaluation of the Reformation and marriage has been the inevitable teleological perspective of the modern investigator. Whether one adopts a Protestant Whig approach, such as Ozment, or the more negative view of Ariès, early modern changes in marriage are invariably assessed in light of their modern results. Indeed, the choice of a revolutionary or an evolutionary interpretation of marital change often appears a less important factor than the historian's own disposition toward the end product of such changes: either progressive interpretations of Protestantism and the modern State or antimodern revisionism and emphasis on the misogynist and other oppressive aspects of the same governmental and religious institutions.[26] Obviously, such personal evaluations represent the very essence of historical scholarship and neither could nor should be eliminated. Still, the question of the Reformation's immediate impact on Western marriage does require a different approach, one as free as possible from the knowledge of what ultimately follows.

[25] Cf., for example, the casual aside of Jean-Louis Flandrin in an otherwise well-considered treatment of family, marriage, and sexuality, in which he suggests a link between an early rise in contraception in France (a full century before the rest of Europe) and Jansenism and/or the "dechristianization" of Europe; See *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household, and Sexuality*, trans. Richard Southern (Cambridge, 1979), 238ff. Even the cleverest connection of European developments in religion and marriage proposed by Goody supposes much greater unity in doctrine and effectiveness in enforcement than most medieval scholars would consider possible.

[26] Cf. similar complaints about family historians "overvaluing the present" in Goody, *Family and Marriage in Europe*, 2; and a related observation by Herlihy that "the medieval family has become the negative stereotype against which later families are compared, in order to show the alleged benefits of modernization" (*Medieval Households* [Cambridge, Mass., 1985], 112).