



Murray, Jacqueline (ed.). Marriage in Pre-modern Europe: Italy and Beyond

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[See table of contents](#)

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between 1670 and 1672, while the fourth, an academic discourse on Our Lady of Sorrow composed in 1672, remains unpublished. Elena also exchanged frequent correspondence with prominent figures such as Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Pope Clement X, and Pope Innocent XI, to mention but three. Her writings displayed both careful composition and persuasive argumentation.

The volume is well organized and complemented by many photo-reproductions of maps, buildings where Elena resided, and portraits of her, of some of well-known professors who taught at the University of Padua, and of religious figures with whom she forged close bonds. It also includes illustrations of various engravings and academic records. The study concludes with an appendix that presents several letters and legal documents that belonged to the Cornaro Piscopia family.

This book successfully integrates a wide variety of source material and provides a thorough description and bibliographic analysis of Elena's life and studies. Moreover, it presents compelling new material that allows for a more nuanced reading of Elena's work than had previously been available, while contextualizing her within the vibrant academic community of the University of Padua. This recent translation of Maschietto's biography will become a standard reference for anyone interested in Elena Cornaro Piscopia's formidable erudition. It will certainly stimulate interest and continued research in this field.

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Murray, Jacqueline (ed.).

Marriage in Pre-modern Europe: Italy and Beyond.

Essays and Studies 27. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012. Pp. 393 + 12 b/w and colour ill. ISBN 978-0-7727-2122-8 (paperback) \$32.

“Marriage” is a capacious term. It can refer to the rituals by which couples are united and to the processes and strategies by which such unions are forged. Yet it most often evokes the experience of living together as a couple over a lifetime. This interdisciplinary collection does a superb job of illuminating the various strategies—mainly those of Italian noble and urban patrician families from the

fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries—used to arrange marriages. Although there are some glimpses into the later lives of the marital partners, the collection offers little in the way of a phenomenology of marriage once negotiated: the passion, joy, anger, occasional violence, and sheer hard work involved in managing, or failing to manage, relationships. Likewise, readers who seek insight into the marital strategies of the majorities of society—peasants, artisans, the poor—will be disappointed here.

Elena Woodacre's essay on marriages of queens usefully delineates the parameters constraining both exogamous and endogamous choices, while other essays skilfully demonstrate how families used marriage either within or beyond a regional or status group, or sometimes both, to build political or economic power through kinship. Mauro Carboni shows the Bolognese oligarchy choosing to close ranks by intermarrying, while Heather Parker's study shows a similar strategy of local connections adopted by the Scottish Carnegie lairds. Exogamy and the use of marriage to extend connections beyond the city or region emerge in Renée Baernstein's account of how regional noble families made connections with the metropolitan Roman nobility; Katalin Prajda depicts Florentine merchants developing connections with the kingdom of Hungary; and Shennan Hutton skilfully traces the impact of inheritance custom on marriage between Flemish nobility and the urban mercantile élite of Ghent.

Such studies inevitably focus on behavioural patterns rather than articulated strategies. This tends to generate a rather anonymous, if not abstract, sense of the prime movers in these strategies, the male heads of families. Only Sally Hickson's essay on Frederico Gonzaga highlights a male protagonist's role in his own marital story. But several contributors do follow their sources to illuminate the later lives of the marital partners, particularly wives. Hickson's essay successfully switches to follow Margherita Paleologa's later career as a Gonzaga matriarch. Ersie Burke uses wives' wills to show in contrast that Greek women who married into the Venetian patriciate remained remarkably centred in their own birth families and culture. Elena Brizio's essay focuses on a seemingly unusual case of Maddalena della Gazzia of Siena, an elite bride who made her own choice to marry a Spaniard, her second husband, before returning to her own Sienese patriciate in her third marriage.

Three essays focus entirely on wives' later roles. Jamie Smith's essay, based on notarial records, shows mothers acting as guardians in Genoa's maritime merchant community, while Erin Campbell uses two portraits to suggest older

wives' roles as mothers and matriarchs in Bolognese families. Leslie Peterson's essay, on the other hand, focuses on the bodies of queenly wives as the objects of the power of kings in three English dramatic works. In these essays and others there is an implicit subtext: the feminist debate about whether historians should understand wives (or all women) as actors rather than as victims and pawns. No author, however, explicitly tackles the problem of assessing marriage through the lens of a gendered manhood.

Three essays cast valuable light on the much-discussed issue of the ritual process of marriage before the Council of Trent. Jennifer De Silva uses diaries of papal masters of ceremonies to illuminate the spiritual-social politics of the successive events in the wedding rituals of papal children and kin. Two of the essays based on literary sources also illuminate ritual stages of weddings. Matteo Soranzo elegantly sketches the marital policies of the Neapolitan élite while showing how the Latin elegies of Giovanni Pontano echo the stages of the pre-Tridentine marriage process. Pontano's elegies hint at the happiness of his marital life, but Soranzo gives more attention to literary form than to this example of a seemingly happy marriage. Reinier Leushuis uses the *novelle* of the Dominican courtier Matteo Bandello to remind readers of the early modern concern with the consequences of clandestine or private marriages that inevitably become public.

Although the running title printed with Soranzo's essay accidentally replaces "poetry" with "poverty" in Naples, only the last essay in the collection provides insight into two issues otherwise omitted: marriage among the lower orders and marriage as lived. The latter experience is often revealed in the narratives of love, hate, and violence that permeate the records of marital litigation. William Smith's essay on Anne Wentworth, the wife of a London glover, is, however, based on Wentworth's mystical writings which mirror the violence of a marriage torn by sectarian disagreements.

This collection may not be as capacious in its range as is the term "marriage" itself, but its particular strengths, notably its rich and subtle exposition of the range of marital strategies, will certainly make it indispensable to students of the history of elite Italian families. Readers will also find it a useful resource to illuminate how kinship and women's roles shaped political and economic power.