

important to note here that the method used to govern Sicily became an internal model for the Aragonese Federation, where, over the course of the latter half of the Quattrocento, individual states acquired greater administrative independence. This was a role that would be preserved during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, inside the Spanish monarchy. Quattrocento Sicily as described by Silvestri proved to be an important testing ground both from the administrative-bureaucratic standpoint and from a purely political perspective.

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*Marriage, the Church, and Its Judges in Renaissance Venice, 1420–1545.*  
Cecilia Cristellon.

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xviii + 286 pp. \$109.99.

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For much of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, the canon law of the Latin church bound Western Christendom to its rules for marriage, irrespective of geographic location. However, with the exception of France, which set down specific legal requirements by the twelfth century for determining the validity of a marriage, the form of the rite was left unregulated, sometimes leaving its validity uncertain. The resulting flow of cases for breach of promise or alleged marriage that reached the bishops' tribunals prompted theologians at the Council of Trent in 1563 to establish a prescribed praxis, and Trent thus became a watershed in the history of marital law.

Cecilia Cristellon's study, based on a rigorous survey of the exceptionally rich documentation in the Venetian patriarchal archives, deals primarily with the century leading up to Trent. She has produced an important analysis of the structure and praxis of marital litigation under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchal Court for the period between 1420 and 1545. It is based upon 706 cases of marital conflict, categorized as alleged marriage (270), annulment (133), separation (118), betrothal (10), and no classification (175). In all, 353 males and 337 females were plaintiffs in the cases, with 16 listed as unspecified. Following a thorough survey of the historiography on marital litigation both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, Cristellon offers students and scholars of marital litigation a history of institutions and laws in two main sections. The first (chapters 2 and 3) concerns the organization of the Venetian ecclesiastical tribunal. It begins with a chapter that details procedures for litigation, describing the composition of the court, the way petitions were formed, how people were cited to appear in court and the consequences of failing to comply, the methods for acquiring proof, and the processes of sentencing and appeals. Witnesses and testimony are the subjects of the following chapter, which outlines deponent selection, their instructions, the way their evidence was

verbalized, and the criteria judges used in determining their credibility. The latter was based on gender, class, age, and geographic provenance and evidenced the implicit social and gendered hierarchy of society. The second section of the book (chapters 4 and 5) highlights the dialogue between the judges and clients of the tribunal. In the fourth chapter we learn about the role of the judge, in this case the Patriarch of Venice. Here Cristellon explains his functions as an inquisitor and investigator but also as a mediator between the spouses and their families and as a confessor focused on the control primarily of women's consciences in order to ascertain whether they acted with free consent. Cristellon emphasizes that the "assumption of one role or another implied different conceptions of truth" (20). The fifth chapter concentrates on the important theory of consent to marry, which in canon law was an essential key to a marriage's validity. She outlines the conceptions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as those of the laity. Finally, the sixth and last chapter offers a quantitative analysis of the 706 cases of marital conflict. Of interest here is the gendered breakdown of the petitions. Of the 133 annulment cases, 85 women were plaintiffs, as opposed to 47 men, while for the 118 separation petitions 72 were from men who primarily wanted to reinstate cohabitation, while 46 were from women for various reasons. The cases for alleged marriage broke slightly more evenly, with 145 male plaintiffs and 125 females.

Scholars of marital litigation in Europe for the pre-Tridentine period will find this attentive study to be an essential road map to understanding the institutional and legal framework of judicial records. It is an excellent complement to Charles Donahue's work for England and that of Richard Helmholz and other scholars for the tribunals of the German Empire. It also includes a very useful comprehensive bibliography of secondary works.

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*Florentine Patricians and Their Networks: Structures behind the Cultural Success and the Political Representation of the Medici Court (1600–1660).* Elisa Goudriaan.

Rulers and Elites 14. Leiden: Brill, 2018. xx + 480 pp. \$206.

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With this study, Elisa Goudriaan brings together a number of themes developed separately in scholarship of the past few decades: the operation of social networks, the negotiations characterizing successful absolutist regimes, artistic patronage and cultural brokerage, and Florence in what Eric Cochrane memorably called "the forgotten centuries." Drawing on a wide range of archival sources that detail extensive cultural production and familial activity, she puts these into conversation with a select body of