

**To Have and To Hold:
Marriage in Pre-Modern Europe, 1200-1700**

**Abstracts
(in alphabetical order by speaker's last name)**

Alfieri, Fernanda

Session 4B

(Italienisch-Deutsches Historisches Institut, Trento, Italy)

“Marriage, cross-dressing and sexual identity in 17th-18th Century Roman Inquisition Trials”

In 1705, the local inquisitor of a town in Northern Italy examined a marriage he feared might be flawed: under the appearance of Giovanni, husband of Maria Maddalena, might hide a female identity. Few years before, the two were legitimately married in *facie ecclesiae* according to the Tridentine prescriptions. The Vicar’s suspicion starts an enquiry whose picaresque plot leads to a sensational development: not only was Giovanni in truth Antonia. Before becoming Giovanni, she had lived in another town with her male partner and given birth to a baby. Moreover, the marriage with Maria Maddalena had been forced by the local priest, responsible for the latter's pregnancy. In 1720, Maria — after converting from Lutheranism to Catholicism and traveling from Vienna to Rome — asks the Holy Office for forgiveness for having dressed as a man and married the widow Anna, in order to get a job from her. In 1685 Tuscany, a woman disguises herself as man to hide her lover's concubinate. What do these unpublished dossiers, stored in the Vatican Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, tell us about the use of marriage? What about the role of sex within marriage? How did Inquisition deal with such marriage transgressions?

Altbauer-Rudnik, Michal

Session 2B

(The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel)

“ ‘The wounds of love are cured only by those who made them’: Prescribing Marriage for Love Melancholy in European Medical Writing, 1550-1650”

During the early modern period an impressive amount of European medical works were devoted to love melancholy. Not only did the volume of writing increased dramatically, special attention was given to the social roots of the disorder, as is clear from the discussions on its etiology and therapy. Physicians were in agreement that only by union with the love object would the patients be healed completely. Difference in their bluntness corresponds to the social realities regarding love and marriage in their countries. Some state that this union can be realized only in accordance with divine and human laws, others directly attack the legal and social obstacles which prevent young couples from being joined in marriage. My aim is to show that medical discussion itself served as a technique to deal with the social distress: pathologizing love on one hand and prescribing love marriage on the other. My research focuses on three cases: French and English societies and the Italian Jewish communities.

Anderson, Judith R.

(University of Alberta)

Session 8B

“‘Get thee a new wife!’: Mrs. Noah, Her Gossips, and Domestic Disturbance in the Chester Cycle”

Noah’s wife is one of the most popular, and most criticized, characters in medieval drama, for her willful disobedience to her husband when it is time to board the ark, and for the altercation between husband and wife that ensues. This paper will argue that, rather than being an anomaly within the religious drama, Mrs. Noah is merely one extreme example of a dramatic convention of “domestic disturbance.” After briefly defining the term “domestic disturbance,” I will show that Mrs. Noah’s rebellion in the Chester cycle, taken in the context of this cycle’s emphasis on obedience, patriarchy, and authority, serves a challenge to these ideals in favour of affinity groupings such as that of Mrs. Noah’s gossips, thereby complicating the typological or religious significance of the Chester cycle, and its representation of domestic relationships.

Armstrong-Partida, Michelle
(UCLA)

Session 8C

“Married Priests? The Practice of Clerical Unions in Fourteenth-Century Catalunya”

Catalan clerics did not forsake marriage. In fact, many went to great lengths to engage in relationships that could offer them a sexual outlet, companionship, perhaps even love, as well as a union that would create a household and an economic unit. Fourteenth-century episcopal visitations and ecclesiastical court records reveal the widespread practice of clerical concubinage and how marriage-like unions offered many clergy the benefits of marriage that their predecessors experienced in the nine hundred years before the prohibition of clerical marriage was well established as a matter of canon law. This paper will outline the practice of clerical concubinage, including how clerical unions were formed, how they mirrored lay unions, and evidence that suggests clerical couples exchanged promises of commitment to each other before family and friends.

Azari, Motaleb

(Islamic Azad University of Quchan, Iran)

Session 6B

“Marriage in Pre-modern Europe and Islam: A Case Study of Intercultural Dialogue”

This paper, as a case study in pre-modern Europe and Islam, examines the concept of marriage according to these ideologies. Religion has something crucial to contribute the way we understand and define marriage, in this regard; marriage is examined as a religious institution and cultural practice in both, pre-modern Europe and Islam. The practices associated with both pre-modern culture of Europe and Islamic culture is discussed and marriage is seen as a mediator for creating an intercultural dialogue between western and Islamic civilizations. factors associated with enhancement and enrichment of growing relationships to ease the transition from single to married life in those cultural contexts are considered. Finally, modernization in its various forms is seen as a force, affecting thinking and practices about marriage. In this case, regarding polygamy and homosexuality, cultural confrontations between pre-modern Europe and Islam are seen as natural outcomes of modernization.

Baernstein, Renée P.

(Miami University, OH)

Session 7A

“Inter-regional Marriage Among the Italian Nobility in the Sixteenth Century”

Inter-regional marriages among aristocratic families served as part of the connective tissue of the pan-Italian elite in the period before national unification (Visceglia, Fosi) but are little studied for their contribution to the formation of a shared national identity. The 1566 marriage of the Roman noblewoman Costanza Colonna to a minor Lombard nobleman, one of many such exogamous matches for Roman noblewomen, is here situated in this context of peninsular exchange and communication. Part of a larger study of marriage in the Colonna family that places gender at the heart of Italian class formation, the paper exploits extraordinary archival documentation to study the negotiations of husband and wife on the charged terrains of sex, religion, politics, and whom to ask to dinner. These conflicts are contextualized in regional differences, political tensions between the two families, and rapid shifts in religious sensibility during the Tridentine period.

Bednarski, Steven

Session 7C

(University of St Jerome=s College, University of Waterloo)

“A Poisoned Union: Microhistory and Marriage in Fourteenth-Century Provence”

Margarita suffered greatly because of her marriage. After her wedding, she left her beloved brothers and family and moved to a strange place. There, far from familiar surroundings, she fell ill. Her husband, upon seeing her repeated seizures, agreed to allow her to return home for treatment. This, however, earned her the scorn of his family. When she returned to her husband, her illness prevented her from consummating their union. Lonely, sick, and celibate, Margarita existed in a constant state of anxiety. When her husband died suddenly at work, his doctor cited sexual frustration as the cause but her kin argued for poison. This was the beginning of Margarita’s prolonged legal battle to clear her name and reclaim her rightful inheritance. I have been developing the tale of Margarita the Poisoner for several years, in preparation for a monograph. Last summer, I obtained new records from Margarita’s life. I propose, therefore, to deliver a paper on the trials and tribulations of writing a microhistory that addresses late medieval marriage, inheritance, and a woman’s ability to negotiate.

Bornholdt, Claudia

Session 5B

(Catholic University of America, Washington, DC)

“German Tales of Celibate Marriage at the Transition from Spiritual to Secular Narrative”

Some of the earliest extant secular German narratives are the so-called bridal-quest epics, tales in which the young hero sets out to win a bride and secure his progeny. Contrary to the very logic of this narrative pattern, however, several of these German stories end with the couple's marital chastity. Based on the findings in my recently finished monograph *Saintly Spouses: Chaste Marriage in Secular and Sacred Narratives From Medieval Germany (12th and 13th Century)*, this paper will present examples of early vernacular German tales of celibate marriages in saints' lives, historical sources, and secular bridal-quest tales. I shall discuss the arguments outlining the advantages of celibate as opposed to consummated marriage as well as the social consequences of this decision, which is always made by mutual consent of both spouses. The discussion will be placed in the context of the marriage debate of the twelfth century and in the socio-cultural framework of the canonization of Germany's only holy couple, Emperor Henry II and Empress Cunegund, who observed perpetual conjugal chastity.

Breul, Wolfgang

(Johannes-Gutenberg-University, Germany)

Session 3B

“Earthly Eva and Heavenly Sophia. Marriage and Sexuality in German Pietism”

Pietism is regarded as the most important reform movement of European Protestantism since the Reformation. Its influence can be seen up to the present. Following the reform of theology and the church in the 16th century, Pietism's goal was the »Reformation of life« focusing on a renewal of Christian piety and life's conduct. The subject of marriage and family as basic forms of human society was of particular importance. The lecture presents Pietism's view of marriage using examples of selected representatives of both church and radical Pietism. It will show that Pietism deviated considerably from traditional Protestantism and developed interpretations of marriage, which went in various directions. In some cases even sexuality was emphatically affirmed. The lecture will also inquire into the social and cultural-historical causes of this development. I am at present working up a comprehensive study on this subject, which is being supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

Brizio, Elena

Session 5C

(Medici Archive Project, Firenze, Italy)

“ ‘Given her determination that she wanted him for her husband’: Sienese Women Who Chose for Themselves”

In medieval and Renaissance Italy, women from the middle and upper classes were normally “assigned” husbands by their fathers or, in the case of orphaned girls, by their senior male kin (generally their brothers). It is therefore surprising to find archival evidence attesting to the ability of some women to choose their husbands themselves. In my paper I will present and examine several such cases which I have discovered in the archives of Florence and Siena. While one might have expected to find such anomalous cases in post-conquest Siena (that is, after 1555), when the republic’s political and social world was turned upside down and refashioned in the wake of the city’s annexation to the Duchy of Florence, one is surprised to note that even in the early 1400s, when the Republic of Siena was still a strong and viable social entity, some Sienese women were able to sidestep the standard male control of marriage alliances and form their own marital union (as a case from the 1410s seems to indicate). This paper will thus analyze these cases and the context in which they appear in order to determine to what extent, how, and why, some women were able to act independently of their male kin in such an important decision for their families as well as their own life.

Burger, Glenn

(Queen's College, CUNY)

Session 4B

“Conjoined Bodies and the Scene of Marriage: Sexual and Textual Hybridity in *Le Menagier de Paris*”

This paper considers how the contradictions and incoherences that characterize the new space and time of late medieval bourgeois marital relations emerge with particular clarity and urgency in the narrative experimentation of a conduct book such as *Le Menagier de Paris* (written c. 1394). I argue that this text tries to articulate a hybrid space and identity—bourgeois, lay, metropolitan, married householder—that depends upon using the language of others and upon a necessary crossing of known boundaries (masculine and feminine, bodily and spiritual, lay and clerical, active and contemplative, laborer and leisured elite). In the process the *Menagier* constructs a theatre of marriage in which there is endless incitement to talk productively about marital relations as social relations, thereby inciting a process of textual enrichment through which the everyday body of the good wife and the desire of her “husbanding” readers (both male and female) can be made fully social.

Burke, Ersie

(Monash University, Australia)

Session 7A

“The foreign wives of the Venetian ruling classes, 1500-1650.”

In Venice, non-elite women were legally obliged to undergo a potentially distressing enquiry into their 'suitability' before they could marry into the elite. A number of women from Venice itself, from other Italian cities and from the Republic's sea empire - Greeks, Dalmatians, Albanians - survived the ordeal. But did they ever gain full acceptance? Did they have to renounce some of their identity and background - especially the colonial wives, who were ethnically, culturally, linguistically and sometimes religiously different from Venetians? The legal and political aspects of the relevant legislation have been extensively discussed. This paper will focus on the stories of the foreign brides. Drawing on unpublished archival material, it investigates their ties with their in-laws and more particularly their families of origin and whether they preserved their ethnic and religious identities, their language, customs and traditions, and passed them on to their children.

Campbell, Erin J.
(University of Victoria)

Session 3A

“ ‘De la moglie che sia di più anni’: ‘Old Wives’ and Art in Early Modern Bologna”

Research on the early modern Italian domestic interior has revealed a rich array of objects associated with marriage, including betrothal portraits, wedding gifts, and furnishings, as well as objects related to childbirth. My work builds on this research to examine art created for the later stages of women’s lives, including menopause, sexual abstinence, grand-parenthood, and widowhood past the age of remarriage. Specifically, I will focus on the portraits of old women which were produced for the multi-generational households of the well-educated and socially-ambitious professional classes in Bologna during the latter half of the sixteenth century, when, under the impact of religious and social reform, old women became pivotal figures within the moral order of the family. *I ask: How did women and other family members, including men and children, appropriate, maintain, respond to, and transform images of the old wife, mother, and widow in meaningful, dynamic, and even contradictory ways?*

Carboni, Mauro

(Università degli Studi di Bologna, Italy)

“Marriage Strategies and Oligarchy in Early Modern Bologna”

Session 5A

The subject of this essay is the relationship between marriage, civic identity and the successful establishment of a long lasting oligarchy of aristocratic families. I shall focus on the web of matrimonial alliances interwoven by Bolognese patrician families throughout the 16th and the 17th centuries. It will be argued that it was the web of obligations and expectations created by the exchange of individuals and property at the very top echelons of society which explain the resilience of the city's leading families and their ability to retain a position of privilege for over two centuries. Inter-family and intra-family cooperation followed precise strategies designed to protect – and whenever possible expand - both patrimonial assets and civic leadership. The key was a careful combination of endogamy and homogamy, resulting in the repeated exchange of spouses and wealth within a restricted group of city families.

Cossar, Roisin

(University of Manitoba)

“Clerical concubines in Fourteenth-Century Italy”

Session 8C

Long-term, stable sexual relationships between clerics and women were common across Europe throughout the Middle Ages. Many scholars believe that these relationships were normally tolerated by local communities, if not Church officials. Such arguments are usually based on evidence about the sexual activities of male clerics, and only a few studies have examined the women who were clerics' domestic partners. In this paper, I employ notarial documents of practice from fourteenth-century Bergamo to analyze both attitudes towards clerical concubines and the women's own views of their relationships. The women considered themselves long-term partners of their clerical lovers, bearing them children and buying and selling property with them. Their neighbours, on the other hand, treated with women with ambivalence, accepting their presence in the community when their clerical partners were well-behaved, but speaking out against them when the clerics fell under the scrutiny of Church officials.

Crabb, Ann

(James Madison University)

Session 7B

“A Domestic Partnership: Margherita and Francesco Datini, 1376-1410”

Several hundred letters, between Margherita, Francesco and others, document the Datini marriage. Francesco, the self-made and very rich “merchant of Prato” and his younger wife Margherita moved between Prato and Florence. They often chose to be apart, partly because they irritated each other – as their letters show. Problems included Margherita’s infertility and Francesco’s two illegitimate children. However, they also spent time apart so that one or the other of them would be present to administer their two households; they formed a domestic partnership. Francesco was the ultimate authority, expecting daily reports, and Margherita was his deputy. She had considerable freedom of action in overseeing apprentices, visitors, and harvests, and believed that carrying out her responsibilities well brought personal honor. In spite of his quibbles, Francesco’s confidence in her was apparent, and, between them, their households, defined broadly, functioned smoothly.

DeSilva, Jennifer Mara

Session 2A

(Eastern Connecticut State University)

“Secular Ceremonies in a Liturgical World B Weddings at the Vatican Palace, 1483-1521”

In the early modern period getting married was a mix of legal, religious, and social acts that altogether proclaimed the union of two people, two families, and two sets of possessions. Although the Church had formally established marriage as a sacrament in 1439, through the sixteenth century the act of marrying retained this tripartite identity, even in papal Rome. From 1484 to 1521 there were eight weddings held at the Vatican Palace of variously the pope’s children or nieces/nephews. These unions had significant political importance, but also held an unusual place in the papal court’s ritual life. Within an environment that was predominantly male, celibate, and focused almost exclusively on liturgical ceremonies, the legal and lay social rituals of these weddings strike an illicit chord. This paper will examine the papal Master of Ceremonies’ (Johann Burchard, Paris de’ Grassi) reactions to these weddings over five pontificates.

Drummond, Anna

(University of Melbourne, Australia)

Session 2A

“The Matrimony of Mary: A cross-cultural comparison of the Iconography of the Marriage of the Virgin in European Art of the Renaissance”

During the Renaissance, many hundreds of images of the Marriage of the Virgin were produced in Europe, generally as part of narrative cycles illustrating Mary’s life. Artists portrayed the holy couple performing the nuptial rites practiced in their own region, depicting the gestures and settings with which they were familiar. As a result, the iconography of the subject varies greatly between northern and southern Europe, as well as within Italy, reflecting the diversity of marriage rituals on the continent during this period. While this tendency has been noted by a range of iconographic studies, it has not been explored in any detail. By presenting a range of images of the Marriage of the Virgin from both Italy and northern Europe, this paper explores the impact of marriage rites on the gestures, settings and participants portrayed in images of Mary and Joseph’s wedding.

Dunn, Caroline

(Clemson University)

“Marriage by Capture in Late Medieval England”

Session 5B

Marriage by capture survived in England until the close of the middle ages, despite the promulgation of anti-abduction legislation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These royal statutes, targeting complicit abductions (elopements), failed victims of forced marriages because women could not accuse their ravishers once coercive nuptials had been solemnized (a wife could not prosecute her husband). Marital predators especially targeted wealthy widows, because they were less closely guarded than heiresses, and their inheritance was easier to access. These widows forced into remarriage hardly fit the Chaucerian Wife of Bath paradigm of the merry, lusty widow eager to find a new husband. Indeed, recent investigations into remarriage rates of late medieval and early modern widows largely reverse the stereotype. During the fifteenth century lawmakers finally recognized the problem of widows stolen and pressured to remarry, and enacted two more statutes designed to thwart and punish such kidnappings.

Frank, Karen Anne

(University of California, Santa Barbara)

“Jewish Wives and Property in late Medieval Perugia”

Session 8A

This paper explores the range of economic opportunities available to Jewish wives in the central Italian town of Perugia in the later Middle Ages. That there were any such opportunities is exceptional, since medieval rabbinic law severely restricted wives' financial autonomy. Wives could inherit property, but were not legally allowed to manage it. Instead, the law gave all control of wives' assets to their husbands; the latter were the only heirs to their wives' properties. And yet, the oft repeated injunction that the role of a woman was to be a “good” wife, caring for her husband and the household, necessitated women's involvement in the material affairs of their families. Notarial evidence suggests that in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Perugia, married Jewish women's financial dealings sometimes extended far beyond the household budget, and included managing—and sometimes owning—family businesses and assets, as well as designating their own heirs.

Grendler Paul

(University of Toronto)

Session 7B

“A Virgin for a Prince: Gonzaga Marriages Between Honor and Politics”

During the early modern period an impressive amount of European medical works were works devoted to love melancholy. Not only did the volume of writing increased dramatically, special attention was given to the social roots of the disorder, as is clear from the discussions on its etiology and therapy. Physicians were in agreement that only by union with the love object would the patients be healed completely. Difference in their bluntness corresponds to the social realities regarding love and marriage in their countries. Some state that this union can be realized only in accordance with divine and human laws, others directly attack the legal and social obstacles which prevent young couples from being joined in marriage. My aim is to show that medical discussion itself served as a technique to deal with the social distress: pathologizing love on one hand and prescribing love marriage on the other. My research focuses on three cases: French and English societies and the Italian Jewish communities.

Guenther, Genevieve

(University of Rochester)

“The Theology of Marriage in *The Winter’s Tale*”

Session 5B

In *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Lee Edelman argues that the politics of modernity are grounded on a secular theology of futurity at once manifested in and symbolized by the child produced by the affective heterosexual marriage. *The Winter’s Tale* stages Leontes’ conversion to precisely this secular theology of futurity, but it also encodes that theology as a form of idolatry, by conflating Leontes’ final devotion to his wife with his willingness to legitimate the idolatrous magic that seems to animate her (“if this be magic,” he famously proclaims, “let it be an art / Lawful as eating”). *The Winter’s Tale* thus marks the historical moment in which modern affective marriage contested theological norms to establish itself as the locus of men’s hopes for their own immortality.

Guerson, Alexandra
(University of Toronto)

Session 4A

“Marriage, polygamy, and the protection of Jewish autonomy in the late fourteenth-century Crown of Aragon”

The issue of polygamy has loomed large in studies of Jewish marriage and family life. By the twelfth century Northern European Jews had outlawed polygamy, under penalty of banishment from the community. In the Crown of Aragon the practice persisted but, as I shall show in my paper, by the late fourteenth century it had become restricted to cases of a sterile marriage. While in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, monarchs were quick to give licenses of polygamy under the assumption that the practice was indeed permitted under Jewish law and in exchange of a hefty sum, by the 1370s-1380s, this picture had changed and licenses were issued specifically to procure an heir. A study of cases of bigamy not only sheds light on Jewish family life in the Crown of Aragon but also tells us much about royal policy towards Jews in the decades before the violence of 1391.

Hickson, Sally

(University of Guelph)

Session 7B

“The Compromise Bride: The Marriage of Margherita Paleologo”

In 1531 Margherita Paleologo, princess of Monferrato (d.1566) wed Federico II Gonzaga, the first Duke of Mantua. Their union occurred only after the death of Margherita’s older sister Maria, who had originally been betrothed to Federico, and at the height of his long affair with Isabella Boschetti, the wife of Francesco Calvisano Gonzaga of Mantua. The marriage between Mantua and Monferrato was brokered between two powerful mothers, Anna d’Alencon and the formidable Isabella d’Este, and happened only after failed negotiations between Federico and the Neapolitan princess Giulia of Aragon. While the marriage has been examined in the context of Federico’s own political ambitions, this paper examines Margherita Paleologo’s role; as the compromise bride, the first Duchess and, eventually, widow and co-regent of her children and co-ruler of Mantua alongside her brother-in-law Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, with whom she assumed a new role as pious widow, dutiful mother and public spouse to the Mantuan state.

Hutton, Shennan

(Napa, CA)

Session 5A

“Mixed Marriages: Family Strategies and Choosing Spouses Across the Noble-Burgher and Rural-Urban Divides”

In late medieval Europe, poor noble families bettered their fortunes by marrying a son to a wealthy burgher heiress. But in Ghent, the second-largest city in northern Europe in the fourteenth century, every woman from the urban elites held property from her family’s “patrimony,” typically a mixture of urban and rural land, annuities, and investments, and wives had considerable rights to manage their personal property during the marriage. By rural feudal custom, however, land held in fief was supposed to pass down along the patrilineage, and preserving the family patrimony was crucial to noble families. This paper investigates contracts and legal judgments recorded in the annual registers of the aldermen of Ghent to examine how noble-burgher couples and their extended families negotiated gender roles in property management. It will also compare this evidence from actual practice with the ideals expressed in courtesy books, courtly literature and the new Flemish burgher literature.

Kooistra, Milton

Session 3B

(Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Toronto)

“The Challenges of Clerical Marriage in Reformation Strasbourg (1523-1532)”

Marriage and the taking out of citizenship were the two most common ways of publicly announcing one's conversion to the evangelical movement. Anton Firn, parish priest of St Thomas in Strasbourg, led the way by marrying his housekeeper in November 1523. Many fellow priests followed suit, including the chief reformer, Wolfgang Capito, provost of St Thomas, who married in 1524. This paper, based primarily on the correspondence of Capito, will examine the challenges faced by the Strasbourg reformers as they struggled to overcome their vows of celibacy and enter into godly unions. These clerical marriages provoked a bitter response from the Catholic contingent in Strasbourg, which threatened the course of the Reformation and the stability of the city. Attention will also be given to the process of finding a wife, dealing with concubines and illegitimate children.

Koss, Stephen James

(Graduate Center, CUNY)

Session 6B

“Unhappily Ever After: Monstrous Desire and Interfaith Marriages”

This paper will argue that medieval interfaith marriages constituted not simply questions of appropriate marital theology and long winded discussions of concerning the meaning of “disparity of cult.” Rather, these unions contained the virulent power to imperil the very humanity of the believer. Originally, this paper began as an investigation of the efficacy of medieval interracial marriage. Initially, I suspected that these marriages could be validated if bodily changes occurred as two individuals of drastically different bodies demonstrated physical manifestations of becoming one flesh. As my studies progressed, however, the validity of interracial marriages gave way to the queer possibilities that this desire opened up within the body. In the heady mix of sacramental marriage, formed of consent, sex, affection, and desire, marriage functions as a became a catalyst, taking on a Eucharistic power to transubstantiate not only the bodies, but the very form of being the commingled parties. With the grudging admission that sex happens, medieval canonists were forced to investigate what actually *happens* in sex. Their exploration produced a broad spectrum of acts and issues that could be considered sexual in nature and thus productive of a bodily change. At the same time, prevailing attitudes characterized the bodies of Christianity’s “others” (such as Jews, Arabs,) as debased and corrupted. The desire between a human and such bodies thus opens an interstice through which the bestial other jeopardizes not only the body of the believer, but also his or her humanity. In this way, these marriages might provide a fascinating tool for addressing the recent queer recognition that a challenge to embodiment must entail bankrupting both the classification of the human as well as what counts as a viable life.

Lee, Becky

(York University)

Session 2A

“Marriage Rites and Churching Rites: Complementary Strategies for Inculcating Clerical Marriage Reforms”

Marriage rites and churching rites made their way into the liturgical life of the medieval Christian Church around the same time, yet little attention has been paid to their relationship. Michael Sheehan and Christopher Brooke have established that marriage rites, which encouraged the celebration of marriage in public at the door of the church in front of a priest, promoted and reinforced the consensual model of marriage and the Church’s jurisdiction over it. This paper will examine the relationship between those marriage rites and churching rites, arguing that churching rites, which were also publicly celebrated at the door of the church before a priest, played as important a role as marriage rites in promoting and reinforcing the consensual model of marriage and clerical jurisdiction over it. Marriage rites and churching rites were, in fact, complementary strategies for inculcating the eleventh-century clerical marriage reforms.

Leushuis, Reinier

(Florida State University)

Session 6C

“ ‘Col publicamento del matrimonio sgannar ciascuno’: Marriage and Betrothal in Bandello=s *Novelle*”

Bandello’s novellas exploit the tragic consequences of the ecclesiastical position that marriages contracted merely by the partners’ spoken words of consent, i.e. without a priest, witnesses, bans, and parental consent, fulfill the sacrament and are indissoluble. Social historians and literary critics have focused on the ‘clandestinity’ of these unions, in particular in the cases of impatient lovers seeking to avoid family ordained marital bonds. While Bandello, a cleric with ties to the aristocracy, features this situation (e.g. in the Romeo and Juliet story), I argue that several novellas prefigure a shift in perspective from ‘legal vs. clandestine’ marriage toward marriage as opposed to betrothal: while marriage is contracted *publicly* in the present tense, betrothal is a *private* and non-binding promise in the future tense to eventually solemnize the matrimonial bond (a distinction that would not be institutionalized until after Trent). In close textual readings my paper studies how Bandello’s narrative dynamics exploit this shift and the social confusion it triggered.

Luckyj, Christina

(Dalhousie University)

Session 3B

“Marriage and Politics in ‘Feminist’ Polemic: Rereading Rachel Speght’s *Mouzell*”

Criticized in the 1980s for her "weak . . . religious orientation" and described as "hobbled by her faith," apologetically defended in the 1990s for assuming "the only possible position from which to confront Joseph Swetnam's misogyny within the terms of the woman debate," Rachel Speght in her much-anthologized *Mouzell for Melastomus* (1617) is now largely viewed as a radical re-reader of patriarchal religious discourse for protofeminist ends. However, such gender-inflected readings miss Speght's engagement with contemporary religious politics, and specifically with politically subversive Puritan doctrines of marriage also evident in the contemporary sermons of male preachers such as William Whately and William Gouge. When, in a 1604 address to parliament, King James renaturalized the political marriage metaphor, claiming, "I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; I am the head, and it is my body," he opened a space for the analogy between marriage and politics to serve as a foundation for contractually-based resistance theory. In 1617, the same year Speght's *Mouzell* was printed, William Whately's *A Bride-bush: A Wedding Sermon* (1617) asserted that in "this domesticall kingdome" of marriage, "most men governe not well, because they doe wholly serve themselves in governing, and not the wife" (21). The political charge of Whately's text, and especially his support for divorce, eventually led to his censure by the High Commission in 1621. If a woman's rights within marriage could come to signify the rights of the subject under a monarch, Speght's own contribution to marital literature in the guise of a counter-attack on Joseph Swetnam can, I argue, similarly be seen as articulating the conscience of a country bitterly opposed to an increasingly autocratic monarch. "Yet a truth ungainsayable is it, that the Man is the Woman's Head, by which title yet of Supremacie, no authoritie hath hee given him to domineere, or basely command and imploy his wife, as a servant; but hereby is he taught the duties which hee oweth unto her," asserts Speght. This paper will argue that, in political terms, Speght's marriage discourse in her *Mouzell* becomes a coded critique of incorrigible absolute monarchy.

McCue Gill, Amyrose
(Cornell University)

Session 6C

“Spousal Relations on the Italian Renaissance Stage (1520-1530)”

Based upon an eclectic blend of material from late medieval and Renaissance *novelle*, ancient Roman theatre and contemporary oral tradition, the humorous, carnivalesque and often obscene plays of the early Cinquecento became incredibly popular as public entertainment in Italy, especially among the upper classes. This paper focuses upon the representation of marriage in three Italian comedies composed during the 1520s: Aretino’s *Il Marescalco*, Beolco’s *La Moscheta*, and the Accademia degli Intronati’s *Gl’Ingannati*. By exploring the ways in which the *commedie* rework, parody and critique conjugal ideals from the previous century, I ask how these rich literary sources actively engaged with pressing contemporary debates on marriage, and show how early sixteenth-century *drammaturgi* simultaneously delighted audiences with ribald jests and produced a textual venue for serious commentary on the complex socio-political institution that is Renaissance marriage.

McDougall, Sara

(Yale University)

“Bigamy in Late-Medieval France”

Session 4A

In fifteenth-century Northern France, how was bigamy practiced and prosecuted? What patterns of behavior can be found in the cases of men and women accused of bigamy, and how were these alleged bigamists prosecuted and punished for their crimes? To answer these questions, this paper turns to the fifteenth-century records of the officiality court of Troyes. Drawing on sentences passed against bigamists by the bishop of Troyes' judicial official, this paper aims to reconstruct the strategies adopted by male and female bigamists. These records show bigamists engaged repeatedly in the same tactics. They also reveal much about the underlying priorities and circumstances of the men and women who sought out second marriages in this time and place. Turning from the practitioners of bigamy to those court officials who brought them to justice, we seek out these judges' motivations and concerns in the prosecution and punishment of bigamy.

McSheffrey, Shannon
(Concordia University)

Session 7C

“Law and Legal Record as Marriage Strategy in Late Medieval London”

In January 1488, Agnes Skern, a gentleman’s widow, was one of the litigants in a three-cornered marriage suit brought before the Consistory Court of the bishop of London. Both Agnes and another widow named Margaret Niter claimed to have made a contract (a binding vow) of marriage with the same man, Piers Curtes. Through the detailed depositions from this case and a substantial number of other surviving records concerning the litigants and those attached to them, I will explore how Agnes Skern pursued litigation and, in particular, what role documents or legal records played in that strategy. In doing so, I hope to elucidate both the choices faced by a young widow of substantial wealth but ongoing legal problems, and the role played by law and legal records in late medieval Londoners’ social negotiations.

Nardizzi, Vin

(University of British Columbia)

“The Marital Graft in Sidney’s *Old Arcadia*”

Session 4B

In *The Old Arcadia* (ca. 1580), the manuscript romance Philip Sidney composed after retiring from court in the wake of his untoward intervention in Elizabeth’s marriage negotiations with the Duke of Anjou, Pamela, the elder daughter of a duke, and the duke Musidorus carve “pretty knots” into the bark of trees. These eloping lovers, the narrator tells us, “tied together the names of Musidorus and Pamela, sometimes intermixedly changing them to Pamedorus and Musimela.”

I argue that this example of inscriptional improvisation on the surface of trees constitutes a marital graft, not merely in the sense that it is an act of *graphesis*. It also wittily engages discourses of plant grafting, the horticultural practice often described in Elizabethan “how-to” guides for gardening as a conjugal “mixing” of disparate plants and which required grafters to carry a penknife on their tool belts for incising small cuts into the bark of stock trees. Sidney’s romance, then, not only dangerously glances once again at Elizabeth’s marital affairs (Musidorus almost rapes Pamela just after their dalliance in tree-writing), but, more importantly, it keys us into a green vocabulary for imagining dynastic marriage and sex in early modern Europe. Tellingly, at the end of the romance, we learn that the fruit of Musidorus and Pamela’s marital graft is a “fair daughter” named Melidora.

Parker, Heather

(University of Guelph)

Session 5A

“The Management of Marriage in Pre-Reformation Scotland: Family Power and Social Status”

Despite ecclesiastic efforts, marriage among the late medieval Scottish noble and merchant classes was often governed by secular ambitions. Drawing upon marriage contracts from family papers, notaries' books, and burgh records, this paper will examine the familial strategy in the contraction of these marriages in pre-reformation Scotland. The early contracts and court records will be compared with the development of marriage patterns in the years after the reformation in Edinburgh, highlighting similarities and differences among the wide range of social classes that were included in the new system of record keeping. I will focus on questions of power in the creation of marriages between families interested in controlling the exchange of money and advancing their social status. I will also examine the balance of power between parents and their children in the development of these marriage agreements.

Pedersen, Frederik Jakob Galster
(University of Aberdeen, Scotland)

Session 8C

“Privates on Parade: Impotence and the Medieval English Church Courts”

The Impediment of Impotence appears relatively infrequently as an argument for the annulment of marriage in medieval English cause papers. Although the number of impotence cases is relatively small, the fact that so few men successfully defended themselves against the charge of impotence requires explanation. The paper will show that most surviving impotence cases deal with persons with relatively common genital malformations. This paper will investigate the English Cause paper material anew and suggest a further reason: the men who failed the court's examination of their potency were suffering from identifiable physical malformations of their genitals that made it impossible for them to function sexually and will include analyses of social and gender issues arising from a consideration of the legal evidence.

Peterson, Lesley

(University of North Alabama)

Session 8B

“To Have and to Hold Still: Marriage and Monumentalizing in Early Modern English Drama”

Both Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2* and Elizabeth Cary’s *Tragedy of Mariam* dramatize the monumentalizing impulse directed by powerful men at wives who are also queens and to some degree captives: an impulse evident both during and after the women’s deaths. Marlowe’s grieving Tamburlaine finds the strength to continue living in the moment he decrees that Zenocrate’s corpse be embalmed and preserved uninterred to accompany him on his journeys; Elizabeth Cary’s Herod makes the continued survival of his queen Mariam dependent upon her willingness to imitate the marble fixity of a statue, a performance on which his own sanity also depends. Both texts script complex performances that engage Restoration debates on idolatry and materialism, Renaissance conventions of commemoration, the discourse of the emerging science of anatomy, and changing models of marriage through their treatments of that unfixable liminal figure: the theatrical representation of the regal, wifely body.

Prajda, Katalin

(Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italy)

Session 7A

“Unions of Interest; Marriage and Economical Strategies among Florentine Merchants in Medieval Hungary”

The aim of this paper is to analyse the connections between spouse selection and economic ties throughout the case of a Florentine *consorteria*. In medieval families marriage had important role in maintaining not only social, but economic connections among fellow citizens. The present investigation considers a magnate family, the Scolari and their marriage ties which were usually overlapped by economic relations. Strong evidence for conscious selection among suitors is seen in the relations between the Scolari and several other families inside their business circle. Relationships between kin did not end with the death of the spouse but were reshaped on the basis of common economic interests or with a new marriage. The paper focuses on Pipo Spano's network and that of his counterparts in the Hungarian Kingdom and take into consideration the phenomena of successful marriage politics which provided not only economic but political advantage to Florentine families.

Procida, Alysa

(University of Toronto)

“Representations of Marriage in the N-Town *Mary Plays*”

Session 8B

The late fifteenth-century plays in the N-Town cycle dealing with the early life of the Virgin contain two of the most depictions of marriage within the cycle: that of Mary and Joseph and Mary’s parents, Joachim and Anna. In this paper, I examine the plays’ significant deviations from their source material in order to highlight the importance of gender and power relations presented onstage. While *The Marriage of Mary and Joseph* draws extensively on the fabliau tradition in order to minimize Joseph’s masculinity, *Joachim and Anna* makes significant changes to its source in the *Protevangelium* in order to diminish Anna’s role by staging the only extant depiction of their meeting in Jerusalem with Anna crawling on her knees. Though Joachim and Anna’s marriage seems calculated to mediate the relative unorthodoxy of Mary and Joseph’s marriage, this tension creates particularly interesting models of marriage in medieval East Anglia.

Rothman, E. Natalie

Session 7C

(University of Toronto, Scarborough)

“ ‘To remove the occasion for scandal’: Same-sex love, homosocial domesticity, and patriarchal authority in inter-imperial relations”

In the summer of 1588, Giovanni Moro, the Venetian bailo (resident consul) in Istanbul, sent a secret report to the Heads of the Council of Ten, the highest security authority in Venice. Attached to the report was a transcript of the interrogation of some sixteen people, mostly current or former employees resident in the bailo’s house. Their testimonies revolved around a scandal, which the bailo was keen to keep from Ottoman officials’ ears: a love affair that had blossomed between two young men under his employ, a local apprentice dragoman (diplomatic interpreter) and a Venetian barber-surgeon. By following these testimonies and situating the affair in the context of the foreign diplomatic milieu of early modern Istanbul, this paper explores contemporary perceptions of same-sex love, intimacy, homosocial domesticity, and patriarchal authority in the European-Ottoman contact zone.

Rothstein, Marian

(Carthage University)

“Clandestine Marriage in Sixteenth-Century France”

Session 2B

Marriage was both sacrament of the Church and a tool for civil order. It became a battle ground in the struggles between France and the Papacy. Matrimonial politics had a major role in building the fortunes of great noble houses and alliances among European powers. Given this, clandestine marriage, a binding marriage based on a private exchange vows, possible in the absence of witnesses or clergy, presented a real threat to the social order. In France, clandestine marriages were effectively outlawed by an edict of Henri II in 1557. I will examine the causes and intent of this edict and the status of clandestine marriage in France before and after Council of Trent which eliminated the practice (1563) by very different means. (The decrees of Trent were not accepted by the Gallican Church but analogous procedures were instituted.) I will also consider clandestine marriages in sixteenth-century novels which use them to enhance their plots, and consider how chaste heroines looked like women living in sin to readers a generation later, unable to recognize clandestine marriages.

Scarci, Manuela

(University of Toronto)

Session 6C

"He Loves Me Not: Della Casa and the Question of Marriage"

Most likely written in Rome in 1537 but set in Venice, Giovanni Della Casa's *Quaestio lepidissima An uxor sit ducenda* was first published in 1733. Finding his inspiration in classical Greek and Roman literary tradition, but also in earlier Italian literature, in it Della Casa has a venerable old Venetian Senator instruct a group of young noble men, in whom he detects a propensity for marriage, on the perils of taking a wife. The formulation of the issue in these terms opens the door to some of the most virulent diatribes against women in Italian Renaissance. As this is not a dialogue, the injurious accusations remain unanswered and go unchallenged.

Critics of Della Casa's treatise maintain that is a literary *divertissement* whose main characteristics are rhetorical and comical in nature. The ideology of the brief tract has been ignored beyond the usual remarks that it is fitting and usual for the time, especially as it seems to be undercut by humour and irony. The author, of course, is better known for his treatise on manners titled *Il Galateo*; *An uxor* shares with that many a trait. I propose to look at the short treatise in light of these common traits and against the background of other similar contemporary treatises, both in Latin and in Italian vernacular, to argue that the ideology it promotes is less harmless than it seems at first and that, much like *Il Galateo*, it can be read as a manifesto expressing principles and presuppositions that governed Della Casa's world.

Shadis, Miriam
(Ohio University)

Session 4A

“Sexual Politics: Marriage, Concubinage, Historians and the court of Jaume I of Barcelona-Aragon”

According to his own *Book of Deeds*, King Jaume I of Aragon and Barcelona had a sexually fraught marriage to his first wife, Leonor of Castile. An (un)fortunate discovery of consanguinity enabled Jaume to divorce Leonor and turn his attention to rescuing the Countess of Urgell, Aurembiaix, from threatening neighbors. Historians have assumed this relationship was sexual, and indeed have read the charter whereby Aurembiaix handed over her county to the king as a “concubinage contract.” Based on recent historiography on Aurembiaix, queenship, and Jaume himself, as well as my research in the Crown of Aragon Archives this past summer, I argue that sex (and the promise or absence thereof) formed a key element of the evolution of the king’s power, even as it was freed from the constraints of marriage.

Smith, Jamie
(Alma College)

Session 5C

“Keeping It Together: Marriage, Family, and the *Albergo*”

In scholarly studies on marriage, the creation and the dissolution of the union have received the most attention. To complement the current body of research, this paper examines what happened during marriage using late thirteenth-century Genoa as a case study. Contrary to the ideal, many Genoese men spent significant time away from the commune and relied on a kin network, which often included their wives, to maintain the family. Genoese wives functioned not only as the heads of the domestic households, but also the public ones. This paper incorporates new research on Genoese families and their respective *albergo* (the formal and spatial alliance of families in the commune) to determine if there was a correlation between intra-*albergo* marriage and wives in positions of prominence in the legal records. The paper also asks if understanding what was likely to happen during marriage affected the choice of marriage partner.

Smith III, William E.

(Indiana University)

“Anne Wentworth=s Apocalyptic Marriages”

Session 5C

Anne Wentworth, a seventeenth-century English Anabaptist, wrote three fascinating tracts in the late 1670s that revolve around marriage. Wentworth describes her highly dysfunctional and at times violent union with her unnamed husband. She labors to justify publicly her bold actions of setting up a separate household, which includes keeping her daughter in her custody, while her husband rallies their congregational leaders in an attempt to force her return. This narrative grips the reader, but it is Wentworth’s second marriage to Jesus and related phenomena that makes Wentworth a compelling marital case study. In this paper I argue that Wentworth performs an innovative and highly unconventional deployment of both apocalyptic theology and visionary experience. Wentworth connects her heavenly and earthly marriages in order to both justify her separation from her husband and to dramatically relocate the center of salvation history onto her first marriage.

Soranzo, Matteo

(McGill University)

Session 2B

“When Elegy Encountered Marriage: Self-Fashioning and Intertextuality in Giovanni Pontano’s *De Amore Coniugali*”

In this paper I combine literary analysis and intellectual history in order to rethink the significance of Giovanni Pontano's nuptial elegies *De Amore Coniugali* in the context of Quattrocento humanism. Latin, Courtly and Petrarchan poets acquainted readers with different portraits of lovers, whose common feature is their unmarried status. Based on a work of revision of these three traditions, Giovanni Pontano constructed himself as the first "elegiac husband," who celebrates the joys of marriage and the birth of his son in the language of Catullus and Propertius. Pontano's collection is generally approached as a strictly literary experiment and investigated exclusively in its dialogue with Latin sources. However, I propose to frame *De Amore Coniugali* in the context of humanistic treatises on (or against) marriage, and to read it as a highly innovative and even polemical literary experiment whose primary goal is to construct a new figure of poet and scholar.

Sperling, Jutta Gisela
(Hampshire College)

Session 8A

“Dotal Marriage and Domestic Partnerships in Early Modern Portugal”

Requests for marriage dispensations at the Holy Penitentiary show that in sixteenth-century Portugal, clandestine marriages or domestic unions were ubiquitous. Despite the marriage reform of the Council of Trent, Portuguese kings reaffirmed until the 17th century and beyond that marriages among commoners were based on mutual consent, joint ownership, and cohabitation. My analysis of notarial acts from 15th, 16th, and 17th century Lisbon shows that women profited materially from the informal nature of marital partnerships: widows inherited from their deceased husbands, daughters from their parents, and illegitimate children from their fathers. In contrast to Renaissance Italy, where dotal exchange came to be practiced even by the virtually propertyless, marriages among Portuguese aristocrats resembled the more egalitarian arrangements of couples establishing joint ownership.

Spierling, Karen E.
(Ohio State University)

Session 6B

“Making Marriages, Breaking Boundaries in Reformation Geneva”

In mid-sixteenth-century Geneva, church and city officials viewed the control of marriage as one key to safeguarding the independence and religious integrity of the city. Marriages were to be performed within the city only if both parties were faithful members of the Reformed Church, and Genevan inhabitants were forbidden from marrying Catholics outside of Geneva. But as this paper will discuss, some Genevans continued to make family alliances with Catholics, arranging for their children to marry Catholics outside of the city, and sometimes bringing Catholic spouses into Geneva. Using the records of the Consistory and City Council, this paper will address the following questions: How did Genevan inhabitants negotiate official policies regarding intermarriage with Catholics? And more generally, what can this specific case of Geneva tell us about the place of marriage at the intersection of social, religious, and political concerns in pre-modern Europe?

Tsoumis, Karine

(University of Toronto)

Session 3A

“Tokens of Matrimony: Medallic Portraits of Spouses in Early Modern Venice”

In Early Modern Italy, the portrait medal was a favoured means for the circulation of one’s likeness in multiple copies. Medals presenting portraits of married couples - with the profiles of husband and wife on each side – constitute a small portion of the corpus of surviving objects. Scholarship on marriage portraiture, however, has not addressed this phenomenon. Taking the Venetian Republic as a case study, I will push the boundaries of the genre and engage with this aspect of the material culture of marriage. In light of Venice’s matrimonial ideals, and considering how medallic portraits relate visually to representations of spouses in other media, the possible functions of the object will be discussed. Were such medals strictly commissioned to commemorate marriage and publicize family alliances? Or were they bound to other important events in the life of spouses and their families, such as births and deaths? Finally, by recreating a corpus of dual portrait medals, I will seek to assess if this was a predominantly Venetian phenomenon.

Wessell Lightfoot, Dana

(University of Texas, El Paso)

Session 8A

“The Power to Divide?: *Germania* Marriage Contracts in early Fifteenth-Century Valencia”

Using notarial contracts and court cases from 1419-1439 in the city of Valencia, this paper seeks to examine the relative power given to wives over their marital property, in two very different systems. The dotal regime, which mandated a separation of goods, was recognized by the prevailing legal code in Valencia. In contrast, the *germania*, based on a community of goods was not. Theoretically, the *germania* system was advantageous as it gave women access to the fruits of the marital union; however, in practice it held many drawbacks when marital relations broke down.

Williams, Deanne

(York University)

Isabelle de France, Child Bride”

Session 6A

Isabelle de France (1389-1409) married Richard II (1367-1400) in 1396, when she was just seven, and Richard twenty-nine. However, scholarship on Shakespeare's history play, *Richard II*, remains unwaveringly committed to the notion that Shakespeare transforms this historical figure into an adult woman. My paper argues that it is possible to read Shakespeare's character of Queen Isabel as a girl, and as a child. This is more consistent with Shakespeare's historical and poetic sources, in which the queen is famous for being a child bride. But it is also more dramatically effective, as it intensifies sympathy for her character and for the political alliance with France that she represents, thus providing a powerful counterpoint to the play's ostensibly pro-Bolingbroke trajectory. As my paper recovers the historical figure that informs Shakespeare's Isabel, it highlights the attitudes to and anxieties about child marriage that shape critical receptions and dramatic conceptions of this Shakespearean character.

Williams, Linda K.

(University of Puget Sound)

Session 3A

“Marriage in Mind: the Farnese Gallery and Iconographic Tradition”

Annibale Carracci’s Farnese Gallery frescoes (c. 1600), are some of the most celebrated works of the early baroque; however, scholars continue to debate the specific nature of the commission.

Do the frescoes relate to the marriage of Ranuccio Farnese and Margherita Aldobrandini? Or do they reveal the cultured taste of the patron, Cardinal Odoardo Farnese, in a celebration of the arts? This study concurs with Giovanni Pietro Bellori’s suggestion that the four pairs of fighting *putti* provided important evidence for the program, but not in the way that he imagined. By analyzing broad patterns of marital iconography, I argue that the vault was planned to address not just love, but marriage and dynasty in specific ways that have not been probed. Significant details and a long tradition of nuptial imagery reveal that the Gallery was executed, if not conceived, with the long-awaited marriage of the Farnese heir in mind.

Woodacre, Elena (Ellie)
(Bath Spa University, UK)

Session 6A

“The Queen=s Marriage: Matrimonial Politics in Pre-Modern Europe”

Although somewhat unusual, the laws of succession and inheritance in most kingdoms in Pre-Modern Europe did allow for the succession of women to the throne in the absence of male heirs. Matrimonial politics always played a vital role in building alliances and securing the frontiers of the realm, but the marriage of a Queen regnant or an heiress was an especially significant diplomatic opportunity. The selection of the Queen’s consort could have major positive or negative consequences for the realm. The right choice could bring new territory, a powerful warlord for the army and an able partner to rule alongside the Queen. The wrong choice however, could bring disastrous results; embroiling the country in war with its neighbours or destabilizing the realm internally through the creation of factions which supported or opposed the consort’s rule. This paper will explore the selection process for the Queen’s husband and discuss several relevant examples from the period 1200-1700 to highlight the possible ramifications of this momentous decision.

Zajac, Talia

(University of Toronto)

Session 6A

“Fratres ad Ruthenorum principem procedunt: Exile, Hospitality, and Marital Diplomacy under Yaroslav the Wise”

While for most of the pre-Mongol period (to 1240) Rus' princes pursued regional policies towards their neighbours, during the period of territorial unification under the sole rulership of Yaroslav “the Wise” (1036-1054) it is also possible to see a unified marriage policy, favouring union with western noble houses, outside the “Byzantine Commonwealth.” This paper aims to re-examine Yaroslav’s marital policies from the perspective of the Rus’ value of hospitality, drawing on Birnbaum’s study of Yaroslav’s Scandinavian roots. Yaroslav supported at least three exiled rulers during his reign: Harald Sigurtharson of Norway, Casimir of Poland, and Andrew of Hungary. The paper will explore both how the choice of Yaroslav’s courts as a place of refuge for these rulers was influenced by previous marriage alliances, and how the “debt of hospitality” was used by Yaroslav, in turn, to cement further alliances for his kin when these rulers were restored to power.