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Married women, law and wealth in 14th-century Genoa

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My aim here is to assess the relationship between the marital status of women and their ability to accrue wealth and dispose of it by drawing on multiple sources (especially statutes and notarial sources) and focusing specifically on non-dotal assets in 14th-century Genoa. During this period new norms were introduced in Genoa that echoed those which were being implemented in other north-central Italian cities. The late 13th-/early 14th-century Genoese statutes and the successive redaction of 1375 contain restrictive measures in regard to married women and wealth, but to what extent did practice fall squarely within these prescribed rules? Evidence in notarial sources suggests that while women continued to enjoy some leeway (especially when expressing their last wishes), law and practice largely coincided. This is especially evident in the tendency of married women to give full mandate to husbands to manage their personal property and in the conceptual assimilation of non-dotal assets to the dowry.

Female agency, 14th-century Genoa, succession, legal history

Identifying what exactly was part of a married woman's personal fund beyond the dowry is remarkably complex.¹ During the period under scrutiny, most north-central Italian communes introduced norms that largely hampered married women from acquiring and administering property.² But despite increasingly hostile legislation, the notion of non-dotal assets being a separate kind of fund remained.³ In this sense Genoa is paradigmatic. Abundant notarial sources, dating from as

early as the mid-12th century, enable to evaluate the developments of these practices from the abrogation of the *tercia*⁴ in 1143 – traditionally held as a watershed – throughout the medieval centuries.

Elsewhere, I have already discussed the developments in the practices connected with the transmission and management of non-dotal assets in 12th- and 13th-century Genoa, where a specific term – *extrados* – was sometimes used to indicate non-dotal goods in order to establish a clear line of demarcation between the property of husband and wife.⁵ Though direct references to the fund in private sources are scattered, these have helped to elucidate how as early as from the late 12th century, and therefore much ahead of developments in municipal legislation, there was already a tendency to limit female autonomy in managing non-dotal assets.⁶

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1. I have chosen to focus on married women and exclude widows because upon reaching widowhood women no longer needed to differentiate between their dowry and non-dotal assets. By contrast, since during marriage the dowry was administered by the husband, it is obvious that whenever a married woman is registered as a stipulating party, it is her non-dotal property which is at stake.
2. On the gradual restriction of female rights in north-central communes see Bellomo 1961, p. 5 ff.; 163 ff. Among the studies which address the issue of the restriction of female rights Kuehn 1991, 2017; Chabot 1998, 2006; Feci 2004.
3. On this specific matter, Kirshner 2015.

4. The widow's right to a third part of her late husband's belongings; see n. 2.

5. Inserting the term *extrados* in documents could prove essential in case of a *post-mortem* litigation, for example, for widows to recover property that was rightfully theirs, see Bezzina forthcoming.

6. Bezzina forthcoming.

The issue must be considered against the backdrop of the peculiar social landscape of 14th-century Genoa. The last three decades of the 13th century saw the development of the *alberghi* – a system of closed districts gathering two or more aristocratic kin groups who pledged to use a common *cognomen*. During the 14th century these family consortia became the very backbone of the city's social structure. While scholarship has traditionally associated these confederacies with enhanced patriliney, it is still unclear how this development in the structure of kinship impinged on the status of females in late medieval Genoa.⁷ Besides these changes in the city's social fabric, the economic situation, and especially the demographic crises of the 14th century, must also have played their part in defining attitudes towards female wealth.⁸ As we shall see, however, it is not simple to determine how these developments impacted women in allowing them lesser or broader margins of freedom.

Here I intend not only to chart the changes in women's property and inheritance rights *vis à vis* practice, but, more broadly, I will attempt to trace a chronology of the evolution of the notion of *extrados* over the long term. To define the extent to which women could acquire and, above all, if and how they could manage their own property I will tackle the issue from two main angles. I will first address the main developments in the city's legal framework during the 14th century and ascertain to what degree Genoese legislators followed in the footsteps of other Italian cities.⁹ I will then focus

on evidence from multiple sources – but especially notarial deeds –¹⁰ with the aim to assess if these developments are evident in practice.

MARRIED WOMEN AND THE LAW

Throughout the period under scrutiny the chance for women to accrue personal funds beyond their dowries cut across the lines of traditional social boundaries: married women from all social ranks could amass non-dotal funds. Aside from women who practiced a trade, and who therefore could enjoy a regular income, most women acquired wealth through testamentary legacies from relatives and close acquaintances. This was entirely discretionary, and frequently these bequests consisted in paltry sums of money or small tokens, mostly garments or other personal items of the testator or testatrix.¹¹ In order to gauge to what extent married women could access larger portions of wealth we have to consider how likely they were to inherit from their closer kin, and particularly from their fathers.

To this one might add that many died in intestacy. This consideration does not apply to just the poorer social groups who had little or no wealth at all to transmit to their heirs. Evidence from Florence suggests that even among the elites a large portion of the estates of some value passed in intestacy.¹² It follows that the rules of intestacy can help us determine the degree to which a good share of the female population was likely to acquire non-dotal assets.

7. The only study which addresses specifically the establishment and development of the *alberghi* is still Grendi 1975. A recent study focuses on one of the first *alberghi*, that of the Squarciafico, providing insights on the family dynamics underpinning this particular confederacy, Guglielmotti 2017. In her studies on Genoese society, Diane Owen Hughes has also tackled the issue, at least to a certain extent, Hughes 1975; 1977; 1983. More in general on 14th-century Genoese society see Petti Balbi 1995.

8. A comparison with Florence is befitting, here scholars have long established that the Black Death of 1348 and subsequent plagues favoured the passage of assets to females, see Chabot 2011, p. 24-27; Kirshner 2015, p. 80.

9. Two legal codes cover the period under scrutiny: the so-called Statutes of Pera, dates from the period spanning 1270 to 1318 (but contains provisions from earlier statutes). Though parts of the legal code concern exclusively the Genoese colony on the Bosphorus, the section regulating civil law coincides with the municipal code in force in Genoa. The second is the redaction of 1375, the

outcome of a reform of municipal law at the initiative of doge Domenico Fregoso. *Statuti Pera; Statuti 1375*. On the development of Genoese legislation see Braccia 2018 and Savelli 2003.

10. I have analysed the deeds of 33 different notaries gathered in 25 different cartularies preserved in the *Notai Antichi* section of the Archivio di Stato di Genova [henceforth, ASG], a sample of public debt ledgers (*Mutui e Compere*, dating from 1349, 1350, 1351, 1389, 1391), the few extant fragments of the 14th-century cadastres (*Antico Comune, Avariorum* and *Avariorum, Capitis et Posse*, dating from 1356-59, 1371, 1372, 1392), as well as public documents collected in the *Libri lurium*.

11. On the matter, Chabot 2001.

12. Specifically 50% of the cases in Renaissance Florence in which someone repudiated an inheritance involved an intestate estate, Kuehn 2008, p. 132-133. On intestacy in Florence see also Kuehn 2017, p. 167.

Scholars have long established that the rules of intestacy in force in the Italian communes did not follow the principle prescribed by Justinian's *Codex* and the *Digest* of equitable share among direct (male and female) descendants of (male and female) testators.¹³ In communal Italy municipal legislation on inheritance was largely tailored to support patrilineage and avoid the dissipation of sizeable patrimonies along the female line.¹⁴ The most notable example is certainly Florence, where successive norms introduced in the 14th and 15th centuries eventually resulted in precedence in intestate inheritances being given to male descendants, collaterals and ascendants.¹⁵

Genoa is no exception. Wills show that in practice dowered women started to be excluded from succession at least by the second half of the 12th century,¹⁶ but more precise provisions establishing the base line for succession were introduced in the late 13th-century legal code.¹⁷ The rules on intestacy are absent from the extant and incomplete manuscript of the Statutes of Pera. Notarial sources, however, suggest that the chapter may have been already present in this redaction (plausibly from 1316-1318),¹⁸ or in an «intermediate» statute dating from 1353-1356.¹⁹ At any rate, by the mid-14th century a chapter regulating intestacy which encapsulated the principle of male precedence was already present in municipal law.²⁰

Since this version has been lost, we do not know how broad the exclusion of females was in the period spanning the late 13th century to 1375. What is certain is that by virtue of the chapter *De femina tradita in matrimonium a patre vel a matre*, introduced certainly after 1270, dowered daughters were excluded from the inheritance of the parent who had provided their dowries.²¹

As stated, the first extant version of the rules of intestacy (*De successione ab intestato*) dates from 1375. The law established the rules of succession for both male and female inheritances.²² But the rubric is connected to the provision *De femina tradita*, and therefore in order to understand the degree of exclusion, the two rubrics must be read together.²³ The provision *De femina tradita* included in the statutes of 1375 substantially replicates the one in the late 13th-century redaction in establishing that dowered girls were excluded from succeeding the parent that had provided their dowries. The norm was amended in one key passage: it established that even undowered girls could only claim whatever their parents, and paternal and maternal grandparents bequeathed or donated to them in life. The article further specifies that in case of intestacy, it was up to *tres ex melioribus propinquis* of the deceased to decide on the share which the daughter(s) of the deceased would receive in dowry.²⁴ This means that like their contemporary

13. On the prescriptions of the *ius commune* see Kuehn 2017, p. 168-169.

14. See Bellomo 1961, p. 5 ff., and Niccolai 1940, p. 109 ff. More recent studies have explored legal developments in single cities. For Florence see Chabot 1998, 2011; Siena: Lumia-Ostinelli 2003; Bologna: Guiliodori 2005; Milan: Kuehn 2015; Venice: Bellavitis 1995; finally Pisa: S. Duval, and Turin: M. Gravela, both in this monographic issue.

15. Chabot 1998; 2011, p. 13-15.

16. On the exclusion in wills Mayali 1987; on wills in Genoa see Epstein 1984.

17. Provisions written in the first person date from an earlier period, see Braccia 2018.

18. See n. 10.

19. See Braccia 2018.

20. This is evident from an inventory, written in 1359, in which Antonio Cancelliere, *miles et legum doctor*, declared that he was to obtain his nephew's intestate inheritance, since it had to be transmitted *ad proximiorum agnatum masculum*, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 375, notary Nicolò di Bellignano, f. 81rv, 11 December 1359. Another document dated 1362 in the same register makes specific reference to a *rubrica De successione ab intestato* in force in Genoa, f. 122v, 5 January 1362.

21. *Statuti Pera*, cap. CXXXVI, p.132-134; Bezzina forthcoming. Commonly, the dowry was an obligation of fathers, which means that most daughters were excluded from the paternal inheritance. Notarial sources however, suggest that many mothers contributed to their daughters' dotal fund.

22. *si quis intestatus decesserit masculus vel femina: Statuti 1375*, p. 161-164. In this sense, commenting on a general tendency in north-central Italian cities, also on the basis of Niccolai's transcription of the early 15th-century Genoese statutes, Isabelle Chabot, was right in affirming that the Genoese rule of intestacy excluded girls from their mother's inheritance, Chabot 2006, p. 283. Niccolai's first part of the transcription, however, does not completely match the one in the Genoese statutes: he failed to report the lines which mention the chapter *De femina tradita* which is essential to understanding the breath of the exclusion, and that it applied only to the inheritance of the parent who provided the dowry, Niccolai 1940, p. 113-114.

23. As in Florence, Chabot 2011, p. 14-24.

24. *Et eodem modo ille que maritate non sunt petere non possint nisi quantum relinquerint sibi pater vel mater, avus vel avia paterna vel materna aut eisdem donaverit inter vivos vel in ultima voluntate*. This seemingly clashes with the norm stating that married girls were excluded from inheriting from whoever provided the dowry. The section that follows specifies that

Florentine and Bolognese counterparts, Genoese girls were not excluded because they had already been given a portion of their family's estate in dowry (*exclusio propter dotem*), but because of their gender (*exclusio propter masculos*).²⁵

The rubric *De successionibus ab intestato* established that an intestate inheritance had to be transmitted to direct male heirs (and their male heirs in the absence of surviving sons) who took precedence over their sisters and their heirs. In the absence of a direct male heir or his legitimate sons, the inheritance would pass to the brothers (full or agnate) of the deceased, or their heirs. If this was the case, the provision stipulated that they had to share the inheritance with any remaining direct female descendants (including female descendants of any deceased son) of the deceased, *descendentibus masculis vel feminis in stirpem*.²⁶ This means that in the absence of direct male heirs, and in the presence of second-degree male relatives (or their direct descendants) and daughters of the deceased, an inheritance could potentially be fragmented into multiple small quotas.

The late 14th-century statutes established further limitations for married women to amass wealth beyond their dowries. Men were supposed to supply fine objects and clothing to their wives, but a provision in the redaction of 1375 contained in the rubric *De legatis virorum ad uxores irritandis*, prohibited men in Genoa and its *districtus* (which roughly coincides with present day Liguria) from bequeathing to their wives any object that they did not bring with them into marriage.²⁷ It follows that married women were only temporary proprietors of the objects that surrounded them, and once marriage dissolved they could not take with them any item acquired during their union.²⁸

dowries of unmarried girls had to be funded from their father's patrimony, as if to acknowledge that it was up to fathers to dower their daughters.

25. In Bologna, the *exclusio propter masculos* was stipulated by virtue of the Statutes of 1335, with the subsequent compilations introducing tighter norms, Giuliadori 2005, p. 663-665. For comparison with Chabot 2011, p. 13-15.
26. See n. 22. Surviving ascendants retained right to usufruct. In compliance with Roman law, in order to leave all heirs even, married women were required to collate their dowries before obtaining their share of inheritance.
27. *Statuti* 1375, p. 158.
28. Interspousal gifts, which could easily be a way by which men could transmit (also informally) wealth to their wives (and of course vice versa, women to their husbands), were

Another provision is plausibly linked to the development of the *alberghi*. The rubric *De vendicione seu alienacione domorum in agnatos facienda* established that in sales of property located in the *contrata* in which the seller lived precedence was to be given to *proximiori agnato masculo usque in tertium gradum*.²⁹ This means that women were substantially hampered from purchasing property which belonged to their natal families, even if they were in possession of sufficient funds. As stated earlier, the characterizing feature of the *alberghi* was residential proximity, therefore the law was aimed at keeping property within the lineage, and avoiding the risk of key buildings being transmitted to other families via the female line.

By the second half of the 14th century (but plausibly before), the prospects of Genoese women of accessing a part of their family's inheritance, and other immovable or movable property saw a dramatic cutback. But possession and management are two separate spheres, and the notion of agency is inextricably connected to the capacity to dispose freely of one's property. During the same period, norms were introduced in municipal law of many north-central Italian cities establishing that any property a wife acquired during marriage had to remain under the husband's control, thereby hindering women from managing their personal possessions.³⁰ Genoese municipal law fails to regulate directly the management of

not prohibited by statute, though such prohibition was enforced by Roman civil law. Notarial sources have so far yielded no reference to this practice. It should be also noted that prohibitions of interspousal gifts are common in fifteenth-century municipal statutes. A *consilium* by Baldus de Ubaldis concerns precisely this prohibition in the Justinean legal code; the text will be published in a forthcoming two-volume transcription and translation of *consilia* provisionally-entitled *Jurists and jurisprudence in medieval Italy: texts and contexts* edited by Julius Kirshner and Osvaldo Cavallar.

29. *Statuti* 1375, p. 141. The same applied to rented property: *De locacionibus in agnatos et in confines faciendis*, p. 144-146.
30. For example, in Bergamo the statutes of 1331 stated that aside from inheritances or gifts, whatever a woman obtained during marriage became her husband's; in Milan, the 1498 statutes stipulated that unless part of an inheritance or the personal property a woman brought into marriage, any possession which a wife, mother or grandmother gained thereafter would go to their husbands, sons or grandsons respectively, Kuehn 2017, p. 132. In Florence, the 1325 statutes established that husbands had the right to use any income from property acquired by women during marriage, Kirshner 2015, p. 80-81.

non-dotal property.³¹ In theory therefore, Genoese married women retained the right to dispose of their non-dotal funds as they wished. However, severe limits to the ability of married women to act freely were imposed by virtue of the rubric *De vendicione minori set contractus valeat* which prohibited women from alienating goods valued at more than 10 *lire* without their husbands' formal consent.³² Ostensibly, the norm gave substantial control to husbands over their wives' possessions. In this sense, Genoese legislators were particularly precocious: a similar provision was introduced also in Milan, but more than two centuries later, in the Statutes of 1498.³³

The same rubric further established that any woman who intended to conclude a contract could only do so in the presence of two legal guardians (*consiliatores*) chosen among her close acquaintances and relatives.³⁴ The presence of legal guardians is actually recorded in contracts as early as from the late 12th century.³⁵ Certainly, in many cases – especially in transactions involving goods of little value and married women from the lower social echelons – the presence of legal guardians may have been a mere formality, but we cannot discount that these individuals could have some weight or exercise some form of pressure if the transaction concerned woman from the aristocracy.³⁶

The Genoese statutes of 1375 reiterated the norm established by the late 13th-century statutes, but the provision was further amended in one significant subsection.³⁷ It established a waiver for female retailers, who thereafter were free to sell and alienate goods as they wished without their husband's or legal guardian's consent. This discriminatory rule granted substantial agency to a specific segment of the female population,

certainly, but the need to include a waiver also suggests that the provision introduced in the late 13th century had served its purpose.

MARRIED WOMEN AND NON-DOTAL PROPERTY IN PRACTICE

How far, if at all, were these norms altered and thwarted in practice? Can we arrive at an (even if approximate) evaluation of the degree of wealth a woman could accumulate during marriage?

Given that a broad portion of inheritances were intestate, to a certain degree wills can be considered exceptions. Even so, they are still the clearest lens through which we can scrutinize personal inclinations towards family and lineage, degrees of wealth, and strategic ploys to manage it. Wills are also instrumental in determining the extent to which married daughters could aspire to gain additional funds from their natal families. The sample of wills collected for the present study is limited, certainly, but it will nonetheless enable to chart a few trends and elucidate male and female attitudes towards non-dotal assets.³⁸

To begin with, one might observe that only a few wills of male testators contain non-dotal legacies. Of course, personal inclinations mattered in deciding to transmit a share of one's wealth to married daughters. In 1330, for example, Leone, a member of the powerful della Volta family who joined the *albergo* Cattaneo, bequeathed 500 *lire* to his daughter Franceschina, wife of Guiberto Lercari, as well as 100 *lire* to his illegitimate daughter Violante, wife of Antonio Erminio, adding that he was leaving her the sum *pro adeguando ipsam cum aliis filiabus meis*.³⁹ Similarly, in

31. For the 13th century, Bezzina forthcoming. Here regional differences are evident. In Savona, non-dotal assets fell under the husband's control by virtue of the rubric *pro aliquis non possit petere ultra sortem pro extradotibus*, see *Statuta antiquissima Saone*, p. 183-184; Kirshner 2015, p. 280.

32. *Statuti Pera*, cap. CIX, p. 115-117 and Bezzina forthcoming.

33. Kuehn 2015, p. 423-424.

34. Guglielmotti forthcoming.

35. In Pisa, this practice was abolished in the 12th century, Storti Storchi 1998, p. 72. The matter needs to be addressed for other cities. For comparisons with Florence see Kuehn 1991, p. 212-237 and with southern Italy, Mainoni 2015.

36. Guglielmotti forthcoming; Bezzina forthcoming.

37. *Statuti* 1375, p. 134-138.

38. I have collected a sample of 108 wills (48 made by females) dating from the 14th-century, which are insufficient to determine discontinuities in the more general picture. In her study on 14th-century Genoese wills, Petti Balbi has analysed about 300 examples, providing a general overview of testamentary practices, but here again developments and regressions are not clearly evident, Petti Balbi 2010.

39. This could also have been a dowry increase. It is obviously impossible to ascertain whether Violante's husband added the sum to his wife's dotal fund, or if he allowed her a degree of freedom in administering it, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 192, notary Leonardo Osbergario, f. 93rv, 27 November 1330.

1377, a certain Lombardo de Vivaldo, declared his two sons as rightful heirs, but left 200 *lire* to his daughter Bianca, wife of Bertolotto *de Ardimetis*.⁴⁰ Although we are unable to calculate the size of aristocratic fortunes based on wills, we can comfortably assume that these allowances represented a meager portion of an aristocratic family's estate.

At the current state of research, we cannot assess whether in the absence of direct male heirs it was commonplace for aristocrats (both male and female) to override the rules of intestacy and give precedence to their daughters even in the presence of close male relatives; perhaps preferring to transmit broader quotas of their patrimony to fewer heirs, rather than having their estate fractioned into many undersized shares. This could have been a valid reason for preferring females, but we cannot discount that the aristocracy's proclivity for favouring patrilineage could have incited male testators to choose their brothers and nephews over married daughters, even if this entailed that their estates would be fractioned into smaller portions. Already in 1343 (and therefore before the introduction of the first extant rules of intestacy), Bernabò Cibo, an aristocrat, included a substitution clause in his will stipulating that if his two sons and heirs were to die without a legitimate heir, his estate would pass not to his two (at the time married) daughters, but to his four brothers.⁴¹

The wills of female testators can certainly be a more useful barometer for gauging both the degree of female agency and the wealth accumulated by married daughters. Even a cursory analysis of a few notarial registers reveals that many women chose to transmit their estates by resorting to a will, and when they did, our sources show that they were free to dispose of their property. Typically married women did not require their husbands' permission to express their last wishes:⁴² this accounts for the fact that in our sources male and female wills are almost equal in number.⁴³

40. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 255, notary Raffaele Beffignano, ff. 162v-163r, 12 November 1277.

41. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 229, notary Tommaso Casanova, f. 40r, 10 February 1343.

42. I have only found one exception, a certain Clara, a woman from the lower social classes expressly declared: *item dico quod maritus meus dedit mihi licentiam legandi et testandi ad meum beneplacitum*, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 332/I, notary Guidotto de Bracelli, f. 166v, 24 February 1338.

43. Also noted by Petti Balbi 2010, p. 155, who comments on

As elsewhere, small legacies to female relatives and acquaintances are a staple feature in wills of female testators.⁴⁴ Particularly prominent in wills of women from the lower social echelons, often these legacies consisted in garments and other personal items that could be easily monetized. Wills dating from the late 1330s mention the existence of various *doma feneratoris* – perhaps institutions that were forerunners of the *Monte di Pietà* – where these bequests could be pawned.⁴⁵ Objects therefore could represent a way for married women of the lower social classes to obtain immediate cash, plausibly paltry sums of money, which could be put to use without requiring their husband's consent.

The pattern of legacies in female wills is more varied but when it came to choosing their main heir we can observe a substantially uniform tendency. Unsurprisingly, in presence of direct male descendants, (especially aristocratic) women typically chose to follow the agnatic line. There are exceptions to the rule, certainly, but otherwise daughters or female relatives were largely excluded from the bulk of the estate and provided with either money for their dowries, a non-dotal fund, or a small legacy (as *falcidia* or *debito de iure nature*).⁴⁶ In this sense, no particular difference can be observed which can be ascribed to class, economic affluence or occupation: aristocratic and artisan women played by the same rules.

Let us consider three particularly detailed cases which provide us with more clues on the issue. On the threshold of the 15th century, in 1394, Nicolosia daughter of Francesco Grimaldi,⁴⁷ and wife of Simone Malocello drew up her last will and testament. Significantly, she expressed her

how this aligns Genoa with Venice, where a similar trend has been registered.

44. This form of charity was one of the ways through which poorer girls could set aside enough money for a dowry, see Chabot 2001. As put by Madden – Queller 1993, p. 696: «The tendency of women to favor other women in their wills seems to be an anthropological constant».

45. The fact that these *doma feneratoris* were scattered in Genoa's suburban territory and referred to by the place-name/area in which they were located (ex. *domus feneratoris de Predono*; *domus feneratoris de Suxilia*) suggests that these were probably official establishments, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 332/I, notary Guidotto de Bracelli, f. 155r, 2 February 1338; f. 162r, 12 February 1338.

46. The minimum share due to direct heirs by statute.

47. The Grimaldi was one of the first families to gather into an *albergo* in the late 13th century, Grendi 1975, p. 271.

last wishes autonomously, in the absence of her husband (and her only son) who were away from Genoa. She left her three unmarried daughters 600 *lire* in dowry which had to be converted in *loca* (public debt credits, I shall return briefly on the issue) which were to be administered with care, since their dowries would consist in the capital and interest accrued until their marriage. To her sister Franca, at the time married, she bequeathed 500 *lire*, to her other married daughter Orietta, she instead left 200 *lire* adding that she had to stay *tacita et contenta* and advance no further claims on her mother's inheritance.⁴⁸ It is also significant that she entrusted guardianship over the two underage daughters (and management of their funds) to her sister Franca – not to her husband. Since Franca was responsible with safeguarding and managing the funds solo, in order to protect her, Nicolosia inserted an admonishment in her will: her sister was to retain full decisional power, and her orders had to be followed *solo verbo [...] sine testibus*.

Of course, Nicolosia established as her main heirs her husband and young son, but she included a substitution clause whereby her estate would revert to her two unmarried daughters in case her main heirs died (her other daughter Orietta came next, if her sisters died without a legitimate heir, Franca followed in line of succession). Nicolosia chose to protect lineage over her daughters and sibling, certainly, but at the same time, her will also encapsulates her wish to remedy a gender imbalance, by giving broad authority over her estate to her sister.

One particular will sheds even more light on the mindset of aristocratic women as well as on stratagems that could be devised in order to keep a tight grip over non-dotal assets. On January 28, 1339, Violante, widow of Francesco Ultramarino, member of a prominent family, expressed her last wishes.⁴⁹ Violante was mother to two daughters, Catalina and Despina, both married, and two sons, Francesco and Daniele. The testatrix unmistakably chose to follow the agnatic line and transmit the lion's share of her (certainly consistent) estate to her two sons, whom she established universal

heirs. What is interesting for the sake of our discussion here, are her legacies to her two daughters and her sister. Violante established that apart from her dowry, Catalina, who had been married off to Francesco Lomellini, heir to another important family, would have 200 *lire* which had to be invested in *loca*. But this bequest did not come unencumbered: Violante listed the conditions under which the sum of money had to be administered. Despite these 200 *lire* were non-dotal assets, whilst married, Catalina could dispose freely only of the annuities, while the capital was to be managed by her two brothers. She would only gain full access to the fund upon her husband's predecease. Should Catalina die before her husband, the sum of money would revert to her male sons. In the absence of direct male descendants, however, the credits would revert to Catalina's two brothers, the main heirs to her mother's fortune. This move was certainly a means to protect her lineage's best interests and prevent her son-in-law from appropriating Catalina's fund should she die before him.

Violante made the same bequest, under the same conditions to her other daughter Despina, who, like her sister, had married into an aristocratic family. At any rate, like the abovementioned Nicolosia, Violante took a different approach with her sister Catalina, wife of a certain Mirvaldo Cantello: she left her a heftier legacy of 350 *lire* in cash and 200 *lire* to be converted in *loca*, unencumbered of any condition. These dispositions are very telling of Violante's mindset, who while by favouring her sister clearly wanted to redress an imbalance, when it came to her own daughters chose to comply with the agnatic principle and make sure to protect first and foremost the interests of her sons (or other male heirs).

This will is connected to two other documents which further elucidate this family's strategic use of female non-dotal property. The dowry contract of Violante's daughter, Despina, had been drawn up less than a year before, on January 16, 1323. Orphaned by her father, it was her brother Francesco (acting also on behalf of Daniele, the other heir to their father's fortune) who appeared

48. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 313, notary Andreolo Caiti, ff. 14v-15r, 11 April 1393.

49. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 221, notary Tommaso Casanova, f. 124rv, 27 January 1339.

alongside her and bestowed the dowry – 1000 *lire*, one of the highest amounts attested for the period – upon her husband-to-be, Lombardino de Mari.⁵⁰ The document was followed by another contract (whose formulary replicated that of dowry contracts), whereby Francesco conferred upon Lombardino another 1000 *lire*, which had been bequeathed to Despina by her father as *extrados*.⁵¹ The reason for concluding an additional contract is revealed by its closing clauses: Lombardino promised to restore the money to the brothers should Despina die without producing a legitimate heir. We will never know if this strategy had been devised by Despina's father, or if it was her brothers' (and perhaps mother's) choice, what is certain is that by resorting to this ploy the two brothers managed to turn their sister's non-dotal fund to their own advantage, and that in drawing up a separate contract, the notary had figured a feasible solution to cater for their specific needs.

In other instances we can observe mothers that decided to allow more autonomy to their married daughters. A case in point dates from 1336.⁵² Altesia, widow of Filippo di San Romolo, a medical doctor, decided to bequeath to one of her daughters, Leonina, 205 *lire* to be converted in *loca* adding that the fund was intended *pro cocquimento* (treating children of the same sex evenly was a constant worry of testators) because she had received an unequal portion of her father's inheritance compared to her sister Zeneura. Altesia added that Leonina could use the fund *ad suam liberam voluntatem*. This however created disparity between the two sisters since Zeneura had received her share of the family estate in the form of dowry, while her sister had received a portion as dowry and a rather hefty sum as *extrados*.

The above wills further underscore a general trend in female investments: all three women bequeathed public debt credits to their daughters, either in dowry or as non-dotal assets.⁵³ A system of irredeemable debt developed in Genoa

in the 1270s.⁵⁴ It quickly became a popular choice of investment among individuals, irrespective of gender and social standing; but women (or their families on their behalf) were particularly inclined to direct their disposable income towards the purchase of *loca*, perhaps on account of these being safer than the more hazardous *commenda* contract for long-distance trade.⁵⁵ The 1000 or so 14th-century ledgers preserved in the *Compere e Mutui* section of the Archivio di Stato di Genova which register the management of these shares are therefore vital in assessing the degrees of wealth which women were able to amass.⁵⁶ Many of the entries in these ledgers list not only the amounts of money invested by each shareholder, but also how these credits were administered (in the so-called *colonne*, where the transactions by which credits were transferred were listed). But the multitude of documents and the complex system of registration entail that more details on the way women managed their investments can be obtained only through in-depth study of this fond which remains largely untapped despite its inherent potential. At any rate, even a cursory glance at the contents of these ledgers reveals that women invested as much as men, and, more importantly, that even amounts of money invested were substantially equal. A few are remarkably high. In 1291, a certain Agnesina daughter of the late Michele Pelleto di Asti and wife of Palmerio Turcha di Castelletto di Asti, who certainly did not belong to the Genoese aristocracy, was registered as proprietor of credits valued at a staggering 8550 *lire*.⁵⁷ This case is exceptional, but in general women are listed as possessors of substantial investments, averaging around 100 *lire* per share, which is congruent with data on non-dotal legacies (usually ranging from 50 to 200 *lire*) to married daughters collected from wills.

These records seemingly suggest that there was little difference between male and female wealth, but this impression may be vitiated by several factors: 1) because men tended to differen-

50. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 221, notary Tommaso Casanova, f. 118r, 14 April 1338.

51. *Ibid.*

52. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 225, notary Tommaso Casanova, f. 69rv, 12 July 1336.

53. Again, we can draw a parallel with Florence: Kirshner 2015, p. 85-86.

54. For a general overview see Taviani 2018 and Kamenaga Anzai 2003, p. 241-245.

55. Kamenaga Anzai 2003, p. 259; Petti Balbi 2010, p. 166.

56. Inventorized by Gioffré 1966.

57. ASG, *Compere e mutui*, R. 417, c. 105v.

tiate their interests and during the second half of the 14th century they were still active as investors in long-distance trade; 2) because investors often spread their investments over multiple *compere*; 3) because credits registered to married women could have easily belonged to their husbands.⁵⁸ In order to draw comfortable conclusions, therefore, the ledgers must be analysed in their entirety. More importantly, the few ledgers that have been considered for the present study often contain instructions forbidding the transfer of credits belonging to women (not necessarily married) if not by their last wills, which implies that a large segment of the female population could freely manage (in the absence of pressure by relatives, that is) their estate only when nearing death.⁵⁹

Less clear is the involvement of married women in managing real estate. Women could purchase, sell and rent out property, certainly, but since consent of both spouses was needed for the validation of contracts concerning realty, we cannot fully grasp whether women were able to exercise some form of decisional authority in this regard.⁶⁰ The chances for women of acquiring property belonging to their natal families should have become dramatically low by the late 14th century. The law which gave precedence to male agnates – which, as stated, is consistent with the patrilinear character of the *alberghi* – in sale of buildings, should have, at least in theory, barred women from coming into possession of family properties which were central for maintaining and safeguarding intra- and extra-familial equilibria. The extant fragments of 14th-century cadastral registers⁶¹ only contain lists

of sums which individuals and *alberghi* owed the commune, and can be of no help in determining how many women managed to acquire real property. Evidence in other sources, however, lets us infer that the abovementioned norm was not sufficient to completely impede aristocratic women from acquiring such pivotal buildings (or shares of them) of their lineages, possibly via inheritance. In 1384, for example, together with their male relatives, two women from the powerful Doria family, Andriola (described as *filie et heredis quondam [...] Casani de Auria*) and Eliana, sold their respective shares of a house with a tower and a parcel of land they had in Genoa to the commune at the price of 3500 *lire*. Interestingly enough, Andriola possessed the largest share: 17 out of the 24 *karati* into which the property was divided.⁶²

As stated earlier, on par with many Italian cities, Genoese legislation also featured a norm which limited the direct management of non-dotal property by women. Ostensibly, the need for their husband's consent in transactions valued at more than 10 *lire*, entailed that Genoese women who possessed or wanted to profit from their personal funds could only do so either by concluding petty transactions or by bargaining with their husbands.

Did some form of leeway exist? Procurations were the main legal ploy that could enable to circumvent law and potentially allow women to exercise even substantial authority over their belongings (and often over their husbands'). Scholars of medieval Genoa have pointed out that women could freely manage their family's estate in their husbands' absence, which – if we consider that men were often away due to their involvement in war and in trade – was certainly not a rare event for most married women.⁶³ Before leaving the city, men generally appointed a legal agent, giving him/her full decisional power in managing their businesses. Frequently, men chose their wives, at times together with a male relative

58. For example, in a sale of credits, a certain Preciosa acknowledged that the shares written upon her in the public debt ledgers, were actually her husband's, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 409, notary Girardo Parrizollo, ff. 148v-149r, 6 May 1383.

59. Obviously, the 10 *lire* rule must have hindered women from alienating their credits. For example, a certain Anna, needed her husband's consent to sell her shares in the *Compera Veterorum* valued at 608 *lire*, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 276, notary Giovanni Gallo, c. 6r, 11 December 1325.

60. For example, in 1360, Antonina wife of Guglielmo de *Ragio de Clavaro lanerius*, sold a house she had in the Val Polcevera, an area close to Genoa, in her husband's *presencia, auctoritate, voluntate et mandato*, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 255, notary Antonio de Capale, ff. 43v-44r, April 1360. Vice versa, men needed their wives' consent in order to sell immovable property.

61. Namely: ASG, *Antico Comune, Avariorum*, R. 517, 518, 531; *Avariorum, Capitis et Posse*, R. 521.

62. *Libri Iurium*, doc. 3, 3 March 1384, p. 11-17. Rules on the alienation of towers in north-central Italy were typically harsh towards women, but variations existed: in Florence women were allowed to possess shares of towers in absence of male heirs in the extant 12th-century *pacta turris*, Faini 2014, p. 30-31. In Siena, as of 1262, women were barred from inheriting these properties, Lumia-Ostinelli 2003, p. 15.

63. See Smith 2012 and Petti Balbi 2007, p 12.

or close acquaintance, but there is no shortage of references to women who were appointed as sole agents.

Admittedly this could give women some leverage, at least for a limited period of time. But we cannot discount that procurations could remain valid for a longer time-span. In April 1360, acting on her own and her husband's behalf Lena, wife of Sorleone Spinola di San Luca, a scion of one of the most prominent Genoese families, sold of a slave for 52 *lire* to a certain Nicolò di Telia, a wool worker from Rapallo. She was able to conclude the transaction because her husband had appointed her his legal agent by virtue of a procuration which had been drawn up five years before, in January 1255.⁶⁴ At any rate, Lena had to acknowledge that she was acting with the oversight of her *consiliatores*: Ferrando Spinola and Antonio Spinola di San Luca, her husband's relatives. The unrelenting presence of legal guardians in contracts involving women hampers us from grasping the degree to which women were able to decide autonomously.

Still some cases do show women who clearly possessed commensurate agency. When she expressed her last wishes in February 1338, Lauvencina, wife of Antonio *de Assane*, who plausibly hailed from the lower social echelons, specified that by virtue of an *instrumentum procuracione plenarie* she had her husband's full mandate to *faciendi et lugandi et solvendi ad meum beneplacitum omnia bona mea et sua*.⁶⁵ She left clear instructions on how to dispose of her estate, which included a couple of houses and several personal items, some of which had to be sold in order to pay the last installments on a house she had bought. Lauvencina bequeathed most of her inheritance to her only daughter, born from a previous marriage, choosing to allocate a smaller portion of her belongings to her husband.

In 1345 instead, Isabella, described as *uxor et procuratricis* of Antonio Cattaneo, member of the eponymous *albergo*, was able to sell her shares as well as her husband's of the *Compara Pacis*, priced at 300 *lire*.⁶⁶

One further consideration should be factored in that somewhat challenges the representativeness of data gathered from procurations similar to the above as indicators of the breath of action granted to women. Recent research has shown that in Genoa throughout the 13th century non-dotal assets could be transferred to husbands through a specific notarial deed. Formulated like a dowry act, often 13th-century conferral deeds ran counter to the *ius commune* (which prescribed that if a wife transferred her non-dotal funds, or parts of it to her husband, the latter was obliged to reimburse her upon request), and substantially assimilated *dos* and *extrados*, establishing that the fund would be restored under the same conditions as the dowry (i.e. upon the husband's predecease).⁶⁷ Surprisingly, 14th-century notarial registers lack such attestations.⁶⁸

By contrast, the registers which have been analysed for the present study are replete with documents in which women appoint their husbands as legal agents giving them full control in managing all their belongings. One can easily say that documents in which women appoint men as their legal agents outnumber by far those in which women receive the mandate. One eloquent example dates from 1330. On January 16 of that year, Angelina, who is described as *filia et heres quondam Symonis de Goanno lanerius*, appointed her husband Leonardo as her legal agent giving him full mandate to administer her belongings as he deemed fit and to act on her behalf.⁶⁹ It is evident from the reference to her late father's inheritance that Angelina had just obtained part of his estate and that she intended to

64. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 255, notary Antonio de Capale, f. 42rv, 2 April 1260.

65. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 332/I, notary Guidotto de Bracellis, f. 162r, 13 February 1338.

66. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 332/I, notary Guidotto de Bracellis, f. 37v, 30 August 1345.

67. By using the expression *adveniente condicione restituendarum docium seu extradocium*, Bezzina forthcoming.

68. Apart from the contract mentioned in n. 35, I have found only one other direct attestation of such practice in an inventory of a deceased woman which lists both an *instrumentum docium et antefacti*, and an *instrumentum extradocium*, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 183, notary Benedetto di Vivalda, ff. 77r-78v, 5-9 December 1359.

69. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 375, notary Nicolò di Bellignano, f. 15r, 16 January 1330.

confer her newly-acquired property (together with any funds she already possessed, for that matter) upon her husband. Likewise, in 1383, Fiandina, daughter of notary Gilberto *de Carpina*, widow of Bertolotto de Romito, and at the time married to *Dexerinus de Beligrano* acknowledged that she was *mater et heres ab intestato quondam Johannes pupilli filii sui et herede ab intestato dicti quondam Bertholoti*, before appointing her husband as her legal agent.⁷⁰ These cases and similar documents seem to confirm that voluntary bestowals of non-dotal assets upon husbands became a sweeping trend by the first half of the 14th century.⁷¹ Procurations, therefore, were a double-edged sword: a flexible instrument which could be used alternately to allow margins of freedom to women or to dramatically curb their agency.

FURNIMENTA/GUARNIMENTA AND EXTRADOS

So far I have addressed non-dotal assets as one, coherent phenomenon. The *ius commune*, however, differentiated between two main female funds: *parapherna* and *bona non dotalia*. Put simply, *parapherna* were goods which a woman would bring with her into marriage. Traditionally associated with the trousseau, by virtue of Roman law these were supposed to remain under the wife's control. *Bona non dotalia* instead, consisted in movables and immovables which a woman acquired during marriage.⁷² Kirshner has demonstrated that in Florence by the late 15th century, these labels had become mere «legal constructs» which served to describe an array of different funds beyond the dowry. Moreover, in Florence, *parapherna* were replaced by *donora* which, like the dowry, remained under the husband's tight grip.⁷³

Similarly, in Genoa *parapherna* were substituted by *furnimenta* or *guarnimenta* (in later documents referred to also as *iocalia*), first attested in notarial

contracts in the late 13th century.⁷⁴ Such early attestations are extremely rare. It is in first decades of the 14th century that the practice to convey this additional gift became commonplace, but never a compulsory obligation of parents towards their daughters. Provisions for *furnimenta/guarnimenta* to be provided to girls upon their marriage are mostly found in the wills of upper-echelon individuals.⁷⁵ This means that this fund was the prerogative of aristocratic women or girls born to well-to-do families. *Furnimenta* generally consisted in cash, a fact which suggests that these funds may have not served to purchase linens and other fineries for the brides. As in Florence, these funds did not fall under the prescriptions the *ius commune*: *furnimenta/guarnimenta* were conveyed to the husband along with the dowry when *instrumentum dotis* was drawn up, and therefore this fund was subject to the same rules as the dowry (it would be restored only upon the husband's predecease). From the very beginning, therefore, this customary practice was intended as a dowry increase. Throughout the 14th century sums allocated for *furnimenta* varied greatly, but significantly, especially among daughters of the top tier families, the fund provided for the accoutrements of the bride-to-be could even match the dowry.⁷⁶

By the 14th century, therefore, the value of dowries of aristocratic women saw a dramatic increase. This fits Genoa within the broader north-central Italian context. The issue is tied to the question of dowry inflation which past scholarship has tended to associate with increasing competition in finding suitable husbands, since girls were bargaining chips in the hands of aristocratic fathers eager to forge political alliances with their peers.⁷⁷

70. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 409, notary Girardo Parrizollo, ff. 44v-45r, 18 February 1383.

71. Evidence for the period spanning the mid-12th to the end of the 13th century has underscored this trend, but in the 14th century the tendency of females to convey their personal belongings to their husbands seems to have escalated. On the earlier period, again: Bezzina forthcoming.

72. Kirshner 2015, p. 75; Bellomo 1961, p. 132-135.

73. Kirshner 2015, p. 75.

74. The first reference which has been found so far is in a will dated 1293. In the document, a certain Vegnuto di Montemillio established that his daughter was to receive 100 *lire* as dowry and 200 *lire pro suo furnimento*. ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 132, notary Corrado di Castello da Rapallo, f. 244v, 1293. I am thankful to Paola Guglielmotti who gave me the transcription of this document.

75. As noted also by Petti Balbi 2010, p. 164; Hughes 1975, p. 176.

76. In the early 15th century limits were established to the amounts that could be provided as *guarnimenta*, Petti Balbi 2010, p. 165.

77. Madden – Queller 1993, p. 691-692, provide a concise summary of the main views and a different interpretation. According to the scholars, in Renaissance Venice the phenomenon was linked to the fact that dowries comprised also legacies from acquaintances.

Yet, spiraling dowries may be one of the keys to understanding changes in the conferral (or lack thereof) of non-dotal assets upon married women. If we take Genoa as paradigm and chart the main developments we notice that when considering dowries *vis à vis* «unencumbered» non-dotal assets the patterns are inversely proportional. Especially for what concerns the aristocracy, all along the late 12th through the early 13th centuries amounts given in endowment were rather small, compared to the heftier dowries conveyed to daughters during the last two decades of the 13th and through the 14th centuries, when *furnimenta* become customary for daughters of the aristocracy.⁷⁸ Conversely, despite references to husbands controlling non-dotal assets date as early as from the mid-12th century, during the same period and throughout the 13th century, direct references to the *extrados* (understood as a fund which a married woman could freely dispose of) are more frequent as compared to the 14th century when non-dotal assets seem to have been conveyed mainly in the form of *furnimenta*.⁷⁹ In other words, *furnimenta* may have served as a deterrent for bestowing upon daughters other funds beyond their dowries, or else as a strategy to keep some form of control over non-dotal funds.

One further clue points towards the tendency to associate non-dotal assets with *furnimenta/guarnimenta/iocalia*. As stated in the introduction, throughout the 13th century, a single term – *extrados* – was usually used to describe non-dotal property, which theoretically, continued to be regulated by the *ius commune*. By the 1330s, when the custom to provide *furnimenta* to daughters became more frequent among wealthy families, the difference between whatever property a woman could control, at least in principle (the *extrados*), and what was submitted to the same

rules as the dowry (*furnimenta, guarnimenta*) became more blurred. Notaries started to use *furnimenta/guarnimenta/extrados* interchangeably, as if to register that no significant difference existed in the way these funds were being managed.⁸⁰ By the mid-14th century, therefore the word *extrados*, had lost its original meaning, at least in notarial records.⁸¹

CONCLUSIONS

By extrapolating from previous research on 12th- and 13th-century Genoa, we can gain a clear picture of the developments in law and practice surrounding non-dotal assets during the period spanning to the end of the 14th century.⁸² Figure 1 clearly summarizes this evolution, which began with the abolishment (1143) of the widows' right to a third part of their husbands' belongings. Like elsewhere, even in Genoa we can register that practice essentially preceded (or even inspired) municipal law: notarial contracts elucidate a precocious assimilation of the notion of *dos* and *extrados*. Conferrals of non-dotal funds upon husbands are evident as early as from the second half of the 12th century; but this process escalated during the last decades of the 13th century with the introduction of norms limiting the possibility for women to acquire non-dotal goods and to manage them, as well as with the first references to the *furnimenta/guarnimenta*.

It is difficult to establish whether these restrictive developments were, at least in part, an outcome of the consolidation of the *alberghi*. Although these family consortia became the cornerstone of the city's social structure, there is no substantial evidence to establish a direct link between their

78. During the 14th century dowries of aristocratic girls averaged between 800-1300 *lire*, some reaching 2000 and 3000 *lire* (including *furnimenta*). Petti Balbi 2010, p. 163 provides a few examples. On the threshold of the 13th century instead, aristocratic dowries averaged between 200-600 *lire*.

79. Again, Bezzina forthcoming.

80. A clear example is a deed in which a woman used her *confessio dotis* to reclaim her *dos, extrados*, and *antefactum*. The notary used the word *extrados* instead of *guarnimentum* or *furnimentum* to indicate the sum granted to the bride for her personal items, ASG, *Notai Antichi*, Cart. 313, notary Andriolo Caiti, c. 127r, 21 June 1393.

81. Of course, from the legal standpoint, jurists continued to distinguish between dowry and non-dotal assets. For example, one of the *consilia* of the noted Genoese jurist Bartolomeo Bosco, who was active between the late 14th and 15th centuries, concerned precisely the non-delivery of a promised *extrados*, Bosco *Consilia*, cons. 12, p. 14-15. I am thankful to Julius Kirshner for this reference.

82. Bezzina forthcoming.

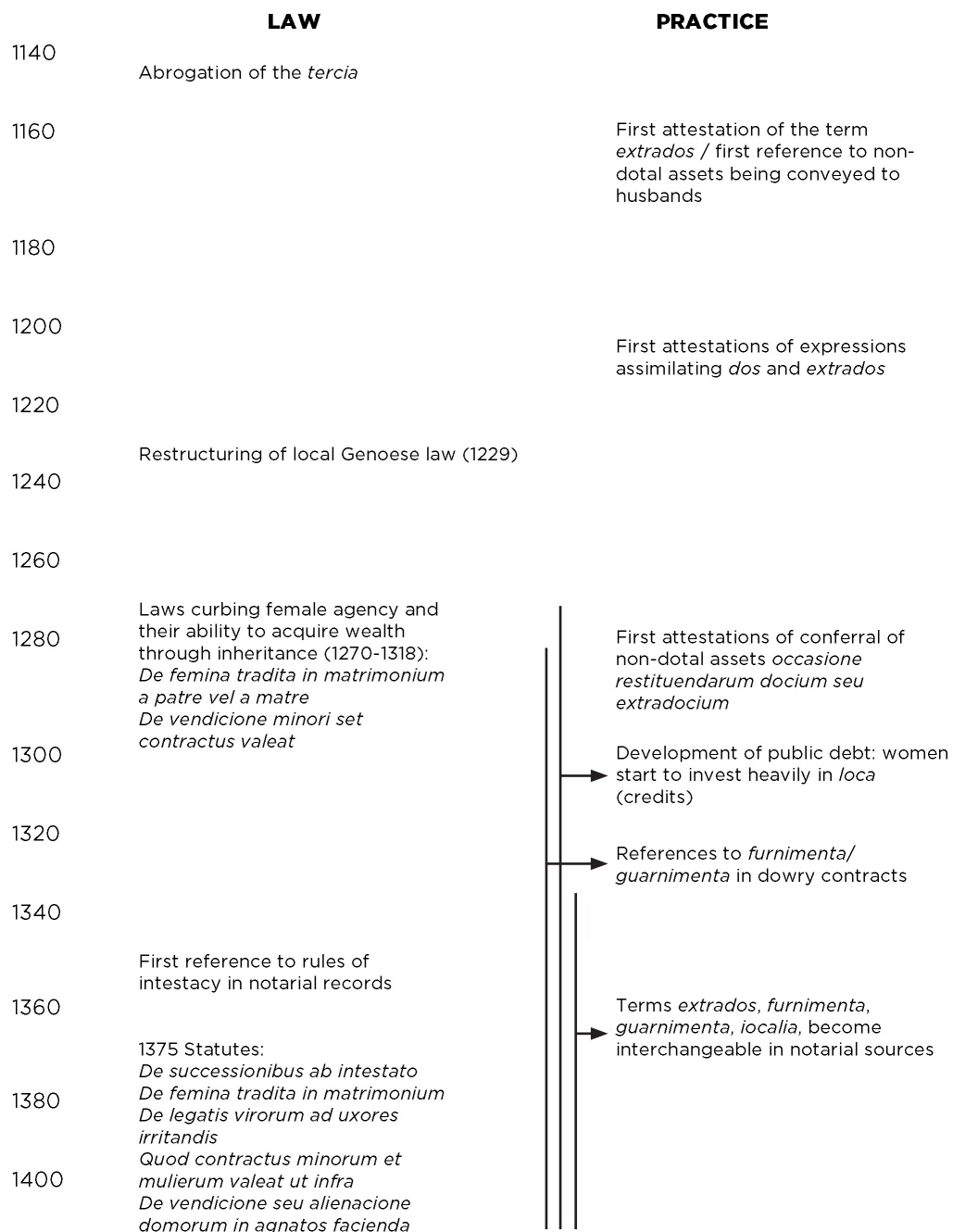


Fig. 1 - Married women and wealth: developments in law and practice.
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development and increased control over female property. Of course, this might have been the case, but both phenomena evolved concurrently, and therefore both may be considered as integrated parts of a general trend.

We cannot deny that medieval Genoa was a partilineally-oriented society. During the period under scrutiny the margins of freedom enjoyed

by women were less tied to the possibility of administering their wealth autonomously than to their ability to use their belongings to foster their husband's lineage. Overall, evidence in notarial sources suggests that most married women embraced patrilineage, and it is perhaps women who played by the rules and accepted social norms and standards who were able to

enjoy broader degrees of agency in administering their own (and at times their husband's) wealth.⁸³ As evident in the wills of Violante, widow of Francesco Ultramarino, and Nicolosia, wife of Simone Malocello, this may have been especially so for aristocratic women. But data from procurations suggests that women from the artisan milieu were no less inclined to convey their belongings to their husbands: the notion that artisan women possessed far more agency than their aristocratic counterparts must therefore be mitigated.⁸⁴ At the same time however, the cases above show that women were still able to use wills to redress imbalances as they wished, and devolve assets along the female line – to their daughters and sisters and

other close relatives and acquaintances – not just to comply with family strategies.

In general, my findings point towards a progressive cutback of female agency. Yet history is never linear. Quantitative data is still in want on the number – plausibly high during the recurring bouts of epidemics of the 14th century – of women who actually managed to obtain a lion's share of their family's estate and on the amount of wealth women could typically amass, adding complexity to the general picture which has been provided here.⁸⁵ In this sense, wills and the still unexplored public debt ledgers are pivotal in addressing these questions with due precision.

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83. One of the ways through which women typically expressed their wealth and agency is artistic patronage, which is not evident in the sources that have been considered in this study. For example, see the case of the Pisan Datuccia Sardi Da Campiglia discussed in Soldberg 2010.

84. Since dowries of artisan women were more reflective of the global wealth of their natal families, and due to their status as their husbands' «unpaid partners», Hughes 1975, p. 174. For a critique of this view see also Bezzina 2017; 2015, p. 137 ff.

85. Apart from these general considerations related to peculiar historical contingencies, we cannot overlook peculiar stories of individual women who managed to play a significant role both in managing their own and their families' patrimonies and in the public sphere, influencing political decisions. Such is the case, dating from the mid-15th century, of Bartholomea, a Grimaldi, and wife of doge Pietro Campofregoso, and of her mother Pomellina, herself a Campofregoso, who retained considerable power in Monaco, see Shaw 2008.

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