



Marriage on Trial: Late Medieval German Couples at the Papal Court (Studies in medieval and early modern canon law, Vol. 10)

Ludwig Schmugge

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In the first detailed study of papal penitentiary materials on marriage, renowned medieval historian Ludwig Schmugge tells the exciting stories of seduced maidens, too-closely-related husbands and wives, and thousands of couples who faced lawsuits?all of whom had transgressed marriage law on various grounds in the Middle Ages. This work vividly describes many of the individual cases and offers new insight into the social and legal pressures on marriage in the Middle Ages.

At a time when betrothal, marriage, and sexual morals were strictly subject to the church's law, petitions from couples abounded. More than two hundred clerics of the penitentiary in the papal curia devoted their time and attention to these petitions alone. With exceptional thoroughness, Schmugge sifted through the thick volumes of registers in the Vatican Secret Archives for his research. Here he presents the exciting, almost unbelievable, and often scandalous fates of these late medieval men and women, while highlighting the important connection between the papal monarchy and the social history of the laity in the later Middle Ages.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ludwig Schmugge, the leading expert on the papal penitentiary and a professor of medieval history, is president of the scientific committee of the German Historical Institute in Rome. Atria A. Larson received her Ph.D. in medieval studies from the Catholic University of America in 2010 and spent the 2009-2010 academic year on a Fulbright grant in Munich, Germany.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"This is a fluent and elegant translation of a book originally published in German . . .It presents a new body of evidence that has much to tell us about medieval marriage. It should inspire other scholars to carry out similar studies for different European regions, following the author's excellent example in combining local evidence with these Vatican sources." *Renaissance Quarterly*

"In a highly accessible style, Ludwig Schmugge renders comprehensible the canon law on marriage and its related legal procedures. His study analyzes the "piteous, exciting, sometimes almost unbelievable, and occasionally scandalous stories" of petitioners to the papal penitentiary . . . A smooth translation renders the author's points clearly, and the attention to explanation makes the book accessible and enjoyable to those

without a strong background in canon law." *?Comitatus*

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