

Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Âge

135-1 | 2023

Plurilingualism in the Kingdom of Naples (1442-1503). Reassessing uses and literary production from Naples and beyond – Household economies in late medieval and early modern Italy – Varia

Household economies in late medieval and early modern Italy

Can widows live on their dowry?

Florence, 15th century

ISABELLE CHABOT

p. 51-77

<https://doi.org/10.4000/mefrm.12125>



Résumé

Based on a qualitative reading of the Florentine catasto of 1427 understood as a narrative source, the article investigates the use of dowry during widowhood. After pointing out that, widows in the family usually do not recover their dowry, which remains in the state of credit in the estate of their children and heirs, the article focuses on widows who “leave” the home of the deceased husband and need the dowry to remarry or to sustain themselves. These widows denounce their immediate material impoverishment due to the delays in returning the dowry and to the fact that they “have neither a house nor household goods”. The article highlights some less investigated features of the dowry: its volatility – the dowry appears as a high-risk capital – and its remarkable plasticity between marriage and widowhood. During its life cycle, the dowry often changes form, value and legal status: from credit to full property; from capital entirely handed over to the husband to capital only partially returned to the widow or even squandered and lost; from movable property (received from the father at the time of the marriage) to immovable property taken from the husband’s inheritance; but also, from full property to usufruct or life annuity. Widows participate as investors in the credit market, seeking an income or a life annuity, and they turn to credit intermediaries still little investigated as small shopkeepers and artisans.

Entrées d'index

Keywords: widowhood, dowry, inheritance system, gender and material culture, credit market

Texte intégral

- 1 A more than well-established historiographical tradition on medieval dowry systems places the dowry predominantly within the legal and economic framework of the transmission of inheritance between generations and of property relations between spouses.¹ Taking up the stimuli of a pioneering article by Julius Kirshner, the observation has recently been extended to non-dowry assets² to better investigate the much more complex articulation of women’s patrimony. But during marriage, when the husband has exclusive management, the dowry still



largely eludes us, not least because of the objective difficulty of finding information.³ In the Florentine elite of the 14th-15th centuries, the writers of family books, so prolix in recording all the expenses generated by their marriage and their wife's dowry, rarely specified how they manage it: they could dispose of it freely, and usually did not explain how they did so. In 1363, at the time of the division of their father's inheritance with his brother Alberto, Lapo da Castiglionchio acknowledged that his wife's dowry had been "converted to his own use", his brother had done likewise, and since they were mutually guarantors of these dowry credits that had, so to speak, dissolved in their patrimony, they both hoped not to have to return them one day to the widows.⁴ In fact, in this private documentation, but also in other sources, some well-known, others less so, such as guardianship accounts, notarial records, women's practical writings that Serena Galasso has begun to investigate,⁵ the papers of city magistracies such as the Office of the *Pupilli*, and judicial sources (from civil courts of the Podestà, merchant court of the *Mercanzia*, etc.), dowries re-emerge at the death of the husband when they must be returned. But apart from this particular circumstance, which often brings the widows and their husbands' heirs into conflict, it remains to be better understood what happens *after* the dowry is returned, i.e. whether the dowry system, as it is conceived, is adequate to ensure the survival of women left without men, without family.

2 In this essay I will endeavour to search for answers in a single source – the Florentine *catasto* of 1427 – by reading the declarations submitted by widows heading their own households and by male family heads with a widow at home (mother, daughter, sister), residing in two city districts – Santo Spirito and Santa Croce –, as well as part of the district of San Giovanni. This is a *corpus* of approximately 1700 *portate*: the Florentine tax census is, in fact, preserved in its dual registration of *portate* – i.e. the declarations delivered by the taxpayers themselves – and *campioni*, that is the transcription by the scribes of the office that provided for the estimation of the goods and the calculation of the tax.⁶ In the transition between *portate* and *campioni*, the loss of information is considerable: suffice it to say that, in the Santo Spirito district, ten registers of *portate* correspond to four registers of *campioni* (mostly all of the same dimension). If the administrative version of the *catasto* is necessarily drier and more functional, the 'original' one is conversely extraordinarily rich. This is because, in 1427, the Florentines, called to report their family and patrimonial situation to the tax authorities, presented their "bocche" ("mouths") and, of course, described their assets; but they commented above all to complain about their conditions, about the wrongs they had suffered, hoping implicitly to benefit from some tax relief; they told their case and, in doing so, they told themselves. Women, in particular, perceive the *catasto* as an important space of public writing where they can attest and put in writing their rights as creditors, legatees, heiresses, as well as affirm and certify their identity as owners.⁷ When describing their assets, they often retrace the history of their property – be it a dowry, a bequest, a credit, a house, an annuity – and it is often a turbulent history of difficulties, resistance, conflicts and abuse, of infrajudicial ("patti", "concordie", "lodi", etc.) and judicial procedures ("piato"), and of belated justice; they evoke the "harassment" they suffered, sometimes the pure and simple loss of their dowry; finally, they appeal, they "commend" themselves to the *catasto* Officials "so as not to lose their rights". As we shall see, it is not only the widow-heads of household, whether alone or with children, who take the floor and present a *portata*: the women of the house also seem to want to seize the opportunity and break in, often in the first person ("I monna Tessa...") in the *portata* of the husband, son or relative, to declare, but also make their assets distinct and recommend themselves; in order to make their voice, otherwise left mostly inaudible, publicly heard.

3 In this sense, the *portate* of the *catasto* are much more than a photographic snapshot taken in the summer of 1427: they offer a true narrative that inscribes its actors in the historical time of existence. This account of hundreds and hundreds of fragments of individual and family life makes the *catasto* a narrative source of extraordinary richness, all the more unique in that it also lets us hear the voices of women, even the humblest, and vividly documents a wide variety of their social and economic practices.

4 I will therefore listen to this choral narrative to begin to piece together the complexity of the picture of female widowhood, looking first at the different family and residential situations in which widows find themselves. Because not all of them have to rely on their dowry to live: whether or not they stay in their late husband's home is the main discriminating factor and we will see what immediate material consequences a widow could face when "exiting" her former home. Finally, observing widows' annuities will lead us to question the actual adequacy of the dowry system in supporting widows outside the family.



“She lives with them and have not drawn her dowry”:⁸ widowed mothers at home

- 5 Upon the death of the husband, legally the widows should take possession of their dowry, but in practice, this restitution is far from systematic. We note that there is a sort of unwritten rule in force, according to which, as long as they do not ‘leave’ the house of the deceased husband, widowed mothers must leave their dowry in the state of credit in the heirs’ estate.⁹ Vico di ser Michele del Campagna and his brothers express it in these terms: “We are obliged to our mother, whenever she would like to leave us, to give her four hundred florins she has of her dowry in the aforesaid assets”.¹⁰ We find this rule again at all levels of society, as Zanobi di Gualtieri known as “the painter”, a modest stockbroker, also recalls that “on these goods is my mother’s dowry which, should she wish to leave me, I am obliged to return it to her, which amounts to florins 65”.¹¹ If they “wish to”, widowed mothers thus have the right to demand their dowry, but they generally do not. In the 13th century, the Pisan legislators even made it a moral issue, since asking dowries from children would have been a callous gesture worthy of the worst stepmothers: *Cognovimus per effectum, matres circa filios in exactione dotis et antefacti non maternum affectum sed impietatem habere saepius novercalem*.¹²
- 6 The husband resorts in advance to the will in order to ‘negotiate’ with the future widow her stay in the house and thus the maintenance of her dowry in the heirs’ estate, especially if these are their sons: in exchange, for some bequest, a usufruct, the usufruct of all the properties, a pension in cash or in goods, a house to live in the event of conflict with the heirs, etc., the creditor wife is destined to become a widowed usufructuary who ends up enjoying the right to be provided for – “fed”, say sources – at the expense of the children. Insensibly, her dowry changes its legal *status* from an asset in full ownership to a right of usufruct until it dissolves as a maternal inheritance into the estate the sons have inherited from their father; and it is important to remember that in the Florentine inheritance system, only sons inherit from their mother.¹³ Are widowed mothers at home therefore no more entitled to their dowry than when their husband was alive? On the whole, the rare mentions of dowries in the *portate* of contributors who have a widowed mother at home seem to confirm this lack of control: for example, in the Santo Spirito district, only 64 heads of households out of 483 (13.2%) mention the existence of the dowry among their assets, and when they do it is more to point out a possible irregular or critical situation than to distinguish the maternal patrimony from their own.
- 7 Yet a few *portate*, however rare, help to blur somewhat this image of the widow dispossessed of her dowry: Boccaccio Brunelleschi declares that his mother’s assets (800 florins) are invested in the bank of two bankers;¹⁴ Cipriano Muccini’s mother is “creditor on the account books of the heirs of Vieri Guadagni and associates” for 460 florins;¹⁵ the notary ser Francesco di Piero even declares “monna Iohanna, my mother, has a hundred florins invested in the bank of Averardo dei Medici, which are part of her dowry, and she wants to do what she wants of it”,¹⁶ giving us a glimpse into the patrimonial agency of widowed mothers left at home with their children, which is very difficult to document.
- 8 Two widows in the household, from very different social backgrounds, grasp the importance of the *catasto* as a space for public writing to certify the existence of their dotal credit, exceptionally also allowing the expression of a maternal “will” to leak through. Thus, Cecca breaks into the *portata* of her son Damiano di Bartolomeo, even dictating in the first person: “he has *my* dowry on these assets, which was 70 florins”.¹⁷ We can guess, then, that Cecca was present at the drafting of the tax declaration, vigilant, aware, and determined to have her say. Here, however, is what the children of Lena, widow of Albizzo del Toso da Fortuni, had to add to their *portata*, going along with their mother’s express wishes:

Note, honored officials, that our mother, Lena, is content and wants seven hundred florins from her dowry and two hundred and twelve florins between a bequest and her own money, which she must have from all the inheritance of Albizo [...], which sum was never given to her by the *Pupilli* officials, she wants, as said above, [these florins] to be put in our assets [...]; but she wants to be our creditor for the aforesaid sum of nine hundred and twelve florins without earning any interest for the time that she keeps it with us, in such a way that, as long as they are registered in the *catasto*, the tax burden of the said sum must weight on us for the benefit that we will receive from the said money.¹⁸



Lena is a much richer woman than Cecca, since between her dowry (700 florins), a testamentary bequest from her husband (112 florins “left her free by Albizo”) and non-dotal

assets (100 florins “were her own, left in the hands of Albizo, and she must get them back”) she is a creditor of no less than 912 florins. Could she demand interest on this conspicuous capital? Indeed, it is a right of widows who have ‘left’ the house while awaiting the restitution of their dowry: Donato and Nardo d’Andrea, for example, still owe 100 florins and pay their mother Nofria an annuity of 12 florins a year because “she has her dowry, and nothing else, which she has to have from me Donato and Nardo my brother: I give to her 6 florins a year, because she provides for her own expenses”.¹⁹ Lena, on the other hand, who remained in her late husband’s house with her two minor children, renounces asking for annual interest on her dotal credit, but “wants” this to be clear and, consequently, does not want to be subject to the tax either. Behind this ‘will’, one can therefore read the awareness of a woman who knows her rights and duties as owner, while accepting not to exercise them because she lives with her children.

10 In the *portate* of the heads of households, dowries emerge above all in critical situations when, for example, it is necessary to house and maintain a sister, “a widow without a dowry”,²⁰ sometimes even taking care of her children. Since 1423, Bernardo Salviati had in his house “a sister of about 26 years of age [...], who has always lived off me for I have not been able to obtain anything from Benvenuto [her late husband] to feed her and two of her children. I have never, and still have not, received the dowry”.²¹ Conversely, when all that remained of the paternal inheritance is the value of the maternal dowry, it is the sons who, in fact, live off their mother: Lorenzo di Antonio de’ Ceri, who claims to own a house and a farm, states that “these goods are her dowry”.²² The young butcher, Boldro di Lorenzo, acknowledges himself to be dependent on his mother’s dowry without which he would have nothing to live on: “I am in debt to my mother for her dowry, which is 500 florins, and I live on her dowry”.²³

11 The economic, but also strategic, role of a widowed mother’s dowry emerges even more clearly when the children refuse their father’s inheritance and save what they can of his patrimony by leaving it to their mother:²⁴ “We all refused our father’s inheritance, whose fourth death anniversary falls on All Saints day – remember the sons of the wool merchant Domenico di Andrea – because he died and nothing was left to us; and we live on our mother’s dowry, which was paid to her up to the clothes we wore. We have great difficulty living”.²⁵ At the end of the 15th century, in one of these complicated succession events, the widowed mother’s decisive assumption of responsibility also resulted in the opening of her own account book;²⁶ thus, between 1491 and 1494, the repudiation of inheritance by her children and the rescue, through the restitution of her dowry, of the family property (some strategic assets such as the house in the city), the taking on of guardianship of the minor children, the management of the conflicts arising from the inheritance of an uncle, these are all situations that lead Lisabetta, widow of Niccolò di Tommaso Busini, to write, to classify, to remember, thus consigning to historical memory one of the first account books of a Florentine woman.²⁷

12 The *catasto* of 1427 also allow us to observe this reversal of the situation, which makes a widowed mother, usually a dowry creditor and a guest in her children’s home, the owner of all that remains of the marital property and responsible, thanks to the dowry, for the survival of the family.

The dowry and “nothing else”:²⁸ widows ‘leaving’ home

13 We might expect that, when declaring their assets, widows heading a household would mention their dowry more often: yet, again observing the situation in the Santo Spirito district, only 72 out of 381 widows presenting a *portata* do so (19%), as if it were not always useful to explicitly mention the dotal origin of their assets. In fact, when they speak of their dowry, in more than half the cases (58%), it is to report trouble: they have yet to obtain their dowry, they have only partially received it back, or they have actually ‘lost’ it. Their choral narrative confirms first of all what other private or judicial sources already tell us: the restitution of the dowry appears precisely as one of the structural problems of the dowry system, capable of compromising the survival of widows especially when an adequate family protection network is lacking.

14 First of all, there is an important discrepancy between the immediacy of widows’ “exit” dictated by florentine custom and the slowness of dowry restitution procedures that leave widows without resources for a long time, and we shall see all the contingent difficulties associated with recent widowhood. The restitution of the dowry naturally depends on the condition of the deceased husband’s inheritance. Apart from the heirs (who are not always the



children), it involves many actors with whom widows have to deal more or less peacefully: the guarantors of the dowry at the time of the marriage (usually the widow's brothers-in-law) or their heirs because sureties are passed on from one generation to the next; the mediators of 'family justice' who administer the intra-judicial system of arbitration,²⁹ the city magistracies, in particular the Office of the *Pupilli*, charged (from 1388) with ensuring the protection and administration of the property of orphans whose father died intestate;³⁰ finally, the Podestà's civil court, but also all the other courts, civil and mercantile. Female widowhood is a harbinger of family conflict and widows denounce the time taken by justice, families or courts; the high, and sometimes unbearable costs; the harassment ("molestie") and "force" they are faced with.

15 At all levels of society we observe the volatility of the dowry that appears as a high-risk capital, a credit guaranteed (not always adequately) on the patrimony of the husband and his brothers, a guarantee that often proves to be useless if, at the death of the husband, little or nothing remains of his property and all, heirs and guarantors, are insolvent: "They refused the dowry of their father and brother because nothing is found of them, which is why this dowry [of 92 florins] is lost".³¹ Bernarda still recalls the numerous and useless lawsuits brought to recover a very modest dowry: "She has been widowed already fifteen years and could never get back her dowry of 50 florins, having bought a lawsuit again and again".³² Here, in a few words, is the rather common story of a dowry, as told by Caterina, widow of a modest woodworker: "my dowry was 150 florins, it was guaranteed only for 100 florins; they have to give me 10 florins every year until my dowry is paid and I have never received anything, and I brought a lawsuit and nothing has been left".³³ One can therefore *lose* the dowry. A woman from a very good family, the daughter of a knight with a prestigious surname, even begins her *portata* with the still very vivid and bitter memory of this 'loss': "I, Bartolomea, daughter of the late messer Donato Adimari, eighty years old, who lost my dowry..."³⁴ Also, Tancia, widow of a simple shoemaker wishes to recall: "I was widowed [in] 1400, nothing was left from my dowry".³⁵ Who are the widows most exposed to these risks when demanding their dowry?

16 First of all, young women, with or without children, who can still remarry. In the circumstance of a very recent widowhood, the writer of the *portata* of the heirs of Pagolo di Ridolfo Lotti – four children between ten and five years old – grasps the imminent risk of the departure of a young mother with her (conspicuous) dowry: "If monna Necia, their mother, who is twenty-eight years old, does not want to stay with her children, she has to have 1,340 florins for her dowry and, you see, they are in the hands of [her] brother".³⁶ Although the writer ascribes this risk to Nencia's still uncertain "will" to "abandon" her children, he must also recognize that the decision is mainly in the hands of her brother, who is evidently still considering whether or not to marry her again.

17 When upon the death of their husbands, widows immediately leave the conjugal roof, they must find refuge in their father's house or count on the help of relatives while waiting to recover the dowry that is generally their only resource. Thus, Tita Canigiani, Giotto Peruzzi's young widow, is the guest of a paternal aunt:

A dowry of six hundred and ten florins, which I have to withdraw from Giotto Peruzzi's heirs, who are in the hands of the *Pupilli* officials, and for the present I see no way of getting it back. I have to live on and I have nothing but this dowry. Now at present, because I have nowhere to return to, I am living in the house of monna Nanna di Barduccio Chanigiani my aunt.³⁷

18 In her *portata*, her aunt, Nanna Canigiani, who "is alone and lives in the countryside", confirms that Tita "at present has come back with her" and until she gets her dowry "she must be supported by the said monna Nanna".³⁸ This cohabitation turns out to be a temporary solution because, a few months later, Tita remarries a relative, Coppo di Bindo Canigiani, a widower with three small children who needs a woman at home.³⁹

19 Many widowed mothers with children find themselves in the position of being forced to rely on their dowry only to live. Niccolosa thus derives an annual income of 30 florins from a credit of 600 florins in public bonds (*Monte comune*), "which money is for my dowry". Four children aged between nineteen and seven live with her and "this is the charge I have on my little dowry: I have raised, and I raise this family with great difficulty. May God commended me to you".⁴⁰

20 After the death of the husband, if the brothers-in-law are also gone, one can observe that the next generation feels less inclined to respect family duties and solidarity towards widows. Aunts – or rather the widows of paternal uncles – are not always welcome in the family home inherited by their nephews and are often faced with their – or other heirs' – reluctance or tardiness in fulfilling obligations such as dotal sureties on inherited assets. Lena di Marco di



Lorenzo Talani, widow of Iacopo di Francesco dei Pecori, “has been well one year or more without her dowry and has to live and sustain children one of ten years, one of seven years, one of three years”.⁴¹ This young, widowed mother of twenty-seven years has, actually, been on trial for over a year against her late husband’s relatives (probably her brother-in-law’s sons) who are even exerting “their force” to escape their obligation to return a large part of her dowry, 790 florins, in addition to 38 florins due for a year’s interest. Francesco di Betto Busini, who must repay two dowries – to Lisa, his uncle’s widow, and to Vaggia, his father’s second wife – stresses the weight of inherited dowry debts and sureties. Let’s listen to his complain.

- 21 Concerning the dowry of Lisa, widow of his uncle Piero di Giovanni Busini, Francesco’s responsibility is committed as heir to his father Betto who, in his time, had acted as guarantor of his sister-in-law’s dowry. Faced with the insolvency of her husband’s inheritance, Lisa could rely on her brother-in-law as guarantor, but now she has to turn to his son and heir, Francesco, who must therefore fulfil the obligation assumed by his late father:

I have to give to monna Lisa, widow to Piero di Giovanni Busini, for the rest of three hundred and five florins [her dowry], my father Betto being guarantor of the said monna Lisa who as such has the mortgage on all my assets, and we are on trial, florins two hundred and thirty-one.⁴²

- 22 Having recovered only 74 florins, Lisa, actually filed a lawsuit (a “piato”), which she won and, while waiting to be paid, obtained from the judge the mortgage of her nephew’s property to secure her claim.

- 23 In these dowry conflicts, the widow who “leaves” the house asking for her dowry is invariably accused of being an unworthy mother:

I have to keep at home the son of Piero Busini, who has nothing left in the world; his mother has abandoned him, and I have to return her dowry. His name is Giovanni di Piero Busini, aged six [...].⁴³

- 24 To the charge of ‘abandoning’ her son, Francesco adds thievery:

And since she stole from the house, that is, three cloaks, sheets and so many things that if I get nothing back, I shall demand everything back: I don’t put the amount because I will have to ask those who know the other things, that is, I don’t put the value of what she stole because it is not clear.⁴⁴

- 25 Such insinuations or outright accusations of theft are not uncommon and point to the question of the possession of material goods by widows who leave home, to which I will return shortly. First, it will be interesting to see how, in her *portata*, Lisa presents the whole affair in a different light, and confronting the two narratives can help us eschew the accusations of both abandonment and theft.

- 26 Once widowed, Lisa left the marital home because she did not wish to live with her husband’s nephew or there were no conditions for such cohabitation; we do not know. In Florentine families, the departure of a widow does not implicate that she takes along the children belonging to their father’s “casa”, lineage.⁴⁵ As the restitution of their dowry is far from immediate, the widows must be taken in by some relative and, at best, rely at least on the annual interest due on the dowry credit (usually at the rate of 8%) to sustain themselves. Lisa explains that her ‘exit’ in no way implied a desire to abandon her son, quite the contrary:

I live with Sinibaldo di Filippo because I do not have my [dowry] to live on. Lisa of forty years of age. When I’ve acquired my [assets], that is, my dowry, I want to settle by myself and rent a house and keep my son of five years of age who has nothing from his father’s.⁴⁶

- 27 To take full responsibility for her young son, who has no paternal inheritance, and continue their family life with him in a new home, Lisa must absolutely recover her dowry, so she does not hesitate to sue her husband’s nephew, Francesco Busini. At the time of presenting her *portata*, Lisa has only received a small part of the dowry: 74 florins, 30 of which are in cash (deposited at her host’s bank) and the rest in ‘household goods’, in particular a bed and clothes:

[She has] her dowry, which was three hundred and five florins, of which she is due and still have to receive from the inheritance of Betto di Giovanni Busini 231 florins; I am on trial with Francesco, the son of said Betto, because the assets of said Betto and his heirs are obliged to pay for the said dowry. For even now I cannot have neither capital nor usufruct of it. And of the said dowry I had forty-four florins of household goods and clothes for my use, that is, a bed.



And I have thirty florins [...] of the money I had from the said dowry on the bank of Sinibaldo di Filippo and associates. And from the money entrusted to Sinibaldo di Filippo, I need to invest some in the lawsuit to get back my dowry: I have already spent five florins on it.⁴⁷

28 Lisa points out that the household goods and clothes received were valued and deducted from the dowry debt: would she have misappropriated other items that Francesco did not want or could not value? We will never know, but beyond this focus on household goods, I would argue that it is the whole return of the dowry that is perceived as a theft from the “casa” and its heirs.

29 Francesco Busini is also indebted to his stepmother, Vaggia, who was widowed without children in June 1425 and left home.⁴⁸ Faced with the impossibility of obtaining her dowry any time soon, Vaggia managed to negotiate an agreement with her stepson without going to court, i.e. she *wanted* him to sign a receipt, a ‘writ’, and to pay her an annuity of 48 florins (8% of interest on her credit) due until the dowry was returned to her:

I have to give to monna Vagia, the wife to Betto my father, six hundred gold florins for the dowry that she gave and put in the house, and she does not have it back, as it appears from a writ the said monna Vagia has from my hand: I give her eight per cent a year, as she wants.⁴⁹

30 Widows who ‘leave’ the home are often childless women, who must demand their dowry from their husband’s heirs, collaterals or more distant relatives, with whom the ties and responsibilities are less stringent. Caterina, Quintino’s childless widow, has taken the “Ghuentino’ heirs” to court to get back “a hundred florins and the *sopradota* which is 50 pounds”⁵⁰ and while waiting for the results she has no other means of living but her work.

31 When these childless widows are second wives, are they the ‘bad stepmothers’, the merciless *novercae* who, on the death of their husbands, do not hesitate to ruin their stepchildren by forcing them to return their dowry? Even in this family context, the evidence from the *catasto* hints at the fragility of the bond between stepmothers and their husband’s first-bed children when, on his death, the absence of children of their own immediately makes these widows strangers in their stepchildren’s and heirs’ home.⁵¹ They can leave of their own accord but are sometimes thrown out, deprived not only of their dowry but of everything. A woman from a good family such as Francesca di Neri Lucardesi, widow of Bindo di Francesco degli Agli, by whom she had no children, describes herself, aged 66, as destitute, forced to rent a house ‘by the month’, waiting to obtain her dowry from her stepchildren:

She is renting a house [of] ser Giovanni Ghini in the parish of San Felice in Piazza and rents it from him on a month-to-month basis, at 26 soldi a month, and a little bed where she is staying, which her daughter has given to her; and moreover, she has debts [...]. She is due from the children of Bindo degli Agli for the restitution of her dowry and donation three hundred florins, fifty pounds, as the charter of her dowry says. The said monna Francesca has nothing else, neither household goods, nor bed, nor house, nor clothes except those which she wears [...]. She commends herself to you for the love of God because she has nothing else to live on and is struggling and can earn nothing.⁵²

32 Testimonies like this invite us to take a closer look at the specific material conditions of widows who left home.

“She has neither a house, nor household goods”

33 The lack of a home: this is what Caterina, widow of Paolo di Napoleone de’ Franzesi,⁵³ denounces and this is common to all widows who, on their husbands’ death, leave the marital home. Because, unlike men, women are not the “casa” – the lineage – and therefore they do not have houses: they do not receive one in dowry, almost always given in cash. In Florence, marriage is virilocal and therefore brides move into their husband’s house: they enter with two wedding chests containing their trousseau, but apart from these chests, women have no furniture, not even a bed (unlike Venetian brides⁵⁴). In Florence, in fact, the furnishing of the bridal chamber is the responsibility of the husband, who also provides all the ‘furnishings’ for the bed. In fact, sheets and blankets are not part of the trousseau of Florentine women, who only receive objects, linen, and clothing for their personal use, all of which are valued as integral parts of their dowry.⁵⁵ The women are also deprived of all those utensils and everyday



objects that they sum up in one word: “masserizie”, household goods. Newly-weds find everything they need in their husband’s house; when they leave it as widows, they will only take their trousseau (or what remains of it) with them, in one of the two wedding chests, which, in such circumstances, will in fact be mismatched.⁵⁶ This sort of material extraneousness of women to the house they enter by marriage cannot but have consequences when they ‘leave’ it as widows.

Material impoverishment

34 How destitute was a widow seems to have been measured by their access to “masserizie”, the household goods, as if their scarcity, or absence, defined the very condition of widowhood: “I do not have any household goods, because I remained a widow and without household goods”, explains Gemma, widow of a “modest gunsmith”.⁵⁷ Thus, Lionetta and her daughter Nanna have “a house where they live [...], with the very few *masserizie* that are required of us widows”.⁵⁸ Lulla also owns a house “with *masserizie* that are required of a poor little widow”.⁵⁹ A widow being expelled from her marital home allows us to observe the immediacy of this material impoverishment. In his account book, the painter Neri di Bicci notes with some indignation when, in 1458, he welcomed his sister Andrea into his house together with her son Bicci, whom Santi, her late husband’s first-born son, had thrown out of the house:

They did not bring anything, neither clothes, nor household goods; Andrea without a gown and a cloak, only a bad, sad and ugly dress; and so she brought Bicci; and that was because Santi did not want her in the house, and so she went away and came here, because her husband Andrea Chatastini was dead.⁶⁰

35 Under certain circumstances, widows may even be left without everyday clothes: “I left the house [of my husband] without any household goods, I left only with a poor skirt that my father brought me [...]” recalls Felice, widow of a servant of the *Signoria*, before adding: “I turned back to my father’s home, on his *masserizia*”.⁶¹

36 When a widow “settles to live on her own” she must therefore spend a little of her dowry to set up house: Bionda di Simone Ristori, widow of messer Antonio da Montecatini “says she has to buy household goods such as beds and bedding, linen and woollen cloths and other household goods needed by her because in this year she has moved to live on her own in the aforesaid half house and finds herself without any household goods”.⁶² Niccolosa, who “needs to provide herself with household goods and clothes”, reports that she is also lacking clothes.⁶³ Of all the furniture, the bed is the most immediately indispensable.⁶⁴ Lisa, the second widowed wife of Nofri di Azzo Dini, lives alone in a rented house and has “a poor bed for two people and a little *maserizia* as a person alone needs; and all the clothes I wear, those to go out are really threadbare, and black”.⁶⁵ Widows linger on the description of their bed to emphasize its indigence – a little bed,⁶⁶ even a poor little bed⁶⁷ –, and stress their great poverty by pointing out its absence.⁶⁸ Francesca Lucardesi had to borrow “a little bed” from her daughter,⁶⁹ while Domenica di Giovanni da Vinci went into debt to buy “a bed with some wooden plank” but had to pawn a blanket to get five florins.⁷⁰

37 Household goods and clothes are sometimes given to widows as an advance on the return of a dowry far from coming, to enable them to gather at once a bare minimum of furnishings for their new home. Lisa, widow of Piero Busini, thus received “forty-four florins of *masserizie*, and clothes, that is a bed for my own use”.⁷¹ To avoid future disputes, the objects delivered are generally estimated (by second-hand estimators and dealers⁷²) because their value will then be deducted from the rest of the dotal credit. Caterina, widow of Agnolo di Boninsegna, discovers, in fact, that she should have reckoned better with her husband’s heirs because, from the forty florins of her dowry that she is still owed “they want to discount ten florins of household goods from me, saying that I have had them”; and she adds: “and I could ask them for the *sopradota*”,⁷³ owed to her because she is a childless widow.

38 The more modest the dowry, the more likely it is that everyday objects, sometimes a few work tools, will enter into its restitution. Simona, widow of a woodcutter, still remembers receiving nothing but “a few household goods for my dowry, worth ten florins”,⁷⁴ while Carità, widow of Ugolino, complains of the poor quality of the “weaving looms, which were given to her for her dowry with certain old and bad combs”, which she would like to resell but “I do not know to whom because of their bad craftsmanship, the looms and combs are worth twelve florins”.⁷⁵

The *portata* of Taddea, widow of Albizzo di Carlo dei Neri, points to another concern of



these lonely widows concerning the house. To be able to pay five years' rent in advance to the landlord, and thus be sure of having a roof over her head while waiting for the dowry to be returned in full, Taddea resold part of the household goods received as dowry:

200 florins for my dowry, when I will have retrieve them got from the heirs of the said Albizo and from others that were obliged, of which I have got about seventy florins of *masserizie*, and the rest I have to get back and I do not hope they can all be recovered. [...] I am renting [a place in] via del Fondaccio, [parish of] San Jacopo Oltrarno [...] and I have paid in advance five years with the money that I have made from selling the above-mentioned *masserizie*.⁷⁶

A home to 'come back to'

40 The uncertainty and precariousness of widows' dwellings explain and justify the existence of a safety net provided by both paternal and marital wills to ensure a roof over the heads of daughters and wives who might leave the marital home.

41 The "tornata", i.e. the right (sanctioned by municipal statutes) of women to "come back", to take refuge, more or less permanently, in the family home in case of need or widowhood, is also a bequest that Florentine testators regularly made to consanguineous women: first and foremost to daughters (73%), but also to sisters (40%) and nieces (35%).⁷⁷ Thus, there are family houses made available to widows by testamentary bequest, such as the one in which live Mea, Nanna and Tommasa, three widowed sisters, "each of whom has the *tornata* of the house during their life".⁷⁸ Otherwise, the widows of the family must be taken in by the brother who has inherited the house. Pippa, the widow of Zanobi di Taldo, emphasises that this hospitality can also only be temporary, while waiting for the dowry: "I have no house, no roof and no *masserizie*: I for now, I come back to my brother. I beg you on God's side, to be recommended to you".⁷⁹

42 Gemma, another sister of the painter Neri di Bicci, also moved into his house three months after being widowed, in November 1458: "and she came to my home with her son Piero [...]. She was pregnant and she brought to my house some household goods for her needs, and she brought her slave Lisa". But this was a brief cohabitation, perhaps dictated by Gemma's pregnancy, which was momentarily in need of help. In January of the following year, Gemma, in fact, moved to a house in the vicinity of her brother's "and she brought there what she had brought in my house".⁸⁰ For Antonia di Bonaccorso Boscoli, widow of Andrea Tolosini, hospitality in her brother's house instead became permanent because she had received a farm and a wood as her dowry and, as she explained: "I have nothing else in this world, neither bed, nor household goods nor anything else, this is the pure truth".⁸¹ But not always those who inherit the family home are willing to share it with a sister. Caterina, widow of the furrier Giovanni di Domenico, with two dependent daughters, had to reckon with a brother who was not exactly welcoming: "And to this woman was left by an uncle the *tornata* of the house, and her brother, for the sake of this right on the house, gave her a loft for her dwelling."⁸²

43 Some husbands who know they are leaving a widow – often their second wife – facing the prospect of an uneasy cohabitation with their first-bed children, take care to provide her with a roof over her head, specifying in their will that she will enjoy the usufruct of a house, at the very least.⁸³ Giovanni di Gentile degli Albizzi is the owner of one of these family houses temporarily occupied by a widow, in which "lives monna Iachopa, widowed wife of the late Salvestro my uncle and her husband; it was left to her for all the time of her life and afterwards it has to return freely to me".⁸⁴ Lorenza, widow of the butcher Michele di Guardino, who disposes of "a house with *masserizie* for her own use, left to her for all the time of her life by the said Michele, her husband",⁸⁵ probably lives next to her husband's first-bed children, who appear among the neighbours of the house, without, however, living with them. Bartola declares two adjoining houses: from the first, received as dowry restitution, she earns a modest rent, while she lives in the other and remembers: "Matteo her husband left them to her by will so that she could not be driven out" ...⁸⁶

44 In the husband's last will, the bequest of a nuptial bed has not only a symbolic meaning, but also an eminently practical function. Lisa de' Mozzi, widow of the apothecary Lionardo di Berto, does not fail to specify that she has received a house *and* a "little bed", with the condition that "after her life the bed will be left to [the hospital of] Santa Maria Nuova, and the house to Berto di Lionardo [his first-bed son]".⁸⁷ Agnola, widow of Francesco di Giunta Mercati, did not have a house, but in addition to the dowry of 140 florins, her husband's testamentary executors gave her eight pounds "for me to buy a blanket" and what little bed



linen and clothing she listed, with a wealth of epithets that nevertheless translate their varied state of wear and tear:

I also received from them, for the money given to me by Francesco, these things, that is: 1 torn garment; 1 pair of patched-up sheets; 1 shabby quilt; 1 black cloak, torn; 1 black cup, shoddy; 1 shirt, shorten; 1 miserable sleeveless robe in a sad state; 1 torn cape. All the aforesaid things estimated by the estimator of the ghabella de' concontratti lire LXXX.⁸⁸

45 There is, therefore, on the part of both fathers and husbands, a real concern for the housing of daughters and wives who, with widowhood, may find themselves “homeless”. The story of Fia di Filippo Capponi is, however, emblematic of the intrinsic weakness of these testamentary provisions to protect lonely widows whose implementation depends substantially on the benevolence of the heirs. Fia is a woman from a very good family who, in 1427, had been the widow for at least five years of Nofri d’Andrea di Nero di Filippo, by whom she had no children. “In order not to lose her good rights”, she entrusts to her *portata* a long and detailed account of all the conflicts she has had and still has with her husband’s nephews and heirs.

46 From her father, Fia had received a conspicuous dowry of 800 florins as well as the right of the “tornata” to her father’s house not only in the city but also in the country residence of Legnaia, in case of need or widowhood:

Also to the aforementioned monna Fia the *tornata* of the house which belonged to Filippo, his father, as mentioned in his will; the said house is in the parish of San Iachopo Oltrarno [...]. And, moreover, he left her the *tornata* of his place of Legnia, placed in the parish of San Chiricho.⁸⁹

47 Her husband, Nofrio, was a thoughtful and foresighted man, well aware of the greater difficulties a widow could face when her husband’s heirs were not her children, and for this very reason, in his will, he had made a number of provisions to ensure his wife excellent living conditions during her lonely widowhood. But for years, his heirs – his nephews *ex fratre* – did not give much consideration to their uncle’s last wishes:

The said monna Fia, by Nofri’s last will, has to receive from his said heirs a hundred florins of household goods. It remains in the hands of the aforesaid Piero di Giovanni [di Neri di Lippo, nephew of her husband], adding to this her *masseritie* and he has not even to this day wished to return it to her. The said heirs of the said Nofri have also to pay any fiscal burden or charge that may be placed on the said monna Fia, notwithstanding that the said heirs declare that they are not willing and are not under obligation [to do so], and this is clear from the will of the said Nofri. Furthermore, the aforementioned Andrea and brothers are under [the following] obligation benefitting the aforesaid monna Fia, by the said testament, in case the aforementioned Fia was not happy to live in the house of the aforementioned Nofri, whose use he bequeathed her through his will: in such case and then, they have to rent a fifteen florins a year house, notwithstanding the fact that the aforementioned Andrea and brothers, the previously mentioned heirs, say they are under no such obligation, either because they are not the heirs or because there is nothing left from Nofri’s estate, or because of any other reason, so that little or nothing can be discussed.⁹⁰

48 Fia, in fact, found herself forced to live in a rented house at her own expense, and not at the expense of the husband’s nephews, in “a house of twelve florins a year and less she cannot do”; but for some reason we do not know, she could not even count on the *tornata* to her father’s house.

49 Above all, the husband’s heirs were very slow to return the dowry and it was necessary to reach a ‘concordia’ (a more informal agreement than an arbitration), which obliged them to pay 64 florins of annual interest at the customary rate of 8% on the dowry debt of 800 florins, pending its repayment:

Andrea di Giovanni di Neri di Lippo and his brothers, as heirs of Giovanni their father and as heirs of Nofri d’Andrea di Neri di Lippo and possessors of his assets, have to give for the dowry of the said monna Fia [due to] an agreement that I took below, eight hundred gold florins and 325 florins for interests, and of this dowry from then on said agreement was made: all in all, they cannot consider themselves free of liabilities until 1,125 florins have been transferred.⁹¹

50 The accumulation of a debt of no less than 325 florins of interest still to be paid (in addition to the dowry) would therefore date this ‘concordia’ to at least five years before 1427 and Fia would have been widowed around 1422, perhaps even earlier. Here, then, is a potentially wealthy widow protected by no less than two wills, paternal and marital, who, in her lonely old age suffers a patrimonial violence that seriously impoverishes her. And given her age (she says



she is eighty years old), we can also suspect the nephews of cynically awaiting their aunt's death.

A house for the dowry: in the city, in the countryside

- 51 The *tornata*, in the paternal or marital home, remains a right of usufruct offering widows a roof over their heads only for life. In the elite, the family house(s) are almost never given in full ownership to women, while they may be included in the restitution of more modest dowries, always in order to ensure at least a home to the widows. By decision of the *Pupilli* officials who administer her husband's inheritance, Nanna, widow of a comb-maker, owns "a house divided in two parts [...] in via Ghibellina, in which she lives with her few and poor *masserizie*; this house was given to her for her dowry, or part of it, by the *Pupilli* officials [...], I do not think it is worth florins 250".⁹² Vittoria, the widow of a shearman, has received "a house, which I have taken for my dowry, in the parish of San Filice in Piazza, a place called via della Perghola [...]. My whole dowry is worth 73 florins".⁹³ From the house, the only property she received "for her dowry", Caterina, a young widow of thirty-one years old, derived a small income which allowed her to survive: "she has rented it to Papi di Franciesho di Scholaio, for 12 florins a year, and I have to live, and buy shoes and clothes [on this income]".⁹⁴
- 52 With the goods coming from their dowry, some widows have the means to look for a house and furnish it. In the city, housing solutions are manifold, from rented houses, sublets and flats to the purchase of accommodation in usufruct offered by hospitals, churches, confraternities, etc.⁹⁵ In her *portata*, Bice, Ghinozzo Doffi's widow, claimed that she would soon leave her brother's house where she had temporarily "returned", because she had recently received a farm from which she earned an annual income of twenty florins: "At present I occupy part of my brother's house, but I will have to rent a little house and buy some little *masserizie*, because I have nothing".⁹⁶ But the condition under which dowries were returned could have a direct impact on the housing of widows, forcing them, for example, to settle in the countryside. Mattea, who possessed only half of a farm, had no other choice: "all this is what I have regained from my dowry" [...]; I live on the aforementioned half of a farm with my household goods and tools for my use".⁹⁷ Caterina, Bettello's widow, also declares "a little farm where I live with some household goods, I had it for my dowry".⁹⁸ I will return shortly to this 'villeggiatura' which, when it becomes permanent, is clearly an option dictated by impoverishment, as explained by Antonia, widow of Niccolao del Fede, "who cannot live in Florence out of poverty".⁹⁹

Widows' pensions

- 53 A roof, a bed, some household goods and clothes: but what were the dotal resources widows could live on? We cannot estimate their minimum annual needs, but it may be useful to remember that, in 1427, the *catasto* officials considered 14 florins a year to be the amount needed to maintain a person.¹⁰⁰ Ideally, with an annual interest at the average rate of 8%, a dowry of 175 florins was therefore likely to ensure this income for a widow. Many women had resources well below this minimal threshold, which they supplemented with their work or by recourse to assistance and charity.¹⁰¹
- 54 We have just emphasized how crucial the way the dowry is returned is in ensuring a widow could sustain herself. The *catasto*, better than any other sources, captures the complexity and articulation of women's assets and, more generally, of women's resources. I will not dwell on women's non-dotal assets or working activities, which I have already discussed elsewhere,¹⁰² but rather highlight the remarkable plasticity of the dowry, which, between marriage and widowhood, often changes form, value and legal *status*: from credit to full property; from capital entirely handed over to the husband to capital only partially returned to the widow or even squandered and lost; from movable property (received from the father at the time of the marriage) to immovable property taken from the husband's inheritance; but also from full property to life annuity. The timing of restitution also matters and, as we have already pointed out several times, restitution could be a long-drawn-out affair. In the meantime, widows were entitled to receive an annual interest of around 8% on their dotal credit, in the form of an annuity in cash or in goods.



Money vs. money, money vs. land

55 It takes a long time if the dowry is to be returned in cash because the heirs of a widow's husband generally do not have any immediately available monetary assets. Seven months after her husband's demise, Biagia di Piero Baroncelli, Filippo Arrigucci's widow, has barely received half of her dowry of 1,000 florins and estimates that she will have to wait "just as long" for the missing 575 florins:

Four hundred florins, which she has in her house, which she received on 14 June 1427 from Nicholò del Belaccio and associates, who is a notary of the *Pupilli* officials, as part of her dowry, to receive from the inheritance of Filippo Arighucci, and he gave her 424 ½ florins, the rest of which she spent during the time she was a widow, she had a hard time. And she must have from the said inheritance five hundred and seventy-five florins for the rest of her dowry. She has been a widow for seven months and still I think that it will take her as long to get them; and *they give her no interests* and estimate what seems reasonable to you – florins 575.¹⁰³

56 In the eyes of the husband's heirs, a dowry, even a large one, does not seem to be a capital worthy of interest and, like Biagia Baroncelli, many widows complain that they do not even receive this income that should make the early days of widowhood less difficult.

57 A systematic study of the restitution of Florentine dowries is still lacking, but the overall impression gained from both the *catasto* and the family books suggests that dowries were rarely returned as they had been handed over.¹⁰⁴ In the absence of liquidity, families and institutions faced with the restitution of a dowry to a widow (her husband's first creditor) ended up assigning her houses, lands, estates taken from the inheritance. But this solution could displease creditors and debtors.

58 Lorenzo di Giovanni Benci, who is helping his sister Francesca, widow of Giannozzo Caffarelli, to recover her dowry of 600 florins and 250 florins from a bequest from her first husband, complains about the poor state of the few possessions already handed over by her husband's heirs: two farms and a house valued at 150 florins and 70 florins in cash "which, because the stables and portico of the farm fell down, she spent most of the said money on rebuilding them".¹⁰⁵ In order to recover the missing 630 florins, Lorenzo would prefer to find an agreement at the cost of losing part of the credit in order not to have 'possessions' and to avoid the courts:

And many times, I, Lorenzo, was willing, to lose 100 florins to the benefit of Francesco Chaferelli and have money instead of land, and I would offer it again, like these who say of the bad debtor 'I agree to have only a part of my credit instead of a lawsuit'.¹⁰⁶

59 From the point of view of the indebted heirs, always in search of liquidity to pay the dowry, the handing over of 'possessions' to the widow, which is often perceived as embezzlement ("she wanted to take our [properties]"), must be avoided: it is therefore a matter of stalling and negotiating the deferment of the repayment of the dowry credit. Niccolò and Guido di Biagio da Panzano, who owed 230 florins (with interest) to an uncle's widow for two years, finally negotiated an agreement with her that gave them another two years to 'liberate' the estate that the widow had obtained as a guarantee of her credit:

We have to give to monna Maria, widow of Angniolo di Francesco da Panzano, for the obligation of the dowry of 230 florins, we gave the surety when the said monna Maria got married; and for this obligation she got the mortgage on our properties [...]; and because she wanted to take our [properties], we are obliged to give her 230 florins in term of two years, starting from the first day of April 1427. The aforementioned farm was half of the property of Angniolo di Francesco their uncle and they take it for all for them because they are obliged to the aforementioned 230 florins for the surety they gave. And moreover, they had to give her per year for the interest of her dowry, 20 florins for each year, which are in two years forty florins, and thus while she keeps it [the farm].¹⁰⁷

Property "in the management of widowed women"

60 The formation of these estates also raises the question of their management by a widow, a recent and very promising field of investigation.¹⁰⁸ Between the late 14th and early 15th centuries, rare yet precious clues to the existence of practical records kept by women of the Florentine elite – of which no material traces remain – have been identified.¹⁰⁹ Even in the *catasto* of 1427, we learn incidentally of the existence of the "book of monna Tita", where



Bartola, the peasant woman who worked the widow's farm, knows that Tita's debt is recorded: "monna Tita, widow to Matteo Antinori, who lives in the Fondaccio, must receive thirty florins for the rest of the long-overdue rent of the farm: it appears on the book of the said monna Tita".¹¹⁰ Perhaps there was also a 'book of monna Lisa'? Lisa, the widow of Nofri di Azzo Dini, is one of the very rare contributors who personally drafts her *portata*, concluding it as follows: "I have written it myself, I did not know how to say it better. May Christ protect you and give you his grace".¹¹¹ Lisa therefore knows how to hold the pen and the precision, the 'style' in which she declares and dates the bonds of her public debt titles, and above all her debts and credits, leads me to speculate that she copied this information from one of her account books; it is only a hypothesis. Even if, with a few very rare exceptions, we have to wait until the 1470s to find the first women's books kept in the archives in Florence,¹¹² we can still guess from these clues and more explicit testimonies that, for almost a century, women of the elite had begun to delve written management practices.

61 Once again incidentally, the *catasto* also allows us to grasp the management difficulties stemming from inexperience, as for example in the account of the young Cilia, widow of Attaviano degli Ubaldini in 1415. Cilia owned a piece of land in Settignano, in the immediate vicinity of Florence, which her husband had bought and leased to a certain Corsino back in 1408; but "the said Chorsino have given nothing from 1415 until now. Since 1415, because I have been a widow and my son an underage orphan, I do not know who has worked it; if I know, I will declare it in *chatasto*".¹¹³ Eight years therefore passed without Cilia exercising any control over this property, and she identifies her widowhood and the youth of her son as the reason for this neglect.

62 Guidaccio di Iacopo Pecori clearly tells us that the property left "to the management of widowed women" was not administered very well when he declares the non-dotal patrimony inherited by "monna Tommasa his wife, daughter of Conte de' Medici" which included "a farm with arable land and vineyard and a house to live in, under the government of widowed women already xxvii years ago: everything there has fallen into disrepair and should be mended"...¹¹⁴ Inexperience, neglect, and abandonment, certainly, but the *catasto* also brings to light harassment of all kinds suffered by widows and their property. One example will suffice here, although the widows' *portate* allow us to thematize economic violence against women in its various facets.¹¹⁵ Agnola, widow of Neri da Ricasoli, also attempted to resist her relative's abuse, but in vain: "I rented the aforementioned mill ten years ago or more to Gilia da Ricasoli for bushels 12 of grain a year. I can have nothing of it, I consider it lost. If you can take them from him, let them be to the Comune, but it would be better to give them than to receive them I have tried several times to take it out of his hands, but I could not".¹¹⁶

63 Alongside widows who administer (or have administered) even conspicuous landed estates, we find many little country widows ("vedovette") who suffer from the inadequacy of the assets received in repayment of their dowry. Piera, widow of Domenico Bartoli, lives in the countryside "as widows do" – as if to emphasize that this retreat to one's own land is a rather common practice – "because in Florence I have not a rented house".¹¹⁷ In fact, as I have already mentioned, one stays in the country "out of necessity"¹¹⁸ or more precisely "for being unable to pay rent and taxes".¹¹⁹ The impossibility of living in Florence is a clear sign of an impoverishment due to widowhood: "I spend most of my time in the country, but I have such a small income that, being in Florence, I could not live on it", declares Caterina, widow of Agnolo di Boninsegna, "but when I am there, my home is in the house of Filippo di Piero, tailor in via Borgo Alegri [...] who is my cousin".¹²⁰ Also, Francesca di Giovanni Benci, who lived in the house of the farm received as dowry, could count on her brother's hospitality "when she is in Florence, she returns with Lorenzo her brother [...] so they have a good understanding".¹²¹

64 For women from good families who usually went to the countryside in the summertime, moving away from the city permanently, 'staying *in villa*' but 'out of need', represented a real social step down. Giovanni Boccaccio even makes the widow exiled to the countryside a protagonist of the *Decameron*: "There, near the cathedral, there was once a gentlewoman, monna Piccarda by name, a widow, who had an estate of her own with a house that was not too large; and since she was not the wealthiest woman in the world, she lived there most of the year".¹²² Cara Tolosini and her daughter-in-law, a widow with children to take care of, would also have a house in Florence, but they explain: "our conditions are so reduced that we have to stay poorly *in villa*. We are reduced to staying *in villa* at this farm out of necessity".¹²³ Lisa, widow of Tandi Franzesi with two widowed sisters, the first of a Squarcialupi and the other of a Ricasoli, must also acknowledge: "it is out of poverty [that] they have stood in villa".¹²⁴

One can, in fact, be the owner of a farm and not have sufficient resources to live on, as Caterina di Francesca di Vanni, widow of Segna da Montebuiano, explains: "the said farm was



given to the aforementioned monna Caterina by Nerone di Segna da Monte Buiano her stepson for 230 florins of her dowry. The farm is rented by Stefano di Guccio, who lives on the said farm, and gives her 26 bushels of grain per year. The good woman does not have anything else and she lives poorly”.¹²⁵ Isolation and insecurity, insufficient resources, and the difficulties of management¹²⁶ that increase with time, illness or old age, make life in the countryside unbearable. Apollonia, the widow of Niccolò Gherardini, who lived on her land in Rignano, “needs to come back to Florence and rent somewhere because it is no more possible, being old, to live there”.

66 Were dowries returned in cash perhaps easier to manage? This is what Albizzina Belandi, Giovanni Bugliaferro’s widow, the owner of a vineyard who would like to be relieved of the management costs and risks of random production, suggests: “I would gladly sell the said vineyard and it would be much better to invest the money on the *Monte*”.¹²⁷

Women in the credit market

67 The participation of women in the credit market, which the *catasto* allows us to observe in its various facets, still remains to be investigated.¹²⁸ Here I would like to draw attention not so much on women’s use of credit (borrowing, reliance on pawn lending, etc.), perhaps better investigated, but on their role as investors at various levels. Reading the widows’ *portate*, we see that women’s capital, dotal and nondotal, is often invested in the *Monte comune* whose bonds seem to represent a safe haven for their assets, that yields a modest but secure interest rate of ca. 5%. What is the role played by women on this public debt market? What is the volume of these investments? How do they diversify? These are all questions which we have only recently begun to investigate.¹²⁹

68 Women also participate, as passive investors, in production and trade by entrusting their money to large commercial or banking companies.¹³⁰ These ‘discretionary’ deposits, which promise an interest rate of around 8%, (similar to that owed for a dotal credit) are more profitable than *Monte*’s bonds but also entail greater risks:¹³¹ this is evidenced by the portfolio of Caterina Alberti, widow of Piero Corsini, who invested 1,800 florins in seven different companies of bankers, silk or wool merchants, and reports having lost almost 300 florins in the bankruptcy of Bernardo Guasconi.¹³² Mattea di ser Luca Bambocci, widow of Bindaccio dei Cerchi, also recalls having lost 113 florins in the bankruptcy of the “banker” Lorenzo di Andrea, “money she had given him before he went bankrupt and could never get anything back”.¹³³ In addition to bankruptcies, widows also ran the risk of being deceived by family members who took their investments and forgot to pay interest on them. Indeed, judging by the still vivid memories of Tellina di Giovenco de’ Medici, widow of Bartolo Bonfiglioli, relatives are not always trustworthy: having reached the age of seventy, Tellina remembers that, as early as twenty-five years earlier, “in 1392 or thereabouts, Antonio di Giovenco her brother received from her dowry 200 florins and promised to give her interests and she never could have either capital nor fruit, so that she did not have them as the sons of Antonio di Giovenco make fun of her”.¹³⁴ Here, too, we observe that the *catasto* is perceived by this elderly widow as a place of public and reliable writing where she can assert this old unpaid debt.

69 On the other hand, the *catasto* do not show a purely banking activity of the great Florentine hospitals (which, in fact, is documented later, from the end of the 15th century¹³⁵), comparable to the one developed, at least since the early 14th century, by Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, which attracted an exclusively female clientele ready to entrust their money to the institution.¹³⁶ At the beginning of the 15th century – as we shall see later –, Florentine hospitals seem to deal more in annuities. On the other hand, the *catasto* offers a very interesting glimpse into a small world of credit intermediation still to be explored.¹³⁷ There is, in fact, a more informal credit market, at the neighbourhood level, where artisans and shopkeepers operate, in addition to their business, as both deposit and investment banks (probably also lending, and perhaps even pawnbroking¹³⁸). A widow, like anyone else, could therefore entrust her money to the neighbourhood shopkeeper, “in deposit” with the possibility of withdrawing it “at her convenience”, but without receiving “any interest”.¹³⁹ Small savings, the fruits of a lifetime of work, could also be sheltered in these neighbourhood stalls, as Caterina di Cristofano da Siena recounts, bringing together her entire existence as a servant and immigrant in this very short *portata* with a strong autobiographical flavour:



I, the said monna Caterina, have on the shop of di Piero di Giovanni Cardini, wool merchant in via Mezo, 24 florins that I earned during the 18 years I was a servant in Florence and I don’t have anything else. But I, monna Catilina, can no longer serve

because I am old and I am now 68 years old and I have no other means of support in this world, except some wool [to spin], and I live in a rented house which belongs to the sons of Ricardo di Niccolò, whom I have to pay 6 florins a year.¹⁴⁰

70 Caterina has nothing more to declare, yet she tells us so much. The *portate* of poor widows, however brief, are often eloquent: “Monna Bartolomea, widow to Master Giovanni [who] taught children, wove linen cloth, is LXVIII years old, is a poor person. She has thirty florins in her purse, which she entrusted to Salvestro di Salvestro di maestro Bonaiuto at his discretion. She has nothing else but a bit of *masserizia* and a linen loom”.¹⁴¹

71 In addition to small savings, these credit intermediaries also took in capital to invest and make a profit, a bit like that grocer from Orvieto, the protagonist of a *novella* by Franco Sacchetti, who takes a hundred florins on deposit with the intention of investing in the purchase of meat and cheese, promising a lavish profit to his creditor.¹⁴² These credit shops did not draw their clientele exclusively from the lower classes: a widow with a high-sounding surname such as Lisabetta Abadinghi, widow of Banco da Verrazzano, recounts that between 1421 and 1423 she diversified her investments by entrusting as many as 1,425 florins to five different shops, belonging to a goldsmith, an apothecary, a banker, a grocer and a shoemaker.¹⁴³ To their investors, these traders hand over a receipt, a “writ”, and promise to pay interest of around 7,5 or 8%. But it also happens that the “discretion”, the interest, is, precisely, more discretionary – “what he wants”¹⁴⁴ – as can his payment. Caterina, widow of the furrier Giovanni di Domenico, who deposited the 140 florins of her dowry with a goldsmith complains: “I almost never had something from my money, sometimes a pack of flour, sometimes a pack of wheat, to his discretion, but his discretion is big”.¹⁴⁵ Giovanna, widow of Simone da Volterra, lets us glimpse the risks of this informal, sometimes oral, management of credit, based on trust,¹⁴⁶ but a trust that was sometimes misplaced: “I still have to get from the goldsmith of Borgo Ognisanti about twenty florins, I don’t know how much because he has not wished to discuss this with me for a long time, and he does not want to give me anything, so I reckon it’s worthless”.¹⁴⁷ Monna Francesca di Tofano di Tommaso has more “writs” from her two “bankers”, one of whom is “Nanni di Lorenzo who kept the apothecary’s shop in San Piero Maggiore alle vo[[]te”; the other is in jail, and Francesca also relies on the *catasto* to give greater strength to her rights as a creditor:

Bartolo di Sandro, who is imprisoned, has received 56 florins and even more from me in deposit on several occasions. I, Francesca di Tofano, have written this note here on this *portata* [to remind myself], if he ever comes out of prison, so that I can ask him; and so I beg you, you Officers, that I may be recommended to you so that I do not lose it. I also have a writ of his hand of what I have also given him in deposit, and I have another writ of the hand of Nanni di Lorenzo who had the apothecary’s shop at San Piero Maggiore alle Volte.¹⁴⁸

72 Behind the credit activity of small businesses, in addition to the existence of relations based on trust, we can perhaps discern trade solidarities activated at the onset of widowhood. Margherita, a “widow without *masserizia* and with no money” was probably married to a poulterer and exploited a network of acquaintances in her husband’s trade (with whom she was perhaps associated): she had, in fact, entrusted her dowry to “Antonio di Domenico poulterer at the old market and he made her a writ of his hand to give her at a certain time the said four hundred pounds” and with her 13-year-old daughter “return on the *masserizia* and rent of monna Francescha, widow to Bartolomeo di Partino poulterer, who rents a house of Chardinale di Piero Ruccellai”.¹⁴⁹

Making an annuity, ‘for her life’

73 The dowry’s plasticity can also be seen in the change of widowed property into a life annuity. Faced with the risk of loneliness and impoverishment in old age, widows seek to permanently dispose of their capital or property received as a dowry in exchange for an annuity for the rest of their existence.

74 Sometimes they even alienate the dotal credit they were not even able to take possession of. Faced with this impossibility, the widows end up negotiating with their debtor – usually a brother-in-law – the transformation of the dotal credit into a life annuity, at the same rate of interest of 8% due on dowries awaiting repayment, but with the difference that the dotal debt will be extinguished on the death of the widow. Caterina, widow of Andrea di Val di Pesa (seventy years old), receives from a fellow villager (perhaps her brother-in-law) four bushels of



wheat every year as long as she lives “because I ask him my dowry, and after my death it remains to the said Matteo. I have nothing else in this world”.¹⁵⁰ Mea, widow of the shoemaker Stefano di Andreotto, also agreed with her brother-in-law for an annuity of 16 florins a year for a dowry credit of 200 florins, but kept control over half of the capital that she bequeathed to her daughter who was a nun:

the said Mea has to have for her dowry from Pasquale d'Andreotto shoemaker in the front of the Macciana, two hundred gold florins; the said Pasquale should give every year to the said monna Mea for her life for the right of the said dowry sixteen florins every year; and after the death of the said Mea she leaves to the said Pasquale half of the said dowry, that is, one hundred florins, the surplus she wants to be for her daughter who is a nun in the monastery of Santa Orsa in Florence.¹⁵¹

75 Paola, the widow of a baker who has “placed in the hands” of her brother-in-law her very modest dowry of 75 florins with the “promise” of receiving a life annuity, seeks above all to ensure essential food and a little wood for heating: “he gives me twelve bushels of wheat, and eight barrels of wine, and a jar of oil, and six woodpile, and twenty-five pounds of salted meat, and a bushel of walnuts, and a bushel of figs. And he has promised me the above things: some of which is partly fulfilled, and partly not”.¹⁵²

76 To alienate a dowry, or part of it, in exchange for an annuity for life, widows first look for a *partner* in the family. For two widows of the city’s elite, without male children, alienating a landed property or a substantial capital in exchange for an annuity means in the immediate future to free themselves from management worries and in the future to be able to count on the hospitality of their sons-in-law at home. Lottiera dei Bardi, who has donated a farm to her married daughter, thus obtains (from her son-in-law) a conspicuous annuity, fixed and secure, in grain; and it is her son-in-law, Bernardo di Salvestro Nardi, who, in declaring his wife’s non-dotal estate, also specifies this commitment: “monna Lottiera, wife to Piero di Arnolfo de’ Bardi, must have every year until she lives, because of the farm of Castel Vecchio that she gave to monna Cosa her daughter and wife to Bernardo Nardi, three bushels of wheat”.¹⁵³ When in 1491, after five years of legal disputes, Costanza Mancini obtained her dowry from her late husband’s nephews, she immediately made a donation of 800 florins to her four daughters, in exchange for a life annuity of 40 florins a year (at an yearly rate of 5%). Two years later, Costanza took back 288 florins that she had entrusted to Giuliano Salviati’s company, again in order to divide it among her daughters, freeing herself of any worries related to the management of a conspicuous capital; but we also see from her account book that, for short periods, she benefits from (paying) hospitality in the homes of her daughters’ husbands.¹⁵⁴

77 The aunts, widows without children, find in their nephews a *partner* with whom to negotiate a life annuity. Caterina, widow of Antonio di messer Giovanni Gherardini, is a maternal aunt who, every year, receives from her nephew Napoleone di Antonio de’ Franzesi a money annuity at the annual rate of 8% for the 200 florins he has given him.¹⁵⁵ To protect themselves against the risk of unfulfilled promises of payment, these widows could go to the notary to establish an actual contract that included a penalty in the event of default. This is what the second-hand dealer Romolo di Lorenzo di Giovanni explains, who, from 1412, pays his paternal aunt Nera a life annuity of 10 florins a year “for florins 100 are taken from her since MCCCXII”; he specifies, in fact, that the aunt “is paid from year to year until she lives from the aforementioned annuity, and if the whole year passes without being paid, she can claim the full amount of 100 gold florins”.¹⁵⁶ Here it is possible to calculate the profitability of the deal and, in 1427, more than twelve years have passed, the aunt is still alive and maybe the nephew is losing out.

78 In 1425, Ermellina had made a donation *inter vivos* to her nephew of a farm in exchange for his maintenance and “tornata”: the nephew, Salvo di Iacopo Risaliti, specifies himself in his *portata* that “the said farm belonged to monna Ermellina my aunt; she donated it to me *inter vivos* in March 1425 and then she has returned in my house permanently and I give her all she needs to live”.¹⁵⁷ In this kind of *welfare* before *welfare*,¹⁵⁸ protection in old age is something that is negotiated with relatives: for widowed and elderly aunts, assistance and sometimes even hospitality in the family, in a home where they can end their days, is therefore not free of charge, but in the end, everyone benefits from it. At the age of eighty-five, Maddalena is hosted by her nephew to whom she has handed over one of her farms: “I live in the house of Piero d’Andrea my nephew; he sustains me, and I give him this income”.¹⁵⁹ Nanna, widow of a dyer, also “turns for the expenses to the said Domenico di Lorenzo”, the nephew to whom she gave her one hundred florins dowry.¹⁶⁰ Women without children, women without male children: these are the widows who, by negotiating an annuity in exchange for the dowry, manage to be “fed” by daughters and nephews, as are the mothers left at home with their heirs.



79 Lonely widows, on the other hand, find in that variegated world of credit intermediation both private citizens and welfare or religious institutions which offer annuities. “Committing” themselves, entrusting themselves to a hospital, a monastery, a parish church is evidently a strategy of elderly and isolated women who fear impoverishment. To widows who “commit” themselves by alienating one of their possessions or a sum of money, these civic bodies offered an annuity and sometimes even a house.¹⁶¹ In 1420, Andrea di Salvi Lotti, the widow of a goldsmith, had alienated 100 florins to secure a small annuity in case of “need”:

In 1420, I made a contract with the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova which was in this form: that I give to the said hospital one hundred florins with the condition that during my lifetime of my life I would be free to ask for eight florins a year and after my life they would be available for the said hospital; and when I did not need it, I did not take the said eight florins because during such time I only received them twice.¹⁶²

80 The further down the social ladder one goes, the more the annuity, however modest, appears as an indispensable complement to other smaller, more random incomes obtained, for example, from interest on *Monte*'s securities, or from subletting part of the house and obviously from work. “My work is to weave wool cloth,” declares Caterina di Piero del Forte, “and if I did not have this life annuity, I could not live on it”. From the parish, in fact, she earns a small income from “my house in which I live and my household goods, after my life I will leave it to Santa Felice in Piazza and that is how I am oblate”.¹⁶³ With a life annuity granted by the convent of Ognissanti in exchange for a hundred florins and the interest from a few bonds of *Monte comune*, Betta, a Dominican tertiary living with a sister, puts together a modest annual income of 20 florins:

I would like to say to the *catasto* officials how, having more than one hundred florins, as I am poor and old, I gave these one hundred florins to Ognissanti and during my life I receive thirteen florins a year; and still I receive seven florins from the *Monte* every year for my life. This is the income that we have in this world, and we are not very healthy in body, and the rent of the house takes three florins, which left seventeen florins; now you have heard the truth from us. God be always in all your actions. We two tertiary have to live on this. The said house is monna Nastasia's, half of it, and the other is Santa Maria Nuova's.¹⁶⁴

81 Pippa, a widow in her sixties “who twists the silk”, also recounts how “she gave to the hospital de' Pinzocheri di San Pago[lo] 50 florins, and they have to give her every year 6 florins, and after her death the said 50 florins belong to the hospital”.¹⁶⁵ With a similar capital of 55 florins, Lisa, widow of Cenni di Tonio, who “takes care of women who give birth”, receives every year “from the abbot of San Branchazio in Florence [...] twelve bushels of wheat and six barrels of wine and a half jar of oil and fifty pounds of salted meat. This is all her assets, and she has her *masserizia*. She has this annuity during her life and then it is left to the monastery”.¹⁶⁶ The religious or charitable institutions that offer these life annuities take the place of fathers or husbands and somehow become the “heirs” of these mostly family-less women who alienate what little patrimony they have left in exchange for a measure of material security.¹⁶⁷

82 Widows also turn to the artisans and shopkeepers we have seen operating on the informal credit market: these, in fact, do not seem to limit themselves to taking deposits “at discretion”, but also offer annuities with sometimes higher interest, between 10% and even 16%. Mattea, for example, receives 14 florins a year for the 100 florins entrusted to “Francesco di Lippo linen merchant [...] with these conditions: every year he must give to me all my life long fourteen florins and after my death they belong to the said Francesco free of obligation”.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, this is a life annuity and not a “deposit”. Caterina, widow of Mino del Chiaro, sublets part of her house for six pounds a year, but also receives an unspecified life annuity (the *alimenta*) from the heirs of a shoemaker to whom she had donated her dowry:

I must have *alimenta* from the heirs of Nicholò di Francesco d'Agnolo shoemaker during all my lifetime [...]. I am so old that I cannot do anything, I am 78 years old, and these *alimenta* must be given to me because I gave my dowry to the said Nicholò, which were 200 florins.¹⁶⁹

83 Iacopa, widow of Piero di Nascimbeni, had a capital of 200 florins: she alienated it to the hospital of San Matteo, which for 100 florins donated by her serves her an annual income of 10 florins, and to a certain “Giovanni di Cecco cereal seller” who, for the same sum, offers a much more advantageous income of 16 florins a year. “The aforementioned monna Iachopa has no other substance in this world”: once the five florins of rent have been deducted, “on



what remains, that is 21 florins, I have to live, infirm and old and sometimes someone helps her as she is poor. May I be commended to you".¹⁷⁰

Conclusion

84 The Florentine *catasto* of 1427 shows that, in practice, there is not any automatism between widowhood and restitution of the dowry, as the law would suggest. Not all widows need their dowry to live. The dowry follows the women in their movements between houses: to obtain it, a widow must "leave", either to have it pass into the house of a new husband or to obtain the resources to live from it; otherwise, the dowry (the maternal inheritance) remains in the *status* of a credit in the deceased husband's estate, placed under the control of the sons and future heirs. The presence of male children in the household is, in fact, the main discriminating factor that either renders widows sedentary or sets them in motion again with their dowry.

85 The husband in his will, then his children and heirs or their guardians can do little to avert the risk of second marriages that require the restitution of her dowry to the widow who has left home. On the other hand, a widowed mother's stay in the household perpetuates her condition of creditor of the property (dotal and non-dotal) that was hers during her marriage and ensures that she is "fed", basically, in both the meanings of the term: she receives bed and board, but in a certain sense she is also beneficiary of *alimenta* (i.e. interests in latin) on dotal credit at the expense of the inheritance for life. Incidentally, the *catasto* does, however, give us a glimpse of some widowed mothers who seem to manage their capital personally and sometimes claim to do "what they want" with it, suggesting that the loss of control over the dowry is not always inescapable. Not to mention that those real reversals of the patrimonial situation are not rare, when the paternal inheritance has gone up in smoke and the maternal dowry, saved from *debacle*, becomes the only resource to support the whole family, often with great difficulty.

86 Widows who leave home and, consequently, must rely on the dowry to remarry or to live, are young women (with or without children, including sons) destined for second marriages, mothers of daughters or women without offspring, lonely and elderly women. In these various family configurations, the deceased husband's inheritance passes to the minor children, to the first-bed children, otherwise to the collateral branch or to the siblings or nephews *ex fratre*; more rarely does it leave the family, bequeathed to charity: the widow then finds herself requesting her dowry from the guardians of the minor children (relatives or *Pupilli* officials), stepchildren, brothers-in-law or their children, religious or welfare bodies. In most cases, these women – sisters-in-law, aunts (wives of paternal uncles) and stepmothers – thus have no direct inheritance links with the heirs of their husband who must return the dowry to them, and sometimes the generational distance loosens furthermore their sense of responsibility towards them, giving rise to resistance and conflicts that lengthen the time it takes to return a dowry indispensable for living.

87 The time between the widow's departure and the restitution of her dowry, with all the difficulties that this implies in the early days of widowhood, is already apparent from many private and judicial sources, and the *catasto* can only enrich the picture by giving widows a voice. Their *portate* are particularly valuable because they highlight another consequence of a widow's departure, hitherto much less investigated: their immediate material impoverishment, which appears as a structural fact, capable even of defining the very state of female widowhood. If widows have "neither house nor household goods", they must therefore derive from their dowry not only their subsistence, but also pay for accommodation and furnish it, sometimes even buy some clothes. The very explicit evidence found in the *catasto* suggests that the special relationship of women with objects, of gender and material culture should also be investigated from this angle.

88 A census such as the *catasto* makes it possible to observe widows' patrimony (of essentially dotal origin, but not only) both in its transformation into landed property and in the form of capital (large and small) enabling women to enter the credit market as passive investors in public institutions such as the *Monte comune* and private banks of various kinds. Here, too, the *portate* prove to be an exceptional source capable of shedding new light on a whole world of small credit intermediaries acting locally: artisans and neighbourhood shopkeepers, more immediately accessible to women from the middle and lower classes than the large merchant companies, offering various 'banking' services, acting as deposit and investment banks and even dispensers of life annuities.



Reading these stories of widows of all social and economic backgrounds, we grasped the volatility of dowries but also their plasticity between marriage and widowhood, and throughout their life cycle, until in old age they can be used for searching for forms of familial security. Among the possible strategies, only the obtention of a fixed income – an annuity negotiated with those still indebted to their dowry, but also with hospitals, religious institutions, or private individuals in exchange for the alienation of a small capital, a house, a piece of land –, offers widows the security of being taken in and ‘fed’, in the family or as if part of the family, until the end of their days.

Bibliographie

Archives

ASFf = Archivio di Stato di Firenze

Primary sources

Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle* = Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, E. Faccioli (ed.), Turin, 1970.

Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* = Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, V. Branca (ed.), Florence, 1960.

Neri di Bicci, *Le ricordanze* = Neri di Bicci, *Le ricordanze (10 marzo 1453-24 aprile 1475)*, B. Santi (ed.), Pisa, 1976.

Statuti 1870 = *Statuti inediti della città di Pisa dal XII al XV*, F. Bonaini (ed.), 3 vol., Florence, 1870, II.

Secondary sources

Bardyn 2018 = A. Bardyn, *The ‘egalitarian trend’ in practice: female participation in capital markets in late medieval Leuven*, in A. Bellavitis, B. Zucca Micheletto (eds), *Gender, law and economic well-being in Europe from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century*, London, 2018, p. 167-182.

Bellavitis 2001 = A. Bellavitis, *Identité, mariage, mobilité sociale: citoyennes et citoyens à Venise au XVI^e siècle*, Rome, 2001 (*Collection de l’École française de Rome*, 282).

Bellavitis – Zucca Micheletto 2018 = A. Bellavitis, B. Zucca Micheletto, *Introduction: North versus South – gender, law and economic well-being in Europe in the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries*, in A. Bellavitis, B. Zucca Micheletto (eds), *Gender, law and economic well-being in Europe from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century*, London, 2018, p. 1-26.

Bezzina 2018 = D. Bezzina (ed.), *Beyond their dowries: women and wealth in medieval and early modern north-central Italy*, in *MEFRM*, 130-1, 2018.

Bezzina 2021 = D. Bezzina, *Povert  femmine e famiglia a Genova tra Duecento e Trecento*, in L. Feller, P. Grillo, M. Moglia (eds), *Donne e povert  nell’Europa mediterranea medievale*, Rome, 2021, p. 161-180.

Casella 2014 = L. Casella, *Forme della memoria quotidiana: i libri femminili come oggetti materiali (Friuli, secc. XVI-XVIII)*, in A. Fornasin, C. Povolo (eds), *Per Furio: studi in onore di Furio Bianco*, Udine, 2014, p. 133-142.

Chabot 1988 = *Widowhood and poverty in late medieval Florence*, in *Continuity and Change*, special issue, 3-2 (= J. Henderson [ed.], *Charity and the poor in medieval and Renaissance Europe, proceedings of the conference held at Somerville College, Oxford, on 20 September 1986*), 1988, p. 291-311.

Chabot 1994 = I. Chabot, *“La sposa in nero”: la ritualizzazione del lutto delle vedove fiorentine (secoli XIV-XV)*, in R. Ago, M. Palazzi, G. Pomata (eds), *Costruire la parentela: donne e uomini nella definizione dei legami familiari*, in *Quaderni storici*, 86, 1994, p. 421-462.

Chabot 2010 = I. Chabot, *‘Io vo’ fare testamento’: le ultime volont  di mogli e mariti, tra controllo e soggettivit *, in M. C. Rossi (ed.), *Margini di libert : testamenti femminili nel Medioevo. Atti del convegno internazionale (Verona, 23-25 ottobre 2008)*, Verona, 2010, p. 205-238.

Chabot 2011 = I. Chabot, *La dette des familles: femmes, lignages et patrimoine   Florence aux XIV^e et XV^e si cles*, Rome, 2011 (*Collection de l’École française de Rome*, 445).

Chabot 2016 = I. Chabot, *‘Breadwinners’: familles florentines au travail dans le catasto de 1427*, in A. Bellavitis, M. Martini, R. Sarti (eds), *Familles laborieuses: r mun ration, transmission et apprentissage dans les ateliers familiaux de la fin du Moyen  ge   l’ poque contemporaine en Europe*, in *MEFRIM*, 128-1, 2016, p. 2-21.

Chabot 2018a = I. Chabot, *“Multe sunt mulieres in matrimonio existentes que habent bona propria”: r flexions conclusives sur le dossier “Beyond their dowries”*, in Bezzina 2018a, p. 199-211.



Chabot 2018b = I. Chabot, *Matrigne: le altre madri dei Fiorentini (secc. XIV-XV)*, in E. Insabato et al. (eds), *Tra archivio e storia: scritti dedicati ad Alessandra Contini Bonaccossi*, 2 vol., Florence, 2018, I, p. 65-89.

Chabot 2021 = I. Chabot, *Family justice and public justice in conflicts over dowry and inheritance between Florentine families (14th-15th centuries)*, in S. Clementi, M. Lanzinger (eds), *Stipulating – litigating – mediating: negotiation processes within the competing fields of gender and property*, Leiden, 2021, p. 226-253.

Chojnacki 1999 = S. Chojnacki, *Riprendersi la dote: Venezia, 1360-1530*, in S. Seidel Menchi, A. Jacobson Schutte, T. Kuehn (eds), *Tempi e spazi della vita femminile nella prima età moderna*, Bologna, 1999, p. 461-492 [repr. in *id.*, *Women and men in Renaissance Venice: twelve essays on patrician family*, Baltimore, 2000, p. 95-111].

Conti 1966 = E. Conti, *I catasti agrari della Repubblica fiorentina e il catasto particellare toscano: secoli 14-19*, Rome, 1966.

Dermineur 2018 = *Women and credit in pre-industrial Europe: an overview*, in E. M. Dermineur (ed.), *Women and credit in pre-industrial Europe*, Turnhout, 2018, p. 1-18.

Feller – Grillo – Moglia 2021 = L. Feller, P. Grillo, M. Moglia (eds), *Donne e povertà nell'Europa mediterranea medievale*, Rome, 2022.

Fisher 2009 = C. M. Fisher, *Guardianship, the family and the rise of Renaissance Florentine State, 1368-93*, in A. Bellavitis, I. Chabot (eds), *Famiglie e poteri in Italia tra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, Rome, 2009, p. 265-282.

Galasso 2019 = S. Galasso, *La memoria tra i conti: alcune riflessioni sulle scritture domestiche di donne a Firenze (XV-XVI secolo)*, in *Quaderni storici*, 160, 2019, p. 195-223.

Galasso 2021 = S. Galasso, *Le droit de compter: les livres de gestion et de mémoire des femmes (Florence, XV^e-XVI^e siècles)*, thèse de doctorat, EHESS, 2021.

Goldthwaite 2013 = R. Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence*, Bologna, 2013.

Groppi 2010 = A. Groppi, *Il welfare prima del welfare: assistenza alla vecchiaia e solidarietà tra generazioni in Età moderna*, Rome, 2010.

Henderson 2016 = J. Henderson, *L'ospedale rinascimentale: la cura del corpo e dell'anima*, Bologna, 2016 (1st ed. New Haven-London, 2006).

Herlihy – Klapisch-Zuber 1978 = D. Herlihy, C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles: une étude du catasto florentin de 1427*, Paris, 1978.

Kamenaga-Anzai 2003 = Y. Kamenaga-Anzai, *Attitudes towards public debt in medieval Genoa: the Lomellini family*, in *Journal of medieval history*, 29, 2003, p. 239-263.

Kirshner 1985 = J. Kirshner, *Wives' claims against insolvent husbands in late medieval Italy*, in J. Kirshner, S. F. Wemple (eds), *Women of the medieval world: essays in honor of John H. Mundy*, Oxford, 1985, p. 256-303 (repr. in *Marriage, dowry, and citizenship in late medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Toronto, 2015).

Kirshner 1991 = J. Kirshner, *Materials for a gilded cage: non-dotal assets in Florence, 1300-1500*, in D. I. Kertzer, R. P. Saller (eds), *The family in Italy from Antiquity to the present*, New Haven-London, 1991, p. 184-207 (repr. in *Marriage, dowry, and citizenship in late medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Toronto, 2015).

Kirshner 2015 = J. Kirshner, *Marriage, dowry, and citizenship in late medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Toronto, 2015.

Klapisch-Zuber 1982 = C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Le complexe de Griselda: dot et dons de mariage*, in *MEFRM*, 96-1, 1982, p. 7-43 [repr. in *id.*, *La maison et le nom: stratégies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1990, p. 185-213].

Klapisch-Zuber 1983 = C. Klapisch-Zuber, *La «mère cruelle»: maternité, veuvage et dot dans la Florence des XIV^e et XV^e siècles*, in *Annales: économies, sciences sociales*, 38-5, 1983, p. 1097-1109 [repr. in *id.*, *La maison et le nom: stratégies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1990, p. 249-261].

Klapisch-Zuber 1984 = C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Le «zane» della sposa: la sposa fiorentina e il suo corredo nel Rinascimento*, in *Memoria: rivista di storia delle donne*, 11-12, 1984, p. 12-23 [trad. fr. *Les corbeilles de la mariée*, in *id.*, *La maison et le nom: stratégies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1990, p. 215-227].

Kuehn 1992 = T. Kuehn, *Law, death, and heirs in the Renaissance: repudiation of inheritance in Florence*, in *Renaissance quarterly*, 45-3, 1992, p. 484-516.

Kuehn 2008 = T. Kuehn, *Heirs, kin and creditors in Renaissance Florence*, Cambridge, 2008.

Kuehn 2010 = T. Kuehn, *Debt and bankruptcy in Florence: statutes and cases*, in *Quaderni storici*, 137, 2011, p. 355-392.

Kuehn 2018 = T. Kuehn, *Travails of the widow in law in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century: an illustrative case*, in *Sixteenth century journal*, 49-3, 2018, p. 691-711.

Kuehn 2022 = T. Kuehn, *Property of spouses in law in Renaissance Florence*, in T. Kuehn, *Patrimony and law in Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge, 2022, p. 73-99.

Fontaine 2008 = L. Fontaine, *L'économie morale: pauvreté, crédit et confiance dans l'Europe préindustrielle*, Paris, 2008.

Fontaine 2011 = L. Fontaine, *Il posto delle donne nella piccola economia finanziaria in Europa in Età moderna*, in *Quaderni storici*, 137, 2011, p. 512-532.



- Lazzari 2018 = T. Lazzari, *La violenza sui beni e sulle rendite delle donne*, in A. Esposito, F. Franceschi, G. Piccinni (eds), *Violenza contro le donne: una prospettiva medievale*, Bologna, 2018, p. 37-56.
- Meneghin 2020 = A. Meneghin, *The social fabric of fifteenth-century Florence: identities and change in the world of second-hand dealers*, London, 2020.
- Meneghin 2022 = A. Meneghin, *Circular economy and “circular expertise”: the second-hand market and professional estimators in fifteenth-century Florence*, in *Anuario de estudios medievales*, 52-1, 2022, p. 253-276.
- Petti Balbi 2012 = G. Petti Balbi, *Forme di credito femminile: osservazioni introduttive*, in G. Petti Balbi, P. Guglielmotti (eds), *Dare credito alle donne: presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna. Convegno internazionale di studi Asti, 8-9 ottobre 2010*, Asti, 2012, p. 9-24.
- Piccinni 2012a = G. Piccinni, *Conti correnti di donne presso l'ospedale senese di Santa Maria della Scala: interessi, patti, movimenti di denaro (1347-1377)*, in G. Petti Balbi, P. Guglielmotti (eds), *Dare credito alle donne: presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna. Convegno internazionale di studi Asti, 8-9 ottobre 2010*, Asti, 2012, p. 121-147.
- Piccinni 2012b = G. Piccinni, *Il banco dell'ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala e il mercato del denaro nella Siena del Trecento*, Siena 2012.
- Piccinni 2016 = G. Piccinni, *Ospedali, affari e credito prima del Monte di Pietà*, in M. Gazzini, A. Olivieri (eds), *L'ospedale, il denaro e altre ricchezze*, in *Reti medievale*, 17-1, 2016, p. 133-154.
- Piccinni 2020 = G. Piccinni (ed.), *Alle origini del welfare: radici medievali e moderne della cultura europea dell'assistenza*, Rome, 2020.
- Pompermaier 2021 = M. Pompermaier, *L'économie du «mouchoir»: crédit et microcrédit à Venise au XVIII^e siècle*, Rome, 2021.
- Redon 1985 = O. Redon, *Autour de l'hôpital Santa Maria della Scala a Sienne au XIII^e siècle*, in *Ricerche storiche*, 15, 1985, p. 18-34.
- Sandri 2001 = L. Sandri, *L'attività di banco di deposito dell'Ospedale degli Innocenti: don Vincenzo Borghini e la 'bancarotta' del 1579*, in A. Pastore, M. Garbellotti (eds), *L'uso del denaro: patrimoni e amministrazione nei luoghi pii e negli enti ecclesiastici (secoli XV-XVIII)*, Bologna, 2001, p. 153-178.
- Scherman 2018 = M. Scherman, *Le crédit: une obligation de tous les jours (ou presque). Aperçus depuis une économie urbaine de la fin du Moyen Âge (Trévis au XV^e siècle)*, in *Histoire urbaine*, 51-1, 2018, p. 111-130.
- Sherman 2021 = M. Scherman, *Les femmes pauvres dans les villes : l'exemple des femmes trévisanes au XV^e siècle*, in L. Feller, P. Grillo, M. Moglia (eds), *Donne e povertà nell'Europa mediterranea medievale*, Rome, 2021, p. 205-218.
- Smail 2016a = D. L. Smail, *Legal plunder: households and debt collection in late medieval Europe*, Cambridge, 2016.
- Smail 2016b = D. L. Smail, *Mesurer la valeur à Marseille et à Lucques à la fin du Moyen Âge*, in L. Feller, A. Rodriguez (eds), *Expertise et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge, II, Savoirs, écritures, pratiques*, Madrid, 2021, p. 295-314.
- Tognetti 1999 = S. Tognetti, *Il banco Cambini: affari e mercati di una compagnia mercantile-bancaria nella Firenze del Quattrocento*, Florence, 1999.
- Tognetti 2022 = S. Tognetti, *Le finanze dell'ospedale degli Innocenti di Firenze: dalla fondazione alla bancarotta del 1579*, in *Archivio storico italiano*, 671, 2022, p. 53-128.
- Shaw 2018 = J. E. Shaw, *Women, credit and dowry in early modern Italy*, in E. M. Dermineur (ed.), *Women and credit in pre-industrial Europe*, Turnhout, 2018, p. 173-202.
- Zucca Micheletto 2011 = B. Zucca Micheletto, *À quoi sert la dot ? Aliénations dotales, économie familiale et stratégies des couples à Turin au XVIII^e siècle*, in *Annales de démographie historique*, 121-1, 2011, p. 161-186.

Notes

1 Bellomo 1961; Kirshner 2015; Kuehn 1991; Chabot 2011; *id.* 2020 (with bibliography).

2 Kirshner 1991; Bezzina 2018a; Kuehn 2022.

3 Kirshner 1985; Zucca Micheletto 2011.

4 ASFi, *Carte strozziane*, serie II, 3, fol. 6r.

5 Galasso 2019, 2021; Casella 2014.

6 Herlihy – Klapisch-Zuber 1978; Conti 1966.

7 Chabot 2016.

8 “Stassi con loro e non à tracta la sua dota”, ASFi, *Catasto* 29 (II), fol. 642r-647v.

9 Chabot 2011; Kuehn 2018.

10 “Item siamo tenuti a nostra madre, ogn’ora si volessi partire da noi, a dargli fiorini quattrocento ch’ella à di dota sopra i detti beni”, ASFi, *Catasto* 22, fol. 916r-917v.

11 “in su questi beni sono la dota di mia madre la quale, vogliendosi partire da me, sono tenuto a rendergliela, che ssono fiorini 65”, ASFi, *Catasto* 16, fol. 748v.



- 12 Statuti 1870, II, p. 753: *Constitutum legis pisanae civitatis*, art. 29, *De donatione propter nuptias*.
- 13 Chabot 2011, chap. 1; Kuehn 2018.
- 14 ASFi, *Catasto* 52, fol. 244r.
- 15 “creditore in su’ libri delle rede di Vieri Guadagni e compagni”, ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 581r.
- 16 “à monna Iohanna, mia madre, fiorini cento in sul banco d’Averardo de’ Medici, che sono resto di sua dota e vuolne a sua posta fare la sua volontà”, ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 581r-582v.
- 17 “àne la dota mia i’ su detti beni, che fu 70 fiorini”, ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 540v.
- 18 “Notate, honorevoli ufficiali, che monna Lena nostra madre è chontenta e vuole che fiorini setecento de la sua dota e f. dugiento dodici fra lascio e suoi propri denari i quali deve avere da tutta la redità d’Albizo [...], la qual somma mai le fu chonsegnata pe’ gl’ufficiali de’ Popili, vuole chome detto di sopra si metano fra le nostre sustanze [...]; ma vuole de la detta somma di fiorini novecento dodici essere nostra creditrice da parte senza trarne alchuno frutto pel tempo che la tiene cho’ noi sì veramente che, quantunque egli sieno accatastati, la gravezza di detta somma vada sopra noi propri pel beneficio ch’aremo de’ detti denari”, ASFi, *Catasto* 49, fol. 333v.
- 19 “à lla dota sua, non à [al]tro, la quale à [a]vere da me Donato e Nardo mio fratello, diagleie fior. 6 l’anno per mio, perché ella istà a ssue ispese”, ASFi, *Catasto* 57, fol. 87r.
- 20 ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 555r-v.
- 21 “una sirocchia d’anni circha 26 [...], che continuamente è stata a mie spese che non ch’io abbi potuto avere quello di Benvenuto [il defunto marito] per nutrichare lei e due suoi figliuoli. Non ò mai àuto la dota né anchora l’ò”, ASFi, *Catasto* 36, fol. 185r-185v.
- 22 ASFi, *Catasto* 25, fol. 120r-120v.
- 23 “òe d’incharico la dota di mia madre, che sono fiorini cinquecento, posto ch’ella mi tiene in sulla sua dota”, ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 383r-v, 388r-v.
- 24 Kuehn 1992; Chabot 2011, p. 290-291.
- 25 “rifiutamo tuti la redità di nostro padre, che 4 anni sarà a Ognisanti – ricordano i figli del lanaiole Domenico di Andrea – ché morì e non ci rimase niente; e torniamo cho’ nostra madre in su la sua dotta, che gli fu chonto insino a’ pan[n]i che noi avevamo in dosso. Abbiamo grandissima fatica a vivere”, ASFi, *Catasto* 60, fol. 190r.
- 26 ASFi, *Carte strozziane*, serie IV, 570, fol. 120r, 121r, 122r-123r.
- 27 Chabot 2011, p. 291, 303-305; Galasso 2021.
- 28 ASFi, *Catasto* 16, fol. 692r.
- 29 Chabot 2021.
- 30 Fisher 2009.
- 31 “àno rifiutato la redità del padre e del fratello perché non si truova di loro niente, il perché questa dota [di 92 fiorini] è perduta”, ASFi, *Catasto* 48, fol. 133r.
- 32 “Rimase vedova già anni 15 e non poté mai riavere la sua dota di fiorini 50, avendo piatito e ripiatito”, ASFi, *Catasto* 60, fol. 437r.
- 33 “la dota mia furono fiorini 150, òne soda [garantita] fiorini 100; debamene dare ogni anno fiorini 10 tanto ch’io sia paghata e io non ò mai àuto nulla, e ò piatito e non è rimasto niente”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 249r.
- 34 “Io monna Bartolomea, figliuola fui di messer Donato Adimari, d’età d’anni 80, che perd[e]i la mia dota...”, ASFi, *Catasto* 60, fol. 465r.
- 35 “Rimasi vedova [nel] 1400, de la dota mia non mi rimase niente”, ASFi, *Catasto* 26, fol. 966r.
- 36 “Se monna Necia loro madre, che è d’età d’anni 28, no’ volesse stare cho’ figliuoli, à d’avere fiorini 1340 per la sua dotta e, vedete, sono nelle mani del fratello [di lei]”, ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 327v.
- 37 “Una dota di fiorini seicento dieci, la quale ho a ritirarre dalle rede di Giotto Peruzzi e’ quali sono nelle mani degl’Ufficiali de’ Popilli e per al presente non veggo modo a poterla riavere. Hocci a vivere sùso e non ho niuna altra cosa che questa dota. Hora al presente, perché non ho dove tornare, torno in casa monna Nanna di Barduccio [C]hanigiani mia zia”, ASFi, *Catasto* 16, fol. 692r.
- 38 “conviene dalla detta monna Nanna tragglì le spese”, ASFi, *Catasto* 16, fol. 419r-v.
- 39 ASFi, *Catasto* 64, fol. 105r-107r.
- 40 “questo ène lo charico òne in su questo mio pocho de la dota: ò alevato e alevo questa mia brigata cho’ grande faticha. Per Dio vi sia rachomandata”, ASFi, *Catasto* 16, fol. 33r.
- 41 “è stata bene uno anno o più senza la dotta ed à a vivere e a trare figlioli uno d’anni 10, una d’anni 7, uno d’anni 3”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 141r.
- 42 “Debo dare a monna Lisa, dona che fu di Piero di Giovanni Busini per resto di fiorini trecento cinque, sodò Betto mio padre alla detta monna Lisa e chosì è entrata in tenuta in su tutti i miei beni e siamo a piato, fiorini dugiento trentuno”, ASFi, *Catasto* 34, fol. 582r-583r.
- 43 “Chonvienemi tenere in chasa il figliuolo che rimase di Piero Busini che non à nulla al mondo; la madre lo à abandonato e io ò a renderla la dota. À nome Giovanni di Piero Busini, d’età d’anni sei.”, *ibid.*
- 44 E aciò ch’ella rubò la chasa, cioè tre mantelle sargie, lenzuole e chosì molte cose che se nulla ne ritrarrò tutto recherò: non metto la soma perché mi chonverà richorrere a cchi chonosce le altre cose, cioè non metto il valore di quello à rubato perché non è chiarito”, *ibid.*



45 Klapisch-Zuber 1983; Chabot 1994, 2011.

46 “Tornomi con Sinibaldo di Filippo perché nonn ò da me da poter vivere perché non ò il mio. Lisa d’età d’anni quaranta. Quando avesi acquistato il mio, cioè la mia dota, vorò tornare per me e tore una pigione e tenermi uno mio figliuolo d’anni cinque il quale non à nientte di suo padre”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 143r.

47 “La sua dota che furono fiorini trecento cinque de’ quali ne debba avere e restone a ‘vere dalla eredità di Betto di Giovanni Busini fiorini 231 la quale piatisco chon Francesco, figliuolo del detto Betto perché mi sono obrighati per sodamentto di detta dota e’ beni di detto Betto e sue rede. Per anchora non ne posso avere chapitale né usufrutto. E di detta dotta n’ebbi fiorini quaranta quatro di masserize e di vestimenti a mio dosso che l’ò a mio uso, cioè uno letto. E truovomi di danari avuti di detta dota in su’ fondacho di Sinibaldo di Filippo e chompagni, fiorini trenta [...]. E de’ denari à Sinibaldo di Filippo, mi chonviene mettere nel piatto per raquistare la mia dota: già n’ò ispeso fiorini cinque per piatire”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 143r.

48 ASFi, *Catasto* 35 (II), fol. 1472r, *portata* of Vaggia, recalling the terms of their agreement.

49 “Debbo dare a monna Vagia donna che fu di Betto mio padre, fiorini seciento d’oro per la dota ch’ella dette e misse in chasa e no.ll’ à riaùta chome aparisce per una ischritta à la detta monna Vagia di mia mano: dòlle l’anno fiorini otto per centinaio, ché così vole”, ASFi, *Catasto* 34, fol. 582r-583r.

50 ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 442r. The *sopradota* is the the marital *donatio propter nuptias* due only to childless widows.

51 Chabot 2018b.

52 “stà a pigione in chasa [di] ser Giovanni Ghini nel popolo di San Filicie in Piazza e tiene la casa da lui a mesi, a soldi 26 il mese, et uno letticiuolo dove stà, àl’achattato dalla figliola; e più à debito [...]. Debe avere da’ figliuoli di Bindo degl’Agli per ristituzione della sua dota e donagione fiorini trecento, lire cinquanta come dice la carta della sua dota. Non à la detta monna Francesca alcuna altra cosa, né masserizie, né letto, né casa, né panni salvo quelli ch’ella porta in dosso [...]. Racomandavisi per l’amor di Dio perché non à altro di che vivere e stenta e non può guadagnar nulla”, ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 826r.

53 ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 459r-v.

54 Bellavitis 2001.

55 Klapisch-Zuber 1984.

56 Chabot 1994; Chabot 2011, chap. 7.

57 “non ò maserizia però che rimasi vedova e senza maserizia”, ASFi, *Catasto* 35 (I), fol. 708r.

58 “una chasa dove abitano [...], con le maserisie assai istrette che a noi vedove si richiede”, ASFi, *Catasto* 18, fol. 1057r-v.

59 “con maseritie si richiegiono a una povera vedovella”, ASFi, *Catasto* 21, fol. 192r-v.

60 “No’ ci rechoro[no] nulla, né in dosso né per maserizia; l’Andrea senza cioppa e senza mantello, solo una ghamuraccia trista e bruta e rotta, e chosì menò Bicci; e questo fu perché Santi no.la volle in chasa e però se ne venne qua, perché era morto Andrea Chatastini suo marito”, Neri di Bicci, *Le ricordanze*, p. 103.

61 “uscine de la detta chasa [del marito] senza niuna maserizia e uscine chon una ghone Lucia che m’aveva fato mio padre [...]: sono tornata in chasa [di] mio padre ne la sua maserizia”, ASFi, *Catasto* 36, fol. 497r.

62 “dice di comperare maserizie di case come letto e fornimento di letto, panni lini e lani e maserizie bisognevoli a lei perché in questo anno è tornata in detta mezza chasa sopra ssé e truovasi senza neuna maserizia”, ASFi, *Catasto* 52, fol. 340r.

63 “à di bisogno di fornirsi di maserizie di chasa e di dosso”, ASFi, *Catasto* 67, fol. 497r.

64 In 14th-15th-centuries Massiliote *postmortem* inventories, the bed is the first and sometimes the only piece of furniture (Smail 2016a, p. 54).

65 “uno povereto leto da due persone e un pocho di maserizia chome bisongna a una persona sola; e’ pani che porto indosso sono molto loghori quegli d’andare fuori e neri”, ASFi, *Catasto* 18, fol. 1081r-1082r.

66 “uno lettuccio”, ASFi, *Catasto* 36, fol. 295r.

67 “povero letticiuolo”, ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 175r.

68 “monna Agnola, vedova, donna fu di Bartolomeo choriere, povera, senza letta e senza nula, chonviemi andare mandichando per la vita mia”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 311r.

69 ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 826r, cf. n. 52.

70 “una letiera di parechi assi”, ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 539r.

71 “fiorini quaranta quatro di maserizie, e vestimenti a mio dosso che l’ò a mio uso, cioè uno letto...”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 143r, cf. n. 47.

72 Meneghin 2020, 2022; Smail 2016b.

73 “loro mi vogliono scontare fiorini dieci di maserizie dichono ch’i’ ò aùto, e io pot[r]ei loro adomandare la sopradota”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 680r-v.

74 “un pocho di maserizia, la quale mi contai per mia dota, che vale fiorini dieci ogni cosa”, ASFi, *Catasto* 26, fol. 947v.

75 “telai da tessere, le quali le furo’ assegnate per sua dotta chon cierti petini vechi e chativi [...] non truovo a chi, per la chativa arte, sono di valuta le telaia e petini di dodici fiorini”, ASFi, *Catasto* 23,



fol. 643r.

76 “Fiorini 200 pe.lla mia dota, quando gli arò rischossi dalle rede del detto Albizo e da altri che ne fusse obrighati, de’ quali ò àuto circha fiorini settanta di maserizie, e’ resto mi chonviene rischuotere che no’ spero si possino riavere tutti. [...] Isto a pigione via del Fondaccio popolo San Iacopo Oltrarno [...] e òllo paghato inanzi per cinque anni de’ danari ch’i’ò venduto de le maserizie dette”, ASFi, *Catasto* 26, fol. 997r.

77 Chabot 2011, p. 91-92.

78 “ugniuna àne la tornata della chasa a vita”, ASFi, *Catasto* 25, fol. 393r.

79 “Io non ò né casa, né tetto e non ò niuna maserizia: torno per ora cho’ miei frategli. Pierghovi dalla parte di Dio vi sia rachomandata”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 387r.

80 “e però si tornò qua chon mecho e menò chon seco Piero suo figliuolo e figliuolo di Giovanni sopradetto; è rimasa grossa e arechè nella mia chasa alchune sua chose e maserizie per gli sua bisogni e menò la Lisa sua schiava”, “e portòne ciò aveva in detta chasa arechato”, Neri di Bicci, *Le ricordanze*, p. 103.

81 “non ò altra cosa in questo mondo, né lletto, né masserizie né altra cosa, questo è la pura verità”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 190r.

82 “E a questa donna le fue lasciato da uno zio la tornata della chasa, e que’ suo fratello gli àne dato per questa rendita della chasa gli àne dato uno palcho per suo abitare”, ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 628r.

83 Chabot 2011, p. 304-306; *id.* 2010.

84 “abita monna Iachopa vedova moglie che ffu di Salvestro mio zio e suo marito; le fu lasciata per tutto el tempo della sua vita e di poi à da tornare liberamente a mme”, ASFi, *Catasto* 57, fol. 638r.

85 “una chasa con masseritie a uso della detta monna Lorenza, a llei lasciata a vita per lo detto Michele, suo marito”, ASFi, *Catasto* 16, fol. 150r-152r.

86 “lascògliele Matteo suo marito per testamento ch’ella non potesse essere cacciata”, ASFi, *Catasto* 48, fol. 500r.

87 “dopo la sua vita rimane a [l’ospedale di] Santa Maria Nuova il letto, e la chasa a Berto di Lionardo [il figlio di primo letto]”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 111r-v.

88 “Ancora ebbi da lloro, per lasco mi fé Franciesco, queste chose cioè: 1 choltrinetta rotta; 1 paio di lenzuola ratopate; 1 piumacio tristo; 1 mantello nero, lochoro; 1 coppa nera, trista; 1 camicea amezzata; 1 ghuarnelluccio tristo; 1 mantellina rotta. Tutte le predette chose stimate per lo stimatore della ghabella de’ chontratti lire LXXX”, ASFi, *Catasto* 52, fol. 169r.

89 “Anchora à la detta monna Fia la tornata della chasa fu di Filippo suo padre come appariscie per lo suo testamento; la detta chasa è posta nel popolo di San Iachopo Oltrarno di Firenze [...]. E più gli lasciò la tornata del luogho suo da Legniaia, posto nel popolo di San Chiricho”, ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 649r-650v.

90 “À la detta monna Fia, per lo testamento di Nofri, a ‘vere da dicti suoi heredi fiorini ciento di masseritie. Resta nelle mani di Piero di Giovanni [di Neri di Lippo, nipote del marito] detto di sopra più sue masseritie e non gliel’à persino a oggi anchora voluto rendere. Anchora sono tenuti i detti heredi del detto Nofri a pagare ogni gravezza o incharichi fusse posto alla detta monna Fia, non obstante i detti heredi dichano non volere e non essere tenuti, e ciò apparisce per lo testamento di Nofri detto. Anchora sono obligati i detti Andrea e frategli alla detta monna Fia per lo detto testamento, in chaso che la detta monna Fia non si contentasse di stare nella chasa del detto Nofri, la quale per lo testamento a suo uso gli lasciò, che allora e in quel chaso gli debbo’ pagare una chasa di pregio di fiorini quindici l’anno, non obstante i detti Andrea e frategli heredi predicti dichono non essere tenuti sì perché non sono heredi e sì perché no’ ve n’è di quello di Nofri e ssi perché altre ragioni, siché pocho o niente si può ragionare”, *ibid.*

91 “Andrea di Giovanni di Neri di Lippo e frategli, come heredi di Giovanni loro padre e come heredi di Nofri d’Andrea di Neri di Lippo e possessori de’ suoi beni, àno a dare per la dota di detta monna Fia [per] una concordia che presi di seguito, fiorini ottocento d’oro e fiorini 325 per alimenti d’essi fiorini ottocento d’oro e d’essa dota da poi in qua si fecie detta concordia: in tutto non si possono ragionare per buoni per [in]sino non sono passati – fiorini 1 125”, *ibid.*

92 “una chasa divisa in due parti, overo chasolari, [...] in via Ghibellina, nella quale abita chon sue poche e povere masseritie; e fulle asengniata per sua dota, overo per parte di sua dota, dalgli Ufficiali de’ Pupilli [...], credo non vale fior. 250”, ASFi, *Catasto* 37, fol. 1053r.

93 “una chasa, la quale ò ppresa per mia dota, nel popolo di San Filice in Piazza, luogho detto la via della Perghola [...]. La dota mia sono in tutto fiorini 73”, ASFi, *Catasto* 22, fol. 897r.

94 “l’à apigionata a Papi di Franciesho di Scholaio isceglitore, e damenne l’anno di pigione fiorini 12 l’anno e òne a vivere, chalezare e vestire”, ASFi, *Catasto* 48, fol. 734r.

95 ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 747; ASFi, *Catasto* 22, fol. 525r; ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 646r; ASFi, *Catasto* 25, fol. 51r; ASFi, *Catasto* 37, fol. 865r (ospedale della Scala).

96 “Al presente sono in parte della casa di mio fratello, ma bisognerà mi tórre qualche chasetta a pigione e conperare qualche maserizuole che non ò niuna chosa”, ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 403r.

97 “tutto questo è quello ch’io ò raquistato di mia dota” [...]; “abito al sopradetto ½ podere con mie maserizie e miei anesi per mio uso”, ASFi, *Catasto* 18, fol. 1138r.

98 “un poderuzzo che n’abita dentro a suo uso e maserizie, ch’è per sua dota”, ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 610r.

99 “Stanci in villa e là sù abiamo le nostre masserizie, ché per nicistà non ne stiano a Firenze”, ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 124r.

100 Conti 1966, p. 45.



101 Chabot 1988.

102 Chabot 2016, 2018a.

103 “fiorini quattrocento denari, e’ quali ele gli à in chasa che gli ebbe a dì 14 di giugno 1427 da Nicholò del Belaccio e compagni chamarlingho degl’Ufficiali de’ Popili per parte de la sua dota à [a] riavere da la redità di Filippo Arighucci detto, e detele fiorini 424 ½, e’ resto s’ à spesi nel tempo è stata vedova ch’ à ’uto male. E deb’ avere da detta redità fiorini cinquecento setanta cinque per resto de la sua dota resta a ’ vere. È stata vedova mesi sette e anchora mi pare che la gli potrà avere più che ’tretanto tempo; e non elle danno niuna provigione e stimategli quello vi pare sia ragionevole – fiorini 575”, ASFi, *Catasto* 27, fol. 220r.

104 For Venice: Chojnacki 1999.

105 “chadde stalle e porticho del podere, spese in rachonciallo la maggior parte de’ detti danari”, ASFi, *Catasto* 49, fol. 194r-v.

106 “E ò voluto, io Lorenzo, più volte chon Francesco Chaferelli perdere f. ciento e avere denari e non possessioni, e di nuovo il farei chi fé chome quegli che dice del male paghatore: ‘accietto chome sei chome in parte per non piatire’”, ASFi, *Catasto* 49, *ibid.*

107 “Abbiamo a dare a monna Maria, donna che fue d’Angniolo di Francesco da Panzano, per obrigho della dotta di fiorini 230, facemo el sodamento [fideiussione] quando si maritò la detta monna Maria; e per questo obrigho e[n]trò in tenuta de’ nostri beni [...]; e perché voleva pigliare el nostro, siamo ubrighato a darlle in termine d’anni dua, chominciando a dì primo d’aprile 1427, fiorini 230. Il sopradetto podere era mezzo del bene di Angniolo di Francesco loro zio e danno tutto per loro perché sono hobrighati a detti fiorini 230 per la dota sodorono. E più le doveano dare per anno per utile della dota sua, fiorini 20 per ciasch’un’ano che sono in dua anno fiorini quaranta, e chosì mentre che gli terrà”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 340r.

108 Galasso 2021.

109 Chabot 2018a.

110 “monna Tita donna fu di Matteo Antinori, sta nel Fondaccio, de’ avere fiorini trenta due per resto di fitto del detto podere di più tempo: *apparisce a’ libro di monna Tita detta*”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 511r. On the small account book of a Massiliote widow (1403-1407), see Smail 2016, p. 92-113.

111 “T’ò fatto di mia mano, non ò saputo me[gl]io dire. Cristo vi guardi e diàvi la sua graçia”, ASFi, *Catasto* 18, fol. 1081v.

112 Chabot 2011; Galasso 2021.

113 “il detto Chorsino non à datto ma’ nulla dal chuindici in chuà. Dal 1415 in chuà, perché sono stata vedova e ’l mio figliuolo popillo, non so chi se l’abia lavorato; se lo saprò metterò a chatasto”, ASFi, *Catasto* 34, fol. 482r.

114 “un podere con terre lavoratie e vignate e casa per habitare, stato a governo di donne vedove già fa anni xxvi: è cascato ciò che v’è et ogni cosa conviene sia raconci...”, ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 445r.

115 Lazzari 2018.

116 “Afitai il detto mulino fa dieci anni o più a Gilia da Richasoli per istaia xij di grano l’anno. Non ne posso avere nulla, metolo per saldo perduto. Se gli potete ritenere da lui, sieno del Chomune però che sarebe meglio avegli a dare che a ’ vere. Ò cercho più volte di toglierle dalle mani, ma non ò potuto”, ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 127r-v.

117 “come fanno le vedovette, ché a Firenze non ò chasa a pigione”, ASFi, *Catasto* 18 (II), fol. 1391r.

118 ASFi, *Catasto* 15, fol. 124r.

119 ASFi, *Catasto* 48, fol. 287r.

120 “Stomi el più del tempo in contado però che ò sì piccola rendita che, istando in Firenze, non ne potrei vivere ma quando ci sto, la mia tornata sie in casa Filippo di Piero, sarto in via Borgo Alegri [...] ch’è mio fratello chugino”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 680r-v.

121 “quando sta a Firenze, si torna chon Lorenzo suo fratello [...] per modo ne sono di buono acchordo”, ASFi, *Catasto* 49, fol. 194r-v.

122 “Quivi vicino alla maggior chiesa, ebbe già una gentil donna vedova, chiamata monna Piccarda, un suo podere con casa non troppo grande; e per ciò che la più agiata donna del mondo non era, quivi la maggior parte dell’anno dimorava”, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, VIII, 4.

123 “llo istato nostro è i’ modo ridotto che poveramente ci chonviene istare in villa. Noi ci siamo ridotti a stare in villa a questo podere per bisogno”, ASFi, *Catasto* 30, fol. 217r-v.

124 “è per povertà [che] sono istati in villa”, ASFi, *Catasto* 37, fol. 851r-v.

125 “Il detto podere fu chonsegnato alla detta monna Katerina da Nerone di Segna da Monte Buiano suo figliastro per fiorini 230 della sua dota. Il podere tiene a ffito Stefano di Ghuccio, abitante nel detto podere, dånne l’anno di fitto staia 26 di grano. La buona donna non à niuno altro susidio et istenta”, ASFi, *Catasto* 48, fol. 718r.

126 ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 456r.

127 “Dare’ volentieri la detta vingnia e meriterebemi molto meglio a porgli i’ sue il Monte”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 161r.

128 Scherman 2018; for the modern age: Fontaine 2011; Dermineur 2018; Bellavitis – Zucca Micheletto 2018.

129 Kamenaga-Anzai 2003; Petti Balbi 2012; Bezzina 2018; Shaw 2018, p. 183.



- 130 Tognetti 1999.
- 131 Kuehn 2010.
- 132 ASFi, *Catasto* 34, fol. 460r.
- 133 “i quali gli aveva dipositati inanzi fallisse e non ne poté mai riavere niente”, ASFi, *Catasto* 37, fol. 957r-v.
- 134 “nel 1392 o circha, ebe della sua dota fiorini 200 Antonio di Giovenco suo fratello e promiese darlene frutto e mai ne poté avere né chapitale né frutto, siché ne quanto s’ella no’ gl’ à ‘uti ch’e’ figliuoli d’Antonio di Giovencho si fanno beffe di lei”, ASFi, *Catasto* 26, fol. 978r.
- 135 Sandri 2001; Goldthwaite 2013, p. 575-577, 629-630; Tognetti 2022, p. 87-92.
- 136 Piccinni 2012, 2012b, 2016.
- 137 Sherman 2018; Bardyn 2018.
- 138 On the credit activity of Venetian small business owners in the 18th century: Pompermaier 2021.
- 139 ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 150r.
- 140 “Igio monna Caterina sopradeta, òne su la botega di Piero di Giovanni Cardini, lanaio in via Mezo, fiorini ventiquattro, i quali danari i’ò gadagnati già ène ani 18 che sono stata a Firenze a servire dove altro non ò de mobile. Ma io mona Catilina non posso più sarvire ché sono vegia ed ò oggi anni 68 pasati e non ò altro sosidio in questo mondo, salvo ch’i’ò uno poco di litiselo e stone in una casa a pigione che è de’ figliuoli di Ricardo di Niccolò, devone pachare fiorini 6 l’ano”, ASFi, *Catasto* 17, fol. 415r, full transcription.
- 141 “Monna Bartolomea vedova, donna fu del maestro Giovanni insegnava a’ fanciulli lezioni, tesse panno lino, è d’età d’anni di LXXVII^o anni, è povera persona. À di sustanza fiorini trenta che gli à dipositati a’ banco di Salvestro di maestro Bonaiuto a sua discrezione. Non à altro se non è un pocho di maserizia e uno telaio da pano lino”, ASFi, *Catasto* 56, fol. 592r.
- 142 *Novella CXCVIII*, in Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, p. 596.
- 143 ASFi, *Catasto* 36, fol. 139r-141v, fol. 140v.
- 144 ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 940r.
- 145 “e’ quali danari nonn’ à quasi nulla, quando un pachio di farina e quando uno di grano alla sua discrezione, ma la discrezione è grossa”, ASFi, *Catasto* 23, fol. 628r.
- 146 Fontaine 2008.
- 147 “Ancora debbo avere dal fornacciaio di Borgo Ognisanti circa fiorini venti, no’ llo so a quanto perché non à voluto già è lungo tempo fare ragione mecho e non mi gli vuole dare, siché gli stimo pichola chosa”, ASFi, *Catasto* 18, fol. 938r.
- 148 “Bartolo di Sandro, il quale è in prigione, a ‘uto da me in serbanza in più volte di derate e di valsente fiorini 56 e ancora più. Io monna Francesca di Tofano fo’ qui questo ricordo in su questa iscritta se egli uscisse mai di prigione aciò ch’io gli possa adimandare; e chosì vi priego, voi Ufficiali, ch’io vi sia racomandata acciò ch’io non gli perdi. Ancora ò una scritta di sua mano di ciò ch’io gli ò dato in serbança, e ancora ò un’altra scritta di mano di Nanni di Lorenzo che teneva la bottega di speziale a San Piero Maggiore alle Vo[l]te”, ASFi, *Catasto* 57, fol. 170r.
- 149 “Antonio di Domenicho pollauolo in Merchatto vechio e egli glien’ à fatta una schritta di sua mano di darle a certo termine le dette lire quattrocento [...] “torna in sulla massericia e pigione di monna Francescha, donna che ffu di Bartolomeo di Partino pollauolo, la quale ista a pigione in chasa di Chardinale di Piero Ruccellai”, ASFi, *Catasto* 54, fol. 370r.
- 150 ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 626r.
- 151 “À a [a]vere la detta Mea per la dota sua da Pasquale d’Andreotto chalzolaio di rimpetto alla Macciana, fiorini dugiento d’oro; el detto Pasquale debbe dare ongn’anno alla detta monna Mea per la vita sua per vighore della deta dota fiorini sedici ogni anno; e dopo la morte della detta Mea lasca al detto Pasquale della detta dota la metà, cioè fiorini ciento, del’avanzo vuole che sia della figliuola la quale è monacha nel munistero di Santa Horsa di Firenze”, ASFi, *Catasto* 21, fol. 333r.
- 152 “damene istaia dodici di grano, e barili otto di vino, e uno orcio d’oglio, e sei some di legnia, e libbra venticinque di charne salatta, e uno staio di noci, e uno staio di fichi. E le sopradette chose me le à promese: partte me ne attiene e partte no’”, ASFi, *Catasto* 31, fol. 355r.
- 153 “monna Lottiera, donna di Piero di Arnaldo de’ Bardi de’ avere ogn’anno mentre ch’ella vive, per chagione della possessione di Castel Vecchio che ella donò a monna Coxa sua figliuola e donna di Bernardo Nardi, moggia tre di grano”, ASFi, *Catasto* 27, fol. 152v.
- 154 ASFi, *Carte strozziane*, serie IV, 566 (1487-1501); Chabot 2011, p. 303-305.
- 155 ASFi, *Catasto* 27, fol. 265r.
- 156 “è paghata di anno in anno in però ch’ella vive della sopradetta rendita, e se passasse l’anno intero non fusse paghata, può adomandare l’intero della quantità di fiorini 100 d’oro”, ASFi, *Catasto* 51, fol. 195r.
- 157 “el sopradetto podere era di monna Ermellina mia zia del qua’ mi fece donagione inter vivo di marzo 1425 e di poi è ttornata mecho chontinualmente e dòle le spese e quello le bisogna”, ASFi, *Catasto* 29 (II), fol. 633-635v, fol. 634v.
- 158 Groppi 2010; Piccinni 2020.
- 159 “sto in chasa di Piero d’Andrea mio nipote; dammi le spese di suo e dogli questa rendita”, ASFi, *Catasto* 35 (I), fol. 1016r.



160 “si torna per le spese cho’ detto Domenico di Lorenzo istaniataio”, il nipote al quale ha dato i suoi cento fiorini di dote al nipote Domenico di Lorenzo”, ASFi, *Catasto* 63, fol. 93r.

161 ASFi, *Catasto* 185 (II), fol. 639r-699r: *portata of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova*. The list of houses owned in the district of San Giovanni, around the hospital, includes those given to widows ‘commesse’ with the hospital (fol. 680r-682r). For the 1500s, Henderson 2006, chap. 6.

162 “Nel 1420, feci un chontratto choll’ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova il quale stette in questa forma: che io dia al detto spedale fiorini cento denari con questa condizione che durante il tempo de vita mia stesse in mia libertà potere adomandare fiorini 8 l’anno e dopo la vita mia si fussono liberi per detto spedale; e quando bisogno non m’è ochorso, non ò presi i detti fiorini 8 perché di tutto il detto tempo no’ gli ò avuti se non due volte”, ASFi, *Catasto* 29 (I), fol. 59r-59v.

163 “La mia arte è tessere il panno lano e se non fossi avitata no’ ne potrei vivere [...]; una “chasa mia nella quale abito e le mie maseritie, dopo la mia vita lascio a Santa Felice in Piazza e chosì mi sono chomessa”, ASFi, *Catasto* 19, fol. 514r.

164 “signori uficiali del catasto come io, avendo è più anni centro fiorini, feci, sichome povera che sono e vecchia, comissi questi cento fiorini in Ognisanti e a vita mia me ne dessonno fiorini tredici l’anno; e ancora òe ogni anno a vita fiorini sette dal Monte. Quest’è la rendita che noi avemo in questo mondo e siamo poco sane del corpo, e la pigione della casa cie ne vuol tre fiorini che restono diciassette fiorini; ora avete saputa la verità da noi. Dio sia sempre in tutti i vostri fatti. Noi due pinzochere ci conviene vivere di questo. La detta casa è di monna Nastasia, la metà, e l’altra è di Santa Maria Nuova”, ASFi, *Catasto* 42, fol. 320r.

165 “chomise nello spedale de’ Pinzocheri di San Pago[lo] ff. 50, e di questi ff. 50 gli debano dare ogni ano ff. 6, e dopo alla morte mia rimane e’ detti ff. 50 a lo spedale”, ASFi, *Catasto* 51, fol. 159r.

166 Lisa “atende a ghuardare le donne”, she receives each year “dall’abate di San Branchazio di Firenze [...] stadia dodici di grano e barili sei di vino e u’ mezo orcio d’olio e libbra cinquanta di charne insalata. Questa è tutta la sua sostanza, ed à la sua maserizia. À questa chosa a vita e poi rimane al munitato [sic]”, ASFi, *Catasto* 21, fol. 262r.

167 Redon 1985, p. 25.

168 “in diposito [da] Francesco di Lippo linaiole [...] chon queste chondizioni: ch’egli è doùto darmi ne la mia vita l’an[n]o in mentre ch’io vivo fiorini quatordecim d’oro, dopo la morte rimangono al detto Francescho liberamente”, ASFi, *Catasto* 25, fol. 263r.

169 “Debo avere gl’alimenti dalle rede di Niccholò di Francesco d’Agnolo pezzaio tutto el tempo della vita mia, de’ ssei lire in su che d’io ò per vestirmi della pigione sopradetta. Sono ‘si vecchia che non posso fare nulla, d’età d’anni 78, e detti alimenti mi deono dare perché io diedi la dota mia a Nicholò sopradetto, furono fiorini 200”, ASFi, *Catasto* 20, fol. 618r.

170 “La sopradetta monna Iachopa non à altra sustanzia in questo mondo”: una volta detratti i cinque fiorini di affitto “in su’ resto che sono fiorini 21 mi chonviene vivere, inferma e vechia e avere alchuna volta chi l’aiuti, e sta poveramente. Siavi rachomandata”, ASFi, *Catasto* 25, fol. 39r. On women and poverty, which I have only skimmed over in this essay, see a recent book: Feller *et al.* 2021; Bezzina 2021; Sherman 2021.

Pour citer cet article

Référence papier

Isabelle Chabot, « Can widows live on their dowry? », *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome - Moyen Âge*, 135-1 | 2023, 51-77.

Référence électronique

Isabelle Chabot, « Can widows live on their dowry? », *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome - Moyen Âge* [En ligne], 135-1 | 2023, mis en ligne le 01 janvier 2023, consulté le 20 janvier 2025. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/mefrm/12125> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/mefrm.12125>

Auteur

Isabelle Chabot

Università di Padova – isabelle.chabot@unipd.it

Articles du même auteur

Multe sunt mulieres in matrimonio existentes que habent bona propria. Réflexions conclusives sur le dossier « Beyond their dowries » [Texte intégral]

Paru dans *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome - Moyen Âge*, 130-1 | 2018

Droits d’auteur



Le texte seul est utilisable sous licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Les autres éléments (illustrations, fichiers annexes importés) sont « Tous droits réservés », sauf mention contraire.

