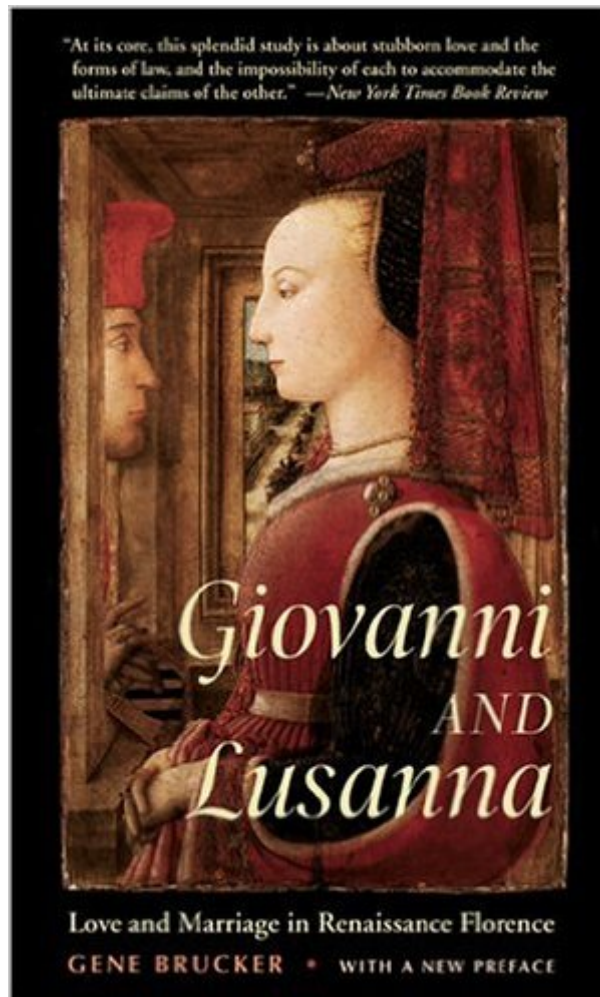


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# Giovanni And Lusanna: Love And Marriage In Renaissance Florence



## Synopsis

This compelling account of a wronged woman in Renaissance Florence, first published in 1986, is a fascinating view of Florentine society and its attitudes on love, marriage, class, and gender.

Lusanna was a beautiful woman from a middle-class background who, in 1455, brought suit against Giovanni, her aristocratic lover, when she learned he had contracted to marry a woman of his own class. Blending scholarship with insightful narrative, the book portrays an extraordinary woman who challenged the unwritten codes and barriers of the social hierarchy and dared to seek a measure of personal independence in a male-dominated world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1455, in Florence, Lusanna di Benedetto, a widow of the artisanal class, brought suit against the noble, Giovanni della Casa, attempting to prove that he had secretly married her, and that, therefore, his publicly celebrated marriage to another was bigamous. Professor Brucker has taken the simple records of this lawsuit and has used them as the framework for a short, but information-packed, account of Florentine society in the 14th-century. This story of a woman who challenged class and hierarchy in order to protect her reputation and prove the legitimacy of her marriage has a great deal to teach us about the legal process of the time, the interplay and tension between civil and church authority, the relationship between social classes, gender norms, and, of course, marriage laws and customs. This book shows Brucker as not only a scholar, but a story-teller, one who can turn the dry papers of the law courts into a fascinating human narrative. In particular, he brings Lusanna and Giovanni to life. We can almost feel what they felt, and

understand how their upbringing, social positions and expectations brought them, first, together, and then into conflict. I was, frankly, surprised to find how much I had learned from a book of slightly over 100 pages! As one who believes that one of the great disadvantages of closed stacks and internet search engines is the minimized opportunity for digression and serendipitous finds, I was delighted to read that this book was the result of Professor Brucker's fascination with a story that he came across while doing research into another matter at the Florentine State Archives. Indeed, he temporarily abandoned that research to concentrate on this story. A man after my own heart!

This small book is a gem of research into Renaissance Florence about the validity of a marriage between two contesting lovers in the mid-fifteenth century. It's a microhistory focusing on specific people with details of events from all walks of life. We get to hear from tailors, bakers, merchants, gossiping neighbors and more within the context of social class, religion, politics, adultery and marriage. Although I enjoy good historical fiction, I love experiencing the truth of the times which seem exotic and distant to the modern mind, yet are surprisingly contemporary in their basic motives and passions. This is not a dry, dusty tome which history is sometimes made out to be. A nice little treat of a book!

I had to buy this book for my women's studies class and I must say I usually dread reading the books that I don't personally choose, but this one was actually a pretty great read. I am interested in women's history and European History, at that. This book was a short read, it only took me a couple hours to get through it. I would recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in social and gender roles during the Renaissance era, it is a great example of how a marriage is viewed between government and the church as well as how a man and a woman are looked upon during this time.

Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence is an account of lovers maintaining social status despite going against certain social expectations. It is a historically significant tale because of the exceptionally detailed documents pertaining to their troubles; these documents describe the norms of the Florentine society throughout the renaissance and show in what ways Giovanni and Lusanna are rebels in their time. Giovanni courted Lusanna whilst she was wed to another, and when she became widowed Giovanni supposedly married her in a small ceremony but later denied the rite, resulting in a legal battle. By providing an exception to the social mores the testimonies of witnesses, along with official documents of a case where Lusanna protested the marriage of her alleged husband to a second woman provide the basis for studying

the societal norms of renaissance Florence. Since "the relationship between Giovanni and Lusanna bridged two different milieux; its denouement in the archiepiscopal court provides a rare and revealing glimpse of social structures and values in Medicean Florence."(94) The in-depth witness testimonies not only tell the stories of this particular relationship but also reveal how society functioned then.

Excellent read with an interesting story to keep almost anyone engaged and wanting to know how it ends. I definitely recommend

This book is about a marriage court case during the Renaissance - It provides insight on women and different social class hierarchies. It reminds me of a soap opera with he said she said arguments.

Bought it for a history class in college. Intriguing love story. I got a good grade on the paper I had to write about it.

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