

Introduction

“Costei sarà la saggia Leonora,
che nel tuo felice arbore s'inesta.”
Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*,
XIII.69.1–2.

When the contract documents were signed for the marriage of Eleonora d’Aragona and Ercole d’Este *per parola de presente* at the Castel Nuovo in Naples on 1 November 1472, neither the bride nor the groom was present at the ceremony. Eleonora, who had given her consent prior to the marriage to the Bishop of Aversa, Pietro Brusca, was represented by her father, Ferrante I of Naples, while Ercole had delegated his procurator, Ugolotto Facino, to sign the contract on his behalf.¹ While the couple may have known each other during the years that Ercole and his brother, Sigismondo, had spent at the Aragonese court in Naples between 1445 and 1462, the difference in their ages, eighteen years, would imply that their acquaintance was slight.

After Ercole’s succession as Duke of Ferrara in August 1471 had been challenged by his nephew, Niccolò di Leonello, it had become one of his first priorities as ruler of the Estense territories to look for a wife who would provide him with a male heir and so confirm his own legitimacy and the continuity of his dynasty. In March 1472, as negotiations commenced to release Eleonora from her earlier unconsummated marriage to a younger brother of the duke of Milan, the arrival of the Ferrarese envoy in Naples, bearing portraits of the duke and his natural daughter, Lucrezia, announced Ercole’s plans to make Eleonora that wife. Sixtus IV’s bull of 15 October 1472, agreeing to

¹ Luigi Olivi, “Delle nozze di Ercole d’Este con Eleonora d’Aragona,” *Memorie della Regia Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Modena*, ser. 2, 5 (1887): 15–68 (56).

Eleonora's divorce, removed the last obstacle to their marriage.

Ferrante's program to place his children, natural and legitimate, in politically advantageous marriages, had begun with his heir, Alfonso, duke of Calabria, who had married the daughter of the duke of Milan, Ippolita Maria Sforza, in 1465. Eleonora had also been a part of this ambitious plan to ensure friendship and cooperation between Naples and the powerful northern duchy, although her marriage to Ippolita Maria's younger brother, Sforza Maria, had foundered when relations between the two states soured after the death of Francesco Sforza in 1466. Ercole's suit for Eleonora, coming at the same time as demands that she be granted a divorce intensified and as Ferrante exited from a short-lived alliance with Venice, had obvious appeal for her father. The geopolitical position of Ferrara, her northern borders with both Milan and Venice, together with those shared with Florence and the hotly contested principalities of the Romagna in the south and west, made her an attractive proposition as a point from which Ferrante might be able to influence future political events in the region, or even launch a military attack.² Marriage to the daughter of the King of Naples would not only confirm Ercole's legitimacy as ruler of Ferrara, it would enhance his prestige within his state and abroad, and hopefully it would ensure that Ferrante would come to his aid should Ferrara be attacked by any of her larger, more powerful neighbours.

The marriage alliance between Ferrante and Ercole was therefore a carefully calculated political move, one that was firmly based in both rulers' perceptions of the advantages that it would hopefully entail. Eleonora would have had little or no involvement in Ferrante's decision to accept Ercole's suit, and it may be tempting to see the young princess as a pawn in the giant political chess game being played by her father and her future husband for power and influence on the Italian peninsula.

² See Appendix Map 1: Italy in 1494.

However, even taking into account the fact she had little choice but to obey her father's wishes, she appeared to have had no reservations about the marriage. Even before it had become a reality, Ercole's chief negotiator in Naples, Ugolotto Facino, described the little delicacies that she and her friends had made for his enjoyment, with a strong allusion to the further delights that he might expect when she finally arrived in Ferrara.³ The images of Eleonora contained in the letter from a member of the Ferrarese delegation in Naples for the proxy marriage to Ercole, are of a happy young woman, confidently approaching this defining moment in her life.⁴ She was already twenty-three years old, considerably older than was usual for aristocratic brides of the day, having been forced to watch and wait for seven years while her father and the duke of Milan argued over the path her future would take.

The broad aim of this dissertation is to explore the extent to which feelings of loyalty and affection were possible within an arranged dynastic marriage in the fifteenth century, using the example of the early years of the marriage of Eleonora d'Aragona and Ercole d'Este (1472–80). This dissertation will demonstrate with the help of original documents, the large majority of which are conserved in the *Archivio di Stato* in Modena, that, from its earliest days and in spite of its origins in political

³ Although none of Eleonora's letters to Ercole before their marriage has survived, her sense of anticipation can be gleaned from the letters of Ugolotto Facino to Ercole in the period before the signing of the marriage contracts in November 1472. On 25 August 1472, commenting on Eleonora's reaction to the continual delays to her journey to Ferrara, he writes that: "se recomanda a Vostra Eccellenza per mille volte" [she commends herself to you a thousand times], and that she and her half-sister, the duchess of Sora, have prepared for him, "certe sue zentilezze [...] cum le proprie mano" [certain delicacies [...] with their own hands], and that he will be sending on to him "le aque et le polvere qual goderete per suo amore, fin che porete haver el maestro in vostro dominio" [the waters and powders for you to enjoy because of her love, until you can have their master in your own domain]; see ASMo, Cancelleria ducale, Estero, Ambasciatori, agenti, corrispondenti estensi, Napoli, busta 1, letter from Ugolotto Facino to Ercole d'Este, Naples, 25 August 1472. Facino also described Eleonora's delight at receiving Ercole's gifts: "Et subito Madama se fece meter al collo quella cannaca bella de balassi e de rubinj la qualevi premeto che le sta cosi bene e dalli cosi zentil vista chel non se poteria dir meglio" [And straightaway My Lady had that that beautiful necklace of garnets and rubies placed around her neck, and I promise you it suits her so well and gives her such a lovely appearance that I could not speak better of it]; see ASMo, Cancelleria ducale, Estero, Ambasciatori, agenti, corrispondenti estensi, Napoli, busta 1, letter from Ugolotto Facino to Ercole d'Este, Naples, 17 May 1473.

⁴ ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Estero, Ambasciatori, agenti, corrispondenti estensi, Naples, busta 1, letter from Teofilo Calcagnini to Ercole d'Este, Naples, incomplete and undated.

expediency, Eleonora's marriage to Ercole d'Este was a loving and loyal partnership based on mutual respect and trust. It will also be argued that the particular qualities of affection and loyalty present in their marriage made it possible for the couple to successfully guide their small state through the challenges of war and political instability created by the incessant jockeying for power and influence between the states of the Italian peninsula.

It is not my intention in this dissertation to suggest that the marriage of Eleonora and Ercole was the only happy and successful partnership to emerge from the network of political unions by means of which alliances were cemented between the states of fifteenth-century Italy. One only has to look at the correspondence documenting the long and successful marriage of Barbara of Brandenburg and Ludovico Gonzaga to realize that it was possible to overcome the strictures of political convenience to create an exemplary partnership based on a shared sense of duty and mutual respect.⁵ However, I will maintain that the Estense marriage far transcended this paradigm of a good working partnership, and that soon after its inception it became an intensely passionate and mutually-dependent emotional and physical relationship that defied the limitations of its origins in political expediency.⁶ Several collections of autograph letters, those that Eleonora and Ercole wrote to each other as well as others from close family members and loyal retainers, will be presented to support this thesis, although the expressions of love and longing that they contain will not be accepted uncritically

⁵ See Elisabeth Ward Swain, "'My excellent and most singular lord': Marriage in a Noble Family of Fifteenth-Century Italy," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16 (1986): 171–95 (177–78). Patrizia Salvadori has thrown some light on the marriage of Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Piero de' Medici in her edition of their letters to each other; see Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *Lettere*, ed. Patrizia Salvadori (Florence: Olschki, 1993). A recent article by Carolyn James questions the role of friendship within the context a dynastic language, comparing the unions of Ippolita Maria Sforza and Alfonso d'Aragona with that of Eleonora's daughter, Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga; see Carolyn James, "Friendship and Dynastic Marriage in Renaissance Italy," *Literature and History*, 17 (2008): 4–18.

⁶ There is very little literature available on physical relationships within marriage in the fifteenth century. Only one work has proved useful for this study: see Helen Rodnite Lemay, "Anthonius Guainerius and Medieval Gynecology," in *Women of the Medieval World: Essays in Honor of John H. Mundy*, ed. Julius Kirshner and Samuel F. Wemple (Oxford/New York: Blackwell, 1985): 315–36.

and every attempt will be made to determine whether such expressions of emotion are genuine or merely formulaic utterances dictated by epistolary convention.

Particular attention will be paid in this dissertation to a little known collection of letters to Eleonora and Ercole from Diomede Carafa, writing both as Ferrante's chief minister and as Eleonora's former mentor and later friend. The fact that Carafa always wrote in his own hand, implying a degree of intimacy with the reader, suggests that his protestations of affection for the young duchess were genuine expressions of his feelings for her, and not the formulaic outpourings of a career courtier. This "affection" continued long after Eleonora's marriage to Ercole and appears to be the inspiration for the political advice that he imparted to her as she developed her own government style in Ferrara.

The time-frame for this dissertation is the first eight years of the marriage of Eleonora and Ercole, beginning with the arrival of Ugolotto Facino in Naples as Ercole's procurator in March 1472, and ending with the peace treaty which ended the Pazzi War in March 1480.⁷ I have chosen to end my study of the early years of the marriage at this point, arguing that the peace agreement which ended the conflict between the League of Milan, Florence and Venice, of which Ferrara was a member, and the combined armies of the Papacy and Naples, also marked the end of a period which had posed the greatest challenge to the continuity of the marriage, both because of Eleonora's familial relationship with Naples and Ercole's decision to accept a *condotta* as leader of the League's forces. Through an analysis of diplomatic documents in the Modena Archive, I will reveal that Eleonora had been under constant pressure from her father all through the war to persuade her husband to abandon his support for the League and his *condotta* as *capitano generale* of its army. I will

⁷ Treaty of alliance between Ferdinand I of Naples, the dukes of Milan, the state of Florence, and the duke of Ferrara, dated Naples 25 July 1480, British Library Add. MSS 27374. An alternate treaty, which did not include Ferrara, had been signed in Naples on 13 March 1480; see Treaty of alliance between Pope Sixtus IV, Ferdinand I of Naples, Bona and Gian Galeazzo dukes of Milan, and the states of Florence and Siena, dated Naples 13 March 1480, British Library Add. MSS 27373.

demonstrate that, despite her distress at the path that Ercole had chosen in the war, Eleonora did not waver in her love or her support for him and served as his regent with distinction. I believe that Eleonora's skilful management of her conflict of loyalty, as Ferrante's daughter and Ercole's wife, saved her marriage and earned the respect of her husband. The situation that Eleonora faced in Ferrara during the Pazzi War was undoubtedly not uncommon when dynastic marriages were expressions of alliances which were rarely permanent. Downie describes the complex role that was expected from a dynastic wife such as Eleonora, although I believe that her success in performing that role was conditioned by her feelings of love for Ercole and her unwavering loyalty towards him:

A royal daughter was aware of her multiple identities and roles of daughter, sister, wife and mother, and the complex of loyalties created by these roles. She was the focus of a network of several families – her birth family, foster family and her own – and had to be capable of facilitating communication within the network and managing her various, and sometimes contradictory, identities and loyalties. These identities formed the basis of a princess' power and her management of them constituted the exercise of that power.⁸

More research needs to be done to critically examine the significant roles that Eleonora continued to play as Ercole's consort, regent and mother to his children until her untimely death at the age of just forty-three in October 1493. A forthcoming doctoral dissertation on the decisive role that Eleonora played in preserving the sovereignty of Ferrara against overwhelming odds during the war with Venice (1482–84) will hopefully go some way to filling the gap in the literature about a most extraordinary woman.⁹

⁸ Fiona Downie, *She is but a Woman: Queenship in Scotland, 1424–1463* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), 198–99.

⁹ Cornelia Endesfelder is currently writing a dissertation titled "Gubernatrice –Procuratrice: Eleonora d' Aragona, Netzwerke einer italienischen Renaissancefürstin" for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Philosophische Fakultät of the Technische Universität Chemnitz, Germany.

The Research Process

Very early in my research on the letters of Eleonora d'Aragona and her marriage to Ercole d'Este I realized that, in order to fully understand the character of the young woman who arrived in Ferrara early in July 1473, I needed to know about her life in Naples, growing up as a princess at the Aragonese court, where, incidentally, her future husband also spent more than fifteen years of his early life. I very quickly discovered that this was no simple task. Very little is known about that period of Eleonora's life due to the lack of archival resources in Naples. The dispersal of Neapolitan documents and manuscripts has been a progressive process, beginning with the invasion of Naples by Charles VIII of France in 1494, which introduced a decade of political instability in the kingdom. The destruction of the Neapolitan State Archive by German troops in 1943, an act of vandalism considered to be responsible for the loss of Ferrante's Chancellery documents, was possibly only the culmination of centuries of political upheavals and natural disasters, all of which had taken their toll of Neapolitan archives. In order to establish any documentary basis for my study of Eleonora's early life at the Aragonese court in Naples, it has been necessary to rely on archival material included in published works before 1943, and on diplomatic documents conserved in archives in other Italian cities and abroad. My major resource for the study of Eleonora's marriage to Ercole d'Este has been the *Archivio Segreto Estense*, which is conserved in the *Archivio di Stato* in Modena. This archive, while not complete, contains a large collection of the letters exchanged between Eleonora and Ercole, generally when they were separated by some distance, the official diplomatic communications between Ferrara, Naples and other Italian and foreign states, and a smaller collection of letters to Eleonora and Ercole from her extended family circle at the court in Naples. While many of these documents have been used in previous

studies of the political and social consequences of the marriage, in this dissertation it is my intention to concentrate on the marriage as an emotional entity, and to present the documentary evidence which supports my argument that it was characterized by a mutual affection and trust which defied its genesis in political expediency.

Archival Sources

1. Modena

The majority of the documents used for this dissertation are conserved in the *Archivio di Stato* in Modena as part of the *Archivio Segreto Estense*. This archive of the private and official papers of the d'Este family was taken by Cesare d'Este (1562–1628) to Modena after Ferrara devolved to the Papacy in 1598. The collection was maintained in the Palazzo Ducale in Modena, where they were organized as the *Reale Archivio Segreto* by Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750) during his fifty years as ducal archivist and librarian. A further regularization of the archives took place during the resurgence of interest in local history which followed the final unification of Italy in 1871, becoming the *Archivio di Stato* in 1874, and relocating to its current location in Via Cavour when regional archives were united under the auspices of the Ministero dell'Interno in Rome.¹⁰

Most of the documents used for this study of the marriage of Ercole and Eleonora are letters, and not only those that the couple exchanged during their times apart. Although their combined correspondence occupies four large *buste* in the Modena Archive, few are from the first four years of their marriage,

¹⁰ Much of this work was done by the chief archivists themselves within their own collections, men such as Cesare Foucard in Modena (1873–87), Costantino Corvisieri in Rome (1881–98) and Alessandro Luzio in Mantua (1899–1918; see Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, *Repertorio del personale degli Archivi di Stato, I (1861–1918)*, ed. Maurizio Cassetti (Rome: Tipografia Mura, 2008).

1473–77.¹¹ These have been supplemented by letters from members of Eleonora’s family and her friends in Naples, and by those from members of Ercole’s household and court in Ferrara. However, because those few of the couple’s letters that have survived from the early years are autograph, they have proved to be a rich source of intimate detail about their relationship and the nature of their marriage.

Several small collections of autograph letters have been used for this study: from Ercole in Ferrara to Eleonora in Naples in the period between the signing of the marriage contract and the celebration of the marriage in Naples; from Ercole in Ferrara to Eleonora en route to Naples in 1477; from Eleonora in Naples to Ercole in Ferrara 1477; and from Ercole at the Pazzi War to Eleonora in Ferrara, August–October 1479. These collections have been complemented by ambassadorial letters from Naples to Ferrara: from Ugolotto Facino, Ercole’s representative in Naples during and after the marriage negotiations, 1472–73; from members of Ercole’s court in Naples and Rome for the marriage celebrations in 1473; and from a miscellaneous collection of decrees, diplomatic instructions and mandates.

The letters from Ferrarese diplomats in other Italian states occupy an archive in the *Archivio di Stato* in Modena, which is described by Ilardi as “one of the leading collections of fifteenth-century dispatches in Italy.”¹² Those from Naples are of particular interest, as are collections of letters from Eleonora’s family and former

¹¹ ASMo, Casa e Stato, Carteggio dei Principi, Ramo ducale, Principi non regnanti 1683, Lettere della duchessa Eleonora d’Aragona, 1477–93, Buste 131(1477–88) and 132 (1489–93); ASMo, Casa e Stato, Carteggi de’ Principi, Ramo ducale, Principi regnanti 1652, letters of Ercole d’Este to Eleonora d’Aragona, busta 67 (1472–85), busta 68 (1486–1505). There are no letters from the years between 1473 and 1477 although such letters obviously existed. There is unsubstantiated information of a fire in the ducal palace in Modena after the documents were transferred from Ferrara in 1595, while Richard Brown suggests that the destruction and altering of court documents may have been encouraged by the Estense rulers; see his “Death of a Renaissance Record-Keeper: the Murder of Tomasso da Tortona in Ferrara, 1385,” *Archivaria* 44 (1997):1–43.

¹² Vincent Ilardi, “Fifteenth-Century Diplomatic Documents in Western European Archives and Libraries (1450–1494),” *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962), 64–112 (103).

associates in Naples to Ferrara.¹³ A collection of autograph letters from Ferrante's *Viceré*, Diomedes Carafa, the count of Matalone, to both Ercole and Eleonora, began before their marriage contract was signed in October 1472, and continued at irregular intervals until Carafa's death in 1487.¹⁴ These letters were the subject of an unpublished doctoral dissertation by John D. Moores, who transcribed and analysed Carafa's correspondence in relation to the part he played in Neapolitan foreign policy.¹⁵

Despite the richness of its collections of Estense documents, there are significant problems in using the Modena Archive, most of which appear to be due to a permanent shortfall in funding from the Italian government. There is as yet no adequate stand-alone guide to the collection. Successive archivists and scholars have also left their mark on the collection and its rather eccentric systematization. While the British historian Tuohy writes that, while working in the *Archivio* in the 1970s, he reorganized part of the *Camera Ducale* section and "applied a system of numeration to the registers to facilitate their identification," other sequences have been broken up and letters redistributed in different *buste* so that it is difficult to construct a narrative.¹⁶ This has been a particular problem for letters emanating from Naples, which are often filed by writer rather than by its place of origin. The first volume of a planned complete inventory of the Estense Archive by then director,

¹³ ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Estero, Ambasciatori, agenti, corrispondenti estensi, Napoli, buste 1–4; ASMo, Cancelleria Estense, Estero, Carteggio di principi e Signorie, Napoli–Sicilia, buste 2–4; ASMo, Caso e Stato, Documenti spettanti a principi estensi, Ramo ducale, Principi non regnanti, busta 376; ASMo, Casa e Stato 1682, Busta 130.

¹⁴ ASMo, Estero, Carteggio dei Principi e Signorie, Napoli–Sicilia, busta 4, autograph letters of Diomedes Carafa to Ercole d'Este and Eleonora d'Aragona, Naples, various dates.

¹⁵ John D. Moores, "Diomedes Carafa and his Unpublished Correspondence," PhD diss., University of London, 1967. I thank Dr Moores for his generosity in allowing me access to this dissertation. For his article on Carafa's relationship with Ferrante, see John D. Moores, "New Light on Diomedes Carafa and his 'Perfect Loyalty' to Ferrante of Aragon," *Italian Studies* 26 (1971): 1–23.

¹⁶ Thomas Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara: Ercole d'Este, 1471–1505, and the Invention of a Ducal Capital* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xvi.

Filippo Valenti, was published in 1953, while a general guide to the collection appeared ten years later.¹⁷ These guides have more recently been supplemented by a series of hand-typed subject folders in which the writers of letters are listed alphabetically according to their profession, for example, medicine. The letters of the court physician, Francesco da Castello, who managed the illnesses of Eleonora and her children, are included in *Archivi per Materie, Medici e Medicina*.¹⁸ An antiquated card catalogue is the only means of accessing published material relevant to the archive collection, although this does not appear to have been updated in recent years.¹⁹

2. Mantua

The potential for improvement in Modena is immediately obvious from a visit to the well-organized *Archivio* in Mantua. Those documents relevant to the Estensi are listed clearly in the *Archivio Gonzaga*, indexed by Alessandro Luzio in 1922 and reprinted in 1993.²⁰ A fine collection of the letters which passed between Mantua and Ferrara during Eleonora's time as duchess is a prelude to the extraordinary *copialettere* of her correspondence commissioned by Eleonora's daughter, Isabella d'Este, after she married Francesco Gonzaga in 1490.²¹ The *Archivio* in Mantua is also an unexpected source for Neapolitan documents from the reign of Ferrante, due to the king's friendship

¹⁷ Filippo Valenti, *Profilo storico dell'archivio segreto estense: introduzione preposta all'inventario della sezione Casa e Stato dell'Archivio Segreto Estense* (Rome: s.n. 1953); and *Panorama dell'Archivio di Stato di Modena* (Modena: Scuola di Paleografia diplomatica e archivistica dell'Archivio di Stato di Modena, 1963).

¹⁸ ASMo, *Archivio Segreto Estense, Archivi per Materie, Medici e Medicina*, Cassetta 3.

¹⁹ See, for example, Cesare Foucard, *Documenti storici spettanti alla medicina, chirurgia, farmaceutica conservati nell'Archivio di Stato in Modena* (Modena: Tipografia Sociale, 1888), presented to the 11th Congress of the Italian Medical Association, Perugia, 1885.

²⁰ Alessandro Luzio, *L'Archivio Gonzaga di Mantova: la corrispondenza familiare, amministrativa e diplomatica dei Gonzaga*, 4 vols. (Verona: Mondadori, 1922; reprinted Mantova: Archivio di Stato, 1993).

²¹ Mantova, Archivio di Stato, (hereafter ASMa), *Carteggio degli Inviati e Diversi, Ferrara, Buste 1228–30*; ASMa, *Lettere degli Estensi ai Signori di Mantova*, Buste 1182–83.

with the Mantuan orator, Giorgio Brognolo, who was given virtually open access to the Aragonese Chancellery.²²

3. Naples

In September 1943 a large part of the Neapolitan Archive was destroyed when the Villa Montesano near Nola, to which it had been moved for safe-keeping, was set alight by renegade German troops.²³ The director of the *Archivio* at the time, Riccardo Filangieri, revealed that, among the documents destroyed, were all the registers of the Aragonese Chancellery, which would account for the almost complete absence of inward-bound letters, including those from Ferrara. However, while Ilardi believes that the destruction of 1943 is responsible for the lack of documents from Ferrante's reign,²⁴ Bentley suggests that insurrections and natural disasters had already accounted for much of the Aragonese Archive.²⁵ Those documents which had survived were published separately in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by two directors of the Naples Archive, Francesco Trinchera, whose work included documents from the Chancellery for the years 1467–68 and 1491–94,²⁶ and Luigi Volpicella, who covered

²² Luzio, *L'Archivio Gonzaga di Mantova*, 2, 164–66. A particularly useful letter came to light among documents in the Mantua Archive after this dissertation was submitted for examination; see ASMa, Archivio Gonzaga, Carteggio degli inviati e diversi, Naples, busta 805, letter from Filippo Maria Sforza and Sforza Maria Sforza to Francesco Sforza, Naples, 15 September 1465. This letter follows on from that included in this dissertation as Appendix Document 1.

²³ Riccardo Filangieri, "Report of the Destruction by the Germans, September 30, 1943, of the Depository of Priceless Historical Records of the Naples State Archives," *American Archivist* 7 (1944): 255. Surviving remnants of the Archive are listed in Jole Mazzoleni, *Fonti per la storia dell'epoca aragonese esistenti nell'Archivio di Stato di Napoli* (Naples: Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, 1956), and in her *Le fonti documentarie e bibliografiche dal sec. X al sec. XX conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Napoli* (Naples: Arte Tipografica, 1974–78).

²⁴ Ilardi, "Fifteenth-Century Diplomatic Documents," 94–95.

²⁵ Jerry H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987) 49.

²⁶ Francesco Trinchera, *Codice Aragonese: lettere, regie, ordinamenti ed altri atti governativi de'sovrani aragonesi in Napoli riguardanti l'amministrazione interna del reame e le relazioni all'estero*, 2 vols. (Naples: Stabilimento Tipografico Giuseppe Cataneo, 1866–68).

the period May 1486–May 1488.²⁷ The archives of Alfonso I were removed to Spain after his death in 1458, and they are in the *Archivio de la Corona de Aragón* and the *Archivio de la Ciudad* in Barcelona.²⁸

The attention of Mazzatinti was drawn to the large number of Neapolitan manuscripts, described as originating in the library of the kings of Aragon and included in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque Imperiale in Paris, the forerunner of the Bibliothèque Nationale, compiled by Léopold Delisle in 1881.²⁹ Mazzatinti suggests that the depredation of the royal library in Naples had begun with volumes removed by Charles VIII and taken with him to Paris in 1495 as part of the spoils of war.³⁰ It is not known how many Aragonese documents were removed from Naples in the turbulent years from 1494 to 1501, after the invasion of Charles VIII of France, when no fewer than three kings of Aragon occupied the throne of Naples in rapid succession.³¹ When Federigo III's son, Ferrante, duke of Calabria, went into exile in Valencia in 1502, he took with him at least a thousand volumes, which are now in the library of the University of Valencia.

²⁷ *Regis Ferdinandi Primi Instructionum Liber. 10 maggio 1486–10 maggio 1488*, ed. Luigi Volpicella (Naples: Pierro, 1916).

²⁸ Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. viii; and Alan Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous, King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396–1458* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 433.

²⁹ Léopold Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, 4 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1881).

³⁰ Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *La Biblioteca dei Re d'Aragona in Napoli* (Rocca San Casciano: Licinio Cappelli Editore, 1897), clv.

³¹ Ferrante I died 25 January 1494, and was succeeded by his son, Alfonso II, who ruled only until 22 January 1495, when he abdicated in favour of his son, Ferrante II, commonly known as Ferrandino. Alfonso retreated to the Olivetan monastery at Mazara del Vallo, Sicily, where he intended to take holy orders, but died of fever in Messina in November 1495. Ferrandino was forced to retreat with his family and court to Ischia, Sicily or Calabria when Charles VIII entered Naples 22 February 1495. Charles left Naples after only three months, Ferrandino returning to his throne 7 July 1495 with military aid from Spain and support from the Neapolitan *popolo*. He died October 1496 to be succeeded by a younger son of Ferrante I, who ruled as Federigo III. In November, with the Treaty of Granada, the kings of France and Spain agreed to share the kingdom of Naples between them. Federigo was forced to cede Naples to Louis XII of France in July 1501 and went into exile in Tours. France and Spain soon clashed and by 1504 Spain had conquered Southern Italy for herself, ruling the former kingdom as a *Viceregno*, see Eleni Sakellariou, "Institutional and Social Continuities in the Kingdom of Naples between 1443 and 1528," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy: Antecedents and Effects*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 327–53 (327–28, 341–45).

Diaries and Chronicles

1. Ferrara

A number of contemporary diaries, many of which have appeared in modern editions, have been a valuable resource in providing background details for the events and personalities referred to in archival documents. Day in and day out, the chroniclers recorded appearances, gossip, clothes, comings and goings, and I have drawn on them extensively to flesh out the skeletons of events described in the letters.³² Four main Ferrarese diaries have been used extensively for the period of this study, all of them reporting events from a slightly different perspective. Bernardino Zambotti, who received much of his information from a family member within Ercole d'Este's inner circle, was an educated man, part of the intellectual elite of the city with close, and sympathetic, ties to the upper levels of Ferrarese society and with an interest in political change.³³ Girolamo Maria Ferrarini, whose diary has recently been published, although a friend of Zambotti and equally well connected at court, was more concerned in his account with the minutiae of Ferrarese court life, weddings, funerals and incidents of daily living, such as the accidental drowning of Eleonora's dwarf.³⁴ A third diary is an anonymous work, possibly by a notary who, while he was not as well educated as either Zambotti or Ferrarini, was a great recorder of the comings and goings of the Estense court.³⁵ Ugo Caleffini, whose diary has also recently been published in a single volume, worked at the ducal court in Ferrara in posts which Folin describes as "livelli inferiori

³² For a survey of these diaries see Marco Folin, "Le cronache a Ferrara e negli Stati estensi (secoli XV–XVI)," in *Storia di Ferrara, 6: Il Rinascimento: situazioni e personaggi*, ed. Alessandra Chiappini (Ferrara: Corbo Editoriale, 2000), 460–92.

³³ Bernardino Zambotti, *Diario Ferrarese dall'anno 1476 sino al 1504*, ed. Giuseppe Pardi, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, tom. 24, par. VII, fasc. 5–6 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1934), hereafter called Zambotti.

³⁴ Girolamo Ferrarini, *Memoriale Estense (1476–1489)*, ed. Primo Griguolo (Badia Polesine: Tipografia Checchinato, 2006), hereafter called Ferrarini.

³⁵ *Diario ferrarese dall'anno 1409 sino al 1502 di autori incerti*, ed. Giuseppe Pardi, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, tom., 24, par. VII, fasc. 1–4 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1928–33), hereafter called *Diario ferrarese*.

del personale amministrativo estense” [lower levels of the Estense bureaucracy].³⁶ Details like the weekly price of grain and listings of members of the ducal court and public officials, and what they were paid, are unique to Caleffini. The diary’s original editor, Giuseppe Pardi, suggests that Caleffini betrayed a bias against Ercole d’Este, that he disapproved of the duke’s “favoritismo” [favouritism] and his “fiscalismo” [oppressive tax system], but that he admired Eleonora greatly.³⁷ While Ondedio da Vitale’s *Cronaca* is conserved in its original manuscript in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea in Ferrara, an unpublished *tesi di laurea* by Elisabetta Azzali, a student at the Università degli Studi in Ferrara, contains a transcription of the diary and a critical essay.³⁸ Azzali writes that little is known of Ondedio, except that he was the son of a tailor, and that he worked as a *fattore* [steward] for the wealthy Sacrati family. This is therefore an ordinary man’s view of life in Ferrara, written from outside the court circle, his blunt descriptions of members of the court circle possibly his greatest contribution. The diary of Giuliano Antigini, which also remains in manuscript form in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea in Ferrara, contains descriptions of a strange mixture of formal court occasions and Antigini family events. Folini describes him as “un uomo del contado” [an ordinary man], who remained substantially outside the court circle.³⁹

³⁶ Ugo Caleffini, *Croniche 1471–1494*, 2 vols. (Ferrara: Deputazione Provinciale Ferrarese di Storia Patria, 2006, without editor’s name. Previously the only published version of the Caleffini diary (found in manuscript in the Vatican and British Libraries) was a strange mixture of paraphrased entries from Caleffini combined with those of Zambotti and of the *Diario ferrarese*; see *Diario di Ugo Caleffini (1471–1494)*, ed. Giuseppe Pardi, 2 vols. (Ferrara: R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per l’Emilia e la Romagna, 1938); Folini, “Le cronache,” 461.

³⁷ Caleffini, 1:x.

³⁸ Ondedio da Vitale, *Cronaca di Ferrara dal 1471 al 1496*, Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Fondo Antonelli, MS 257. The manuscript is edited in Elisabetta Azzali, “Ondedio de Vitale: una cronaca cittadina (1471–1496),” *laurea diss.*, Università degli Studi di Ferrara, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 1997–98.

³⁹ Giuliano Antigini, *Cronaca 1384–1504*, Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale, MS Classe I, 757; see also Folini, *Le cronache*, 464.

2. Naples

Several Neapolitan chronicles have come to light during the writing of this dissertation, the first of which was that of Giacomo della Morte, known as Notar Giacomo. It has been of variable use, as the diarist often leaves huge gaps, while there is evidence that at least some of the entries were written well after the events themselves.⁴⁰ Of more use and interest has been a diary that has been given the title *Una cronaca napoletana figurata del Quattrocento* by its editor Riccardo Filangieri.⁴¹ Although it is only a real diary after 1480, its value lies in Filangieri's biographical footnotes and its superb original coloured illustrations. Filangieri writes that its author is known only as Ferraiolo, "un uomo del popolo" [a man of the people] and a "minuzioso osservatore" [meticulous observer] of events.⁴² A second, more recent, critical edition of the same diary by Rosario Coluccia contains two glossaries, one of words in the Neapolitan dialect and another of the people and places represented in the diary.⁴³ The *Diurnali detti del duca di Monteleone*, so called because it was discovered in 1535 by Ettore Pignatelli, duke of Monteleone, appears as an original source for Pontieri.⁴⁴ Joampiero Leostello da Volterra, the author of *Effemeridi delle cose fatte per il duca di Calabria (1484–1491)*,⁴⁵ is described by Filangieri as a "uomo affatto ordinario" [quite ordinary

⁴⁰ Giacomo della Morte, called Notar Giacomo, *Cronica di Napoli*, ed. Paolo Garzilli (Naples: Stamperia Reale, 1845).

⁴¹ *Una cronaca napoletana figurata del Quattrocento*, ed. Riccardo Filangieri (Naples: L'Arte Tipografica, 1956), hereafter referred to as *Cronaca napoletana figurata*. The work was discovered as 60 leaves of text with 120 coloured drawings, misfiled with the manuscript of the *Cronaca di Partenope*, in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, where it is listed as MS 801. For a description of *Cronaca di Partenope*, which deals with the medieval history of Naples, see Curt F. Bühler, "The Thirteenth Recorded Manuscript of the *Cronaca di Partenope*," *PMLA* 67 (1952): 580–84.

⁴² *Cronaca napoletana figurata*, 12.

⁴³ *Ferraiolo 'Cronaca'*, ed. Rosario Coluccia (Florence: Accademia della Crusca, 1986/7).

⁴⁴ Ettore Pignatelli, *Diurnali detti del duca di Monteleone nella primitiva lezione da un testo a penna, posseduto dalla Società Napoletana di Storia Patria*, ed. Nunzio Federico Faraglia (Naples: Giannini, 1895; reprinted Sala Bolognese: Forni, 1979).

⁴⁵ Joampiero Leostello da Volterra, *Effemeridi delle cose fatte per il duca di Calabria (1484–1491)*, ed. Gaetano Filangieri (Naples: Tipografia dell'Accademia Reale delle Scienze, 1883), hereafter referred to as Leostello. This diary has been identified as one of the manuscripts taken from the Royal Library in Naples by Charles VIII in 1494.

man] with “una certa superficiale cultura” [a certain superficial education].⁴⁶ Although it falls outside the time frame for this dissertation, the work provides intimate insights into life at the Aragonese court, especially “il più perfetto accordo ed una grande affezione” [the perfect agreement and great affection] which existed between Alfonso, his brother, Federico, and their father in their government of the *Regno*.⁴⁷

The diary which takes the name of its compiler, Giuliano Passero, “un uomo di umile condizione” [a man of humble circumstances] remains in the edition in which it was first published in 1785. Covering the period 1443 to 1524, it consists of three sections, a voluminous preface, a commentary and the diary itself. This last section has been a useful source of descriptions of court events in Naples, particularly the marriage of Ferrante to Giovanna d’Aragona in September 1477 and the coronation of his new queen.⁴⁸

3. Parma

The anonymous Latin diary, *Cronica Gestorum in partibus Lombardie et reliquis Italie* (AA. 1476–1482), which was given the rather misleading title, *Diarium Parmense*, by its original editor, Ludovico Antonio Muratori, has proved to be an invaluable source of information, particularly for the period of the Pazzi War.⁴⁹ Its superb, detailed descriptions of the warfare of this period deserve closer inspection by military historians.

⁴⁶ Leostello, liii.

⁴⁷ Leostello, lxv.

⁴⁸ *Giuliano Passero cittadino napoletano o sia prima pubblicazione in istampa, che delle Storie in forma di Giornali, le quali sotto nome di questo autore finora erano andate manoscritte, ora si fa a sue proprie spese da Vincenzo Maria Altobelli [...] Vi si premette ancora una prefazione, [...] e vi si soggiunge una Dissertazione, [...] di d. Michele M.a Vecchioni [...] Vi si è unito finalmente un copioso indice composto da Gherardo Cono Capobianco [...] (Naples: Vincenzo Orsino, 1785), hereafter referred to as Passero.*

⁴⁹ *Cronica gestorum in partibus Lombardie et reliquis Italie [AA. 1476–1482]*, ed. Giuliano Bonazzi, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, tom. 22, parte III, fasc. 23 and 88 (Città di Castello: S.Lapi, 1904–11).

Secondary Sources

1. Sixteenth-Century Histories of Ferrara

The consolidation of Estense dynastic aspirations in the sixteenth century also saw the appearance of more or less contested versions of the history of the Estense rule of Ferrara. Mario Equicola's *Genealogia de li Signori Estensi, Principi in Ferrara*,⁵⁰ was compiled in the last months of 1516, when he was working as the secretary of Isabella d'Este. Kolsky sees the writer as very much an apologist for the Estensi and the work as "the literary monument which commemorates his service and loyalty to the Estensi as well as being a work which would win recognition from the members of the family with whom he was in closest contact."⁵¹ He adds that "the work is distinguished by its careful adherence to historical evidence in an attempt to prove the greatness of the Este without having recourse to legends and other similar types of material." Ercole I is the last ruler covered by Equicola in his history. The work circulated in manuscript form and remains unedited.⁵²

The advent of printing and a new humanist perspective on historiography led to the appearance of new histories of the city in the mid-sixteenth century. Three histories of Ferrara appeared in this period, the first two in 1556. The author of the *Libro delle Historie Ferraresi*, Gasparo Sardi, drew both on the classical works of Thucydides, Torgus Pompeius and Pliny as well as the modern historical literature of Bruni, Benedetti and Corio for his facts,⁵³ while Giovambattista Giraldi, the author of *Commentario delle cose di Ferrara et de principi da Este* and a number of comedies,

⁵⁰ Mario Equicola, *Genealogia de li Signori Estensi, Principi in Ferrara*, London, British Library, MS Add. 22330, ff. 3–22.

⁵¹ Stephen Kolsky, *Mario Equicola: The Real Courtier* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1991), 158–59.

⁵² See Kolsky, *Mario Equicola*, 318 for a list of manuscripts.

⁵³ Gaspare Sardi, *Historie ferraresi* (Ferrara: Francesco Rossi da Valenza, 1556).

tragedies and novels, was proficient in French as well as Greek and Latin, enabling him to draw on the work of contemporary Transalpine historian, Gabriel Chappuys.⁵⁴ Giovan Battista Pigna completed an unfinished history and a genealogy of the Este by Girolamo Faletti, publishing it in 1570 under the title *Historia de' principi d'Este*.⁵⁵ Cochrane applauds Pigna's ability to go beyond the traditional description of political and military events in his history, citing his account of the drainage projects in the lower Po delta, which doubled the crop yields in the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ All of these histories acknowledge Eleonora's contribution to Ercole's rule, but at no stage does she take centre stage, or speak in her own right.

Pandolfo Collenuccio (1444–1504) began a history of Naples in 1498, at the request of Ercole d'Este, although it was not published until thirty-five years after his death in 1504. Twelve editions of this work appeared between 1539 and 1613, those after 1583 with annotations by the Neapolitan, Tommaso Costo (1563–1610).⁵⁷ Cochrane writes that Collenuccio was inspired by his quest for a solution to what he saw as the greatest political problem of his age, the problem of good government, which he considered had existed in Naples in the time of Alfonso the Magnanimous.

When Ferrara devolved to the papacy in 1598 for lack of a legitimate heir, Duke Cesare d'Este was forced to withdraw to Modena, leaving the former capital under the control of the papal legate, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, but taking with him “as much as he could carry, as if the art and the treasures of the city were so many of his own

⁵⁴ Gviambattista Giraldi [Cinzio] *Commentario delle cose di Ferrara et de' principi de Este* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1556). There is some confusion about this writer's identity, as he appended the nickname Cinthio to his name and is commonly referred to by that name.

⁵⁵ Giovan Battista Pigna, *Historia de' principi d'Este* (Ferrara: Francesco Rossi, 1570); volume 1, from the Roman Empire to 1476, was the only one published.

⁵⁶ Eric W. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 263–64.

⁵⁷ Pandolfo Collenuccio (1444–1504), *Compendio dell'istoria del Regno di Napoli di Pandolfo Collenuccio da Pesaro, di Membrino Roseo da Fabriano, et di Tomaso Costo napolitan, diviso in tre parti, con le annotationi del Costo poste novamente a' suoi luoghi, da lui con diligenza, e fedeltà rivedute, e ampliate, le quali suppliscono a molte cose del Regno, da essi autori tralasciate* (Venice: Giunti, 1613); Cochrane, 156.

personal belongings.”⁵⁸ It can be considered fortunate that Cesare d’Este took the Estense Archive with him to Modena, as Aldobrandini’s arrival in Ferrara was the signal for the systematic denuding of art works and anything of value which had not already been removed by Cesare.

2. Antiquarianism and Enlightenment

In 1700 the course of historical research of the Este rule of Ferrara was changed when Ludovico Antonio Muratori was recalled to Modena from Milan, where he had been librarian at the Ambrosiana, to be librarian and archivist in the library of Duke Rinaldo I d’Este. He occupied this post until his death in 1750, during which time he reorganized the *Archivio Estense* and wrote his two-volume *Delle antichità estensi ed italiane*, of which Luciano Chiappini wrote: “rappresentano ancor oggi un testo indispensabile per lo studioso di cose estensi e non solo di quelle” [even today they represent an indispensable text for the student of all things to do with the Estense and not just that].⁵⁹ Muratori was rigorous in his use of original documents, rejecting once and for all the myth, cultivated by the sixteenth-century court historians, that the Estensi had classical Roman or French origins. Instead, he demonstrated that their origin was Longobard, more specifically, Bavarian. He also edited the important source collections, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* in twenty-eight volumes (1723–51), that included the diaries of Bernardino Zambotti, the anonymous *Diario ferrarese dall’anno 1409 sino al 1502 di autori incerti* and the *Diario parmense*, and the *Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevii*, six volumes, 1738–42, a collection of seventy-five dissertations on different historical themes. In 1749 his

⁵⁸ Riccardo Brusaglia. “Ferrara: Arts and Ideologies in a Renaissance State” In: *Phaeton’s Children: the Este Court and its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara*, ed. Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005) 25–47.

⁵⁹ Ludovico Antonio Muratori, *Delle antichità estensi ed italiane*, 2 vols. (Modena: Stamperia ducale, 1717–40; reprinted Sala Bolognese: Forni, 1984); Luciano Chiappini, *Gli Estensi: mille anni di storia* (Ferrara: Corbo Editore, 2001), 9.

treatise expounding the philosophical ideas of the Italian Enlightenment, *Della pubblica felicità, oggetto de' buoni principi*, was published first in Venice then in Lucca. This work may have served as a model for that of Francesco Containi, *Della felicità dello Stato di Ferrara*, which remained in manuscript form in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea in Ferrara until its publication in 1995, edited by Valentino Sani.⁶⁰ It has been dated to the years 1773–74 and gives a rare glimpse of Ferrara under the papal legation which had replaced the Estensi in 1598. The work of Antonio Frizzi, *Memorie per la storia di Ferrara*, which was published in two editions, 1791–1808 and 1847–48, is possibly the most widely used of the early histories of Ferrara. It is in five volumes,⁶¹ the fourth dealing with the period of the five Estense dukes of Ferrara.⁶²

3. Nineteenth-Century Renewal

The upsurge of nationalistic pride which accompanied the *Risorgimento*, and the creation of an independent and unified Italian state under a Savoy monarchy, saw scholars such as Adolfo Venturi, founder and director of the *Galleria Estense*, Giuseppe Campori, collector and antiquary, the philologist, Giulio Bertoni, and historian, Luigi Napoleone Cittadella, poring over documents in the archives of Modena and Mantua. Many of the publications resulting from their painstaking archival research are essential items in any reading list on the history of Ferrara.⁶³

The unification of Italy was also the stimulus for the establishment of regional

⁶⁰ Valentino Sani, *Ferrara felice ovvero Della felicità dello stato di Ferrara di Francesco Containi* (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 1995).

⁶¹ Antonio Frizzi, *Memorie per la storia di Ferrara* (Ferrara: Francesco Pomatelli, 1791; 2nd ed. Ferrara: Abram Servadio 1848; reprinted Ferrara: Ferraria Libro, 1982).

⁶² Frizzi's footnotes indicate that his sources were mainly contemporary diaries and earlier histories.

⁶³ Adolfo Venturi, "L'arte ferrarese nel periodo di Ercole I d'Este," *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per l'Emilia e le Romagne*, 6 (1888): 91–412; Giuseppe Campori, *I pittori degli estensi nel secolo XV* (Modena: Tip. Vincenzi, 1886); Giulio Bertoni, *La Biblioteca Estense e la cultura ferrarese ai tempi del Duca Ercole I (1471–1505)* (Turin: Loescher, 1903); and Luigi Napoleone Cittadella, *Notizie relative a Ferrara, per la maggior parte inedite, ricavate da documenti* (Ferrara: Taddei, 1864).

groups dedicated to the study of local history and archival research. One such group, the *Deputazione Ferrarese di Storia Patria*, was established in 1884 and since 1886 has published a series of monographic studies of local historical interest under the collective titles of *Atti e memorie* and *Serie Monumenti*.

4. Popular Histories

Although Ferrara has never captured the popular imagination to the same extent as Florence, it has had remarkable exponents, and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it too became a subject of interest to English and American scholars.

The English romance philologist, Edmund G. Gardner (1869–1935), who wrote on Dante and Florence as well as Ferrara, and whose *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, which first appeared in 1903 and remains in print, is a social and cultural history of Ferrara under the Este princes from Niccolò to Ercole I.⁶⁴ This was followed in 1905 by a companion volume, *The King of Court Poets*, concentrating more on Ariosto.⁶⁵ In 1911, Gardner's *The Painters of the School of Ferrara* was published, a simple but comprehensive overview of Ferrarese artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁶⁶ Gardner's books on Ferrara were enormously successful in popularizing the city and its culture and, while much of his scholarship is now outdated, in both works the author demonstrates a familiarity with original documents in the Modena Archives and a keen awareness of contemporary Italian scholarship. Other biographers looked to the northern courts, and the extraordinary women who presided over them. Their work was founded inevitably on the research of two remarkable figures: Alessandro Luzio (1857–1946),

⁶⁴ Edmund G. Gardner, *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara: A Study in the Poetry, Religion and Politics of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries* (London: Archibald Constable, 1904).

⁶⁵ Edmund G. Gardner, *King of the Court Poets: A Study of the Work, Life and Times of Lodovico Ariosto* (London: Archibald Constable, 1906).

⁶⁶ Edmund G. Gardner, *The Painters of the School of Ferrara* (London and New York: Duckworth, 1911).

journalist, patriot, and archivist was the author, often in collaboration with the aristocratic Venetian historian Rodolfo Renier (1857–1915), of a large number of articles and monographs based on the Mantuan archives. Luzio's article on the betrothal of Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga is still the best guide to documents defining the Gonzaga–Este alliance.⁶⁷ Accessing and organizing previously unedited documents in the Mantua Archive, he was responsible for the inventory of Gonzaga Archive still in use today.⁶⁸

It took women, however, to popularize this research. Julia M. Cartwright (Mrs Ady), an upper-class English woman who did not train as an historian, wrote several biographies of women, including those of Beatrice and Isabella d'Este, the two daughters of Eleonora d'Aragona and Ercole d'Este, published in 1899 and 1903.⁶⁹ Although both are written in an accessible style, similar to that of Gardner, Cartwright acknowledges the use of original documents in the archives of Mantua and Milan and the assistance of Luzio and Renier. However, her claim to have brought together, for the first time, the letters of Isabella d'Este, which had “hitherto lain buried in foreign archives or hidden in pamphlets and periodicals, many of them already out of print,” raised the ire – or perhaps the jealousy – of Luzio and Renier, who accused her of plagiarism.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Alessandro Luzio, “Isabella d'Este e Francesco Gonzaga promessi sposi,” *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 4, 9 (1908): 34–69.

⁶⁸ See above, n. 15.

⁶⁹ Julia Cartwright, *Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan, 1475–1497: A Study in the Renaissance* (1899; reprinted Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1972); *Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, 1474–1539: A Study in the Renaissance* 2 vols. (1899; 2nd ed., London: John Murray, 1903); on Cartwright and her daughter, Oxford historian Cecilia M. Ady, see Benjamin G. Kohl, “Cecilia M. Ady: The Edwardian Education of a Historian of Renaissance Italy,” in *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. John E. Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 233–55.

⁷⁰ Cartwright, *Isabella d'Este*, I, ix. In his Introduction to the *festschrift* assembled by his colleagues in 1933, Luzio describes Cartwright as “una signora inglese, in due volume tradotti anche in francese, riassunse semplicemente gli studi del Renier e miei su Isabella d'Este” [an English lady, (who), in two volumes translated also into French, simply summarized Renier's and my studies on Isabella d'Este]. Renier himself expressed himself to be “disgustato da quella premature e inconsulta anticipazione di un'opera che accarezzavo da tanto tempo” [disgusted by that premature and rash anticipation of a work which I cherished for so long]. The last word in this bitter little dispute is that of Friedrich von Bezold, who, writing in the *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* in 1910 and decrying the failure of Luzio and Renier to collect their scholarship on Isabella in a single place, attributed the success of Cartwright's biography to her accessibility.

Maria Bellonci (1902–86), the prolific writer of popular historical novels, visited Luzio in Mantua in the 1930s in the course of her research for a biography of Lucrezia Borgia.⁷¹ Although he was dismissive of her choice of subject, the resulting biography, published in 1939, is well written with endnotes citing documents in several archives.

Recent Scholarship

1. Ferrara

In his introduction to a recent volume of essays on the Este court, American historian, Dennis Looney, describes the Fascist “reassessment” of Ferrarese Renaissance culture that dominated scholarship in the 1920s and 1930s, in particular citing the influence of the poet, Gabriele d’Annunzio, the party official, Italo Balbo, and the historian, Guido Angelo Facchini, all of whom were Ferrarese by birth.⁷² The glories of Estense Ferrara, in particular the works of Ariosto, were popularised as a tool in the promotion of what Shemek calls “the grandiose patriotism of Fascist Italy.”⁷³ The historic *Palio di San Giorgio*, which had lain dormant for four hundred years, was revived by Facchini in the service of nationalist propaganda.⁷⁴ In a city which has been described as “one of the principal strongholds of the Italian Fascist movement”,⁷⁵ it is not surprising that Fascist ideas permeated every field of endeavour. At the end of World War II, the wheel turned full circle with the publication of Antonio Piromalli’s *La cultura a Ferrara al tempo*

⁷¹ Maria Bellonci, *Lucrezia Borgia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1939).

⁷² Dennis Looney, “Introduction,” in *Phaeton’s Children: The Este Court and its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara*, ed. Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 12–13.

⁷³ Deanna Shemek, “Circular Definitions: Configuring Gender in Italian Renaissance Festival” *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (1995), 1–40 (8).

⁷⁴ For a history of the Palio ; see Guido Angelo Facchini, *Il palio di San Giorgio a Ferrara* (Ferrara: Maggior Consiglio del Torneo delle Contrade, 1939).

⁷⁵ Looney, 12, quoting from Paul Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara, 1915–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), x. Looney writes of Italo Balbo: “In 1926 Mussolini had promoted Balbo from his position as head of the Ferrarese fascists to the command of the Italian air force, and in 1933 Balbo was shifted to the governorship of Libya – a very powerful political figure, at times rumored to rival even Mussolini himself”; see Looney, 13.

dell'*Ariosto*,⁷⁶ a Marxist interpretation of a fifteenth century princely autocracy.⁷⁷

In the immediate postwar period, Italian language scholarship of Ferrara remained local and dominated by Luciano Chiappini (1922–2002), a Ferrarese scholar and teacher, whose passion for Ferrara and her glorious Renaissance has inspired an impressive corpus of books and articles. He personally “rediscovered” Eleonora d’Aragona in the 1950s, writing the only scholarly biography to date, basing it on his transcriptions of documents in the archives of Modena and Mantua.⁷⁸ His last major work, published almost fifty years later, a comprehensive history of the Estensi, from their Longobard origins until the last Duke of Modena, Francesco V d’Este, contains an excellent bibliography of primary and secondary sources and extensive genealogical tables.⁷⁹

The foundation in 1980 of the *Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali* in Ferrara was an important catalyst for Renaissance research, and a deliberate attempt to set the courts of Italy in a broader national context. Funding was forthcoming for a journal, *Schifanoia*, for an Institute, and for a series of *convegni* in the field of Ferrarese Renaissance studies that brought contributions of new scholarship from around the world.⁸⁰ The proceedings of one *convegno*, organized to celebrate the six hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Ferrara’s *Università degli Studi (1391–1991)*, were published in 1994, under the title *Alla corte degli Estensi: filosofia, arte e cultura a Ferrara nei secoli XV e XVI*,⁸¹

⁷⁶ Antonio Piromalli, *La Cultura a Ferrara al tempo dell’Ariosto* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1953).

⁷⁷ On Piromalli, see Werner Gundersheimer, “Towards a Reinterpretation of the Renaissance in Ferrara,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance: Travaux et Documents* 30 (1968): 267–81 (271–72).

⁷⁸ Luciano Chiappini, *Eleonora d’Aragona, prima duchessa di Ferrara* (Rovigo: A.S.P.F., 1956).

⁷⁹ See n. 53 above.

⁸⁰ *La corte e lo spazio: Ferrara estense*, ed. Giuseppe Papagno and Amedeo Quondam, 3 vols. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1982); *The Renaissance in Ferrara and its European Horizons*, ed. J. Salmon, with *Il Rinascimento a Ferrara e i suoi orizzonti europei*, ed. W. Moretti (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, and Ravenna:

M. Lapucci and Edizioni del Girasole, 1984); and *La corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo 1441–1598: atti del convegno internazionale*, Copenhagen, May 1987 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 1990).

⁸¹ *Alla corte degli Estensi, filosofia, arte e cultura a Ferrara nei secoli XV e XVI: atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Ferrara, 5–7 marzo 1992*, ed. Marco Bertozzi (Ferrara: Università degli Studi, 1994).

while in 2000 the *Deputazione Provinciale Ferrarese di Storia Patria* published a *festschrift* in honour of Luciano Chiappini, under the title *L'Aquila Bianca, studi di storia estense per Luciano Chiappini*, its list of contributing authors reading like a “Who’s Who” of Ferrarese Renaissance studies.⁸²

Meanwhile American interest in the Italian Renaissance, nurtured by an outstanding generation of European refugees from Fascism, turned also to Ferrara. Werner Gundersheimer led the way, and in 1972 he published details of a manuscript which he had found misfiled in the Vatican Library, Sabadino degli Arienti’s *De triumphis religionis*, in which the Bolognese humanist described long-lost Estense palaces and the secular art works which decorated them.⁸³ Gundersheimer’s work on the government styles of the Estense rulers, from Niccolò III to Ercole I, was published in 1973.⁸⁴ A short but ground-breaking article on Eleonora d’Aragona’s position of influence at the court of Ferrara⁸⁵ was followed by one on the future of direction of Ferrarese studies.⁸⁶ Gundersheimer’s most recent article recalls his personal discovery in 1965 of Ferrara, judging it to be a “city [which] was waking up to its history.”⁸⁷

Other Anglo-American scholars soon followed Gundersheimer’s lead. Two PhD dissertations, one in 1882 by Richard Brown on the politics of magnificence in Ferrara in the second half of the fifteenth century, and the other by Richard Tristano in 1883 on Borso d’Este’s new nobility have exposed both those areas to rigorous research

⁸² *L'Aquila Bianca: studi di storia estense per Luciano Chiappini*, ed. Antonio Samaritani (Ferrara: Corbo Editore, 2000), *Atti e memorie della Deputazione Provinciale Ferrarese di Storia Patria*, ser. 4, vol. 17 (2000).

⁸³ Werner Gundersheimer, *Art and Life at the Court of Ercole I d’Este: The “De triumphis religionis” of Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti* (Geneva: Droz, 1972).

⁸⁴ Werner Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: The Style of a Renaissance Despotism*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973).

⁸⁵ Werner Gundersheimer, “Women, Learning, and Power: Eleonora of Aragon and the Court of Ferrara,” in *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, ed. Patricia H. Labalme (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 43–65.

⁸⁶ Werner Gundersheimer, “Ferrarese Studies: an Agenda for the Future,” in *La corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo*, 353–36.

⁸⁷ Werner Gundersheimer, “The Experience of Ferrara: English and American Travellers and the Failure of Understanding” in *Phaeton’s Children*, 389–411.

protocols and have been useful stylistic models for the present dissertation.⁸⁸ In 1994, Thomas Tuohy published his extraordinarily comprehensive exploration of Ercole d'Este's architectural program in Ferrara, based on extensive research in the Modena Archive. This has proved to be an invaluable source of information on the physical environment in which Eleonora and Ercole passed their days.⁸⁹ Richard Brown's more recent paper on the manipulation of public records by the Estensi,⁹⁰ Charles Rosenberg's work on architecture,⁹¹ that of Trevor Dean on government, justice and the bureaucracy, and Lewis Lockwood's work on music, have all shaped my understanding of the cultural and political life of Renaissance Ferrara. The most recent American scholarship has been dominated by art historians, including Joseph Manca and Ruth Wilkins Sullivan and architecture historians Meg Licht and Diane Ghirardo, whose work is a useful antidote to the Florence-based studies that dominate the field.⁹²

In Ferrara itself, an outstanding historian, Enrica Guerra, is working on Estense-related topics within the *Università degli Studi*, while Guido Antonioli and Sergio

⁸⁸ Richard G. Brown, "The Politics of Magnificence in Ferrara 1450–1505: A Study in the Socio-Political Implications of Renaissance Spectacle" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1982); Richard Tristano, "Ferrara in the Fifteenth Century: Borso d'Este and the development of a New Nobility" (PhD diss. New York University, 1983).

⁸⁹ Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara*.

⁹⁰ Richard G. Brown, "Death of a Renaissance Record-Keeper: The Murder of Tomasso da Tortona in Ferrara, 1385," *Archivaria*, 44 (1997): 1–43.

⁹¹ Charles M. Rosenberg, *The Este Monuments and Urban Development in Renaissance Ferrara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Trevor Dean, *Land and Power in Late Medieval Ferrara: The Rule of the Este, 1350–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400–1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

⁹² Ruth Wilkins Sullivan, "Three Ferrarese Panels on the Theme of 'Death rather than Dishonour' and the Neapolitan Connection," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 57 (1994): 610–25; Joseph Manca, "Constantia et Forteza: Eleonora d'Aragona's Famous Matrons," *Notes in the History of Art* 19 (2000): 13–20; Joseph Manca, "Isabella's Mother: Aspects of the Art Patronage of Eleonora d'Aragona, Duchess of Ferrara," *Aurora* 4 (2003): 79–94; Meg Licht, "Elysium: A Prelude to Renaissance Theater," *Renaissance Quarterly* 49 (1996): 1–29; Dianne Ghirardo, "Women and Space in a Renaissance Italian City," in *Intersections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories*, ed. Iain Borden and Jane Rendell (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 170–200; "The Topography of Prostitution in Renaissance Ferrara," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60 (2001): 402–31; "Lucrezia Borgia's Palace in Renaissance Ferrara," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64 (2005): 474–97; "Marginal Spaces of Prostitution in Renaissance Ferrara," in *Phaeton's Children*, 87–127; "Le architetture effimere dei cortei nuziali nella Ferrara rinascimentale," *Bollettino della Ferrariae Decus* 23 (2006): 135–50.

Mantovani, working outside the academy, continue to produce works of profound scholarship on various aspects of the history of Estense rule.⁹³ In 2004, Maria Serena Mazzi of the *Università degli Studi* in Ferrara published a biographical work on the Estense women which included a brief chapter on Eleonora d' Aragona.⁹⁴ In addition to his works on urban architectural history, Marco Folin has published extensively on specific aspects of Estense Ferrara, in particular the ambassadorial system and the diaries which chronicled the daily activities of all levels of society. His chapter on the spaces occupied by Eleonora's court in Ferrara has proved a valuable extension of Tuohy's earlier work.⁹⁵

The history of Ferrara is not just the province of scholars: for residents of Ferrara – as for residents of other Italian cities – it is a reality of daily life, lived and savoured with a passion. Since 1906, the *Ferrariae Decus*, a community organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Ferrara's cultural heritage, has published an annual *Bolletino* of scholarly articles and organized conferences and exhibitions. Under the auspices of the local *Comune*, the *Palio di San Giorgio*, first staged in 1279 and revived

⁹³ Guido Antonioli, “*Secundo il modo cortisano*”: esperienze di viaggi d'educazione presso le famiglie signorili italiane (XIV–XV secolo), unpublished paper received May 2007; “*Il vero e la medolla de la cosa*”: politica e diplomazia nelle vicende della successione di Ercole I d'Este a Borso (1471), unpublished paper received September 2009. Enrica Guerra, “Eleonora d' Aragona e *I doveri del principe* di Diomede Carafa: esercizio del potere tra realtà e precettistica,” in *Donne di palazzo: tracce e forme di potere dall'età moderna*, ed. Angela Giallongo (Milan, Unicopli, 2005), 113–19; Enrica Guerra, *Soggetti a 'ribalda fortuna': gli uomini dello stato estense nelle guerre nell'Italia quattrocentesca* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2005); Sergio Mantovani, “*Ad honore de Signore vostro padre et satisfacione nostra*”: Ferrante d'Este condottiero di Venezia (Modena/Ferrara: Deputazione Provinciale Ferrarese di Storia Patria, 2005); —, “Ferrante d'Este's Letters as a Source for Military History,” *Journal of Military History* 3 (2005): 155–75.

⁹⁴ Maria Serena Mazzi, *Come rose d'inverno: le signore della corte estense nel'400* (Ferrara: Comunicarte, 2004).

⁹⁵ Marco Folin, “Gli oratori estensi nel sistema politico italiano (1440–1505) in *Girolamo Savonarola da Ferrara all'Europa*, ed. Gigliola Fragnito and Mario Miegge (Florence: Galluzzo, 2001), pp. 51–83 (Proceedings of an international congress, Ferrara, 30 March–3 April 1998); “La corte della duchessa: Eleonora d' Aragona a Ferrara” in *Donne di potere nel Rinascimento*, ed. Letizia Arcangeli and Susanna Peyronel (Rome, Viella, 2008), pp. 481–512; “Le cronache a Ferrara e negli Stati estensi (secoli XV–XVI),” in *Storia di Ferrara, 6: Il Rinascimento: situazioni e personaggi*, ed. Alessandra Chiappini (Ferrara: Corbo Editoriale, 2000), 460–92; *Rinascimento estense: politica, cultura, istituzioni di un antico stato italiano* (Rome: Laterza, 2001); *Corti italiane del Rinascimento: arti, cultura e politica, 1395–1530*, ed. Marco Folin (Milan: Officina libraria, 2010); *Delizie estensi: architetture di villa nel Rinascimento italiano ed europeo*, ed. Francesco Ceccarelli and Marco Folin (Florence: Olschki, 2009).

in the Fascist era, returned to Ferrara in 1967 and is held annually at the end of May. This splendid, costumed occasion, together with other historical reenactments, recreate in the streets of Ferrara a sense of the magnificence and the love of display which characterized the city during its rule by the Estensi. The *Deputazione Ferrarese di Storia Patria* continues to initiate and direct local historical and archival research, which it publishes in the series *Atti e memorie*. A constant presence in all these activities is the philanthropic arm of the *Cassa di Risparmio di Ferrara*, the *Fondazione Carife*, which is responsible for the financial backing of the publication of scholarly works and facsimiles, and the staging of exhibitions and congresses devoted to the rich cultural heritage of Ferrara. It also publishes its own twice-yearly journal, *Ferrara: voci di una città*. In 1995, the cultural significance of Ferrara was recognized, when the city was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List and, four years later, when that listing was extended to the countryside of the Po Delta, the Estense *delizie* [country places], and the ceremonial routes travelled by the Estensi on their way to and from the city.

2. Naples

In contrast with the burgeoning interest in the study of Estense Ferrara, Aragonese Naples has been relatively ignored by historians in recent years, not least because of the difficulties of carrying out primary research in Naples. While researchers may be discouraged by the dearth of local documents due to the destruction of the Naples Archive in 1943, many documents do, however, survive in other Italian and foreign archives, and in articles put to press before 1943. While the bibliography of Naples and its glorious court is rich, much of the work, such as that of Tommaso Persico, Emilio Nunziante, Nunzio Faraglia, Giuseppe Mazzatinti and Erasmo Percopo, was done in

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹⁶ The second edition of Ernesto Pontieri's only biographical work on Ferrante I is now almost fifty years old.⁹⁷ David Abulafia, whose work on Mediterranean commerce has extended into the study of Naples during the reign Ferrante I, laments the lack of a modern biography of one of the most important figures of the Renaissance and "the neglect of important southern dimensions to the history of *quattrocento* Italy compared to the unweakened magnetism for historians of Venice, Florence and Siena in the selfsame period."⁹⁸ Alan Ryder, the author of two impressive studies of Alfonso I and his rule of Naples, also complains about the neglect of the southern kingdom by Renaissance scholars.⁹⁹ The challenge posed by the groundbreaking, but unpublished, dissertation of John D. Moores on Diomede Carafa in 1967, and by his follow-up article four years later, has not been accepted to this point.¹⁰⁰ Jerry Bentley's *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* provides an indispensable introduction to a huge subject area, but it appears not to have been followed by a more substantial work. Allan Atlas's work on the role of music at the Aragonese court¹⁰¹ and George Hersey's study of the cultural program of Alfonso,

⁹⁶ Tommaso Persico, *Diomede Carafa: uomo di stato e scrittore del secolo XV* (Naples: Pierro, 1899); Emilio Nunziante, *I primi anni di Ferdinando d'Aragona e l'invasione di Giovanni d'Angiò 1458–1464: studio storico su documenti inediti dell'Archivio di Milano, della Biblioteca Nazionale di Parigi ecc.* (Naples: Giannini, 1898); Ettore Pignatelli, *Diurnali*; Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *La biblioteca dei re d'Aragona*; Erasmo Percopo, "Lettere di Giovanni Pontano a principi ed amici," *Atti della Accademia Pontaniana* 37 (1907): 1–86.

⁹⁷ Ernesto Pontieri, *Per la storia del regno di Ferrante I d'Aragona Re di Napoli* (Naples: Morano, 1945; 2nd ed. rev and enlarged, Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1963).

⁹⁸ David Abulafia, "The Crown and the Economy under Ferrante I of Naples (1458–94)," in *City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Essays Presented to Philip Jones*, ed. Trevor Dean and Chris Wickham (London: Hambledon, 1990), 125–46 (125); "Ferrante of Naples, the Statecraft of a Renaissance Prince," *History Today*, 45 (1995): 19–25; and his collected essays, *The French Descent*, in particular, "Introduction: from Ferrante I to Charles VIII," 1–25.

⁹⁹ Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); *Alfonso the Magnanimous: King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396–1458* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); *The Wreck of Catalonia: Civil War in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁰ John D. Moores, "Diomede Carafa"; and "New Light on Diomede Carafa."

¹⁰¹ Allan W. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

duke of Calabria (who ruled for one year as Alfonso II of Naples)¹⁰² both provide excellent windows into the cultivated world of Ferrante's court.

Two authors have been helpful in elucidating the complexities of Aragonese diplomacy. Cecil Clough's long and erudite article on the military career of Federigo Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, in the service of Naples, contains information not available elsewhere, while Paul Dover's study of the Aragonese diplomatic service during Ferrante's reign puts faces to many of the names that appear in the Neapolitan letters.¹⁰³ However, it has been the volumes of Lorenzo de Medici's letters, especially the comprehensive footnotes of their various editors, that have been most valuable in helping to unlock the intricacies of the relationships between the Italian states, particularly in the period of the Pazzi War.¹⁰⁴

An encouraging note has recently been struck by the ongoing work of a young scholar, Bianca de Divitiis, whose field is architecture and patronage in fifteenth-century Naples, in particular in relation to Diomedea Carafa.¹⁰⁵ In her recent presentation, at the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Venice in 2010, on the architecture of the Castel Nuovo and the Castel Capuano in Naples, homes respectively of Kings Alfonso I and Ferrante I, and of Alfonso, duke of Calabria, in the fifteenth century, de Divitiis revealed that she had been working with previously-unknown archival material and signalled her intention

¹⁰² George L. Hersey, *Alfonso II and the Artistic Renewal of Naples, 1485–1495* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

¹⁰³ Paul M. Dover, "Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante d'Aragona (1458–1494) and his Ambassadors," *Mediterranean Studies* 14 (2005): 57–94; Cecil H. Clough, "Federico da Montefeltro and the Kings of Naples: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Survival," *Renaissance Studies* 6 (1992): 113–71.

¹⁰⁴ Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere, I (1460–1474)*, ed. Riccardo Fubini (Florence: Giunti-Barbèra, 1977); *Lettere, II (1474–1478)*, ed. Riccardo Fubini (Florence: Giunti-Barbèra, 1977); *Lettere, III (1478–1479)*, ed. Nicolai Rubinstein (Florence: Giunti-Barbèra, 1977); *Lettere, IV (1479–1480)*, ed. Nicolai Rubinstein (Florence: Giunti-Barbèra, 1981).

¹⁰⁵ Bianca de Divitiis, *Architettura e committenza nella Napoli del Quattrocento* (Venice: Marsilio Editore, 2007).

to continue her work in this long neglected field.¹⁰⁶

What has become particularly apparent during my bibliographic searches in preparation for this dissertation is the lack of any study linking, comparing or contrasting the courts of Ferrara and Naples, despite the evidence which exists of the influence of Neapolitan art, culture and leadership style on that of Ferrara, both after the return of Ercole and Sigismondo d'Este from Naples in 1462 and after Ercole's marriage to Eleonora d'Aragona some ten years later. Only Werner Gundersheimer has had the foresight to acknowledge this phenomenon. In his seminal work on Ercole d'Este, published in 1973, Gundersheimer alluded to the influence of their years in Naples had had on the Estense brothers:

In a very real sense, Naples was their second home. Ercole's long sojourn there unquestionably affected his sense of his role and power, and his particular interests and enthusiasms, more than has generally been acknowledged.¹⁰⁷

Ercole's marriage to a Neapolitan princess confirmed and extended that influence, which manifested itself in a variety of diverse areas. It was no coincidence that he chose Neapolitans as his closest companions and eschewed Borso d'Este's flamboyant gold and red garments, choosing instead the austere black favoured by Alfonso I during his time in Naples. In this dissertation, using both contemporary sources, later histories and the work of more recent scholars, I will illustrate the extent to which Ercole maintained both diplomatic and private ties with his wife's family and friends in Naples, although those ties were put under enormous strain during the period of the Pazzi War.

¹⁰⁶ For an abstract of this presentation, see Bianca de Divitiis, "Castel Capuano and Castel Nuovo in Naples: the Transformation of two Medieval Castles." *Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting, Venice, 8–10 April 2010, Program and Abstract Book*, 151.

¹⁰⁷ Gundersheimer, *The Style of a Renaissance Despotism*, 176.

3. Women's Letter-Writing in the Renaissance: Autograph v. Dictated

Letters, and in particular autograph letters, form the documentary basis for my enquiry into the emotional basis of the marriage of Eleonora and Ercole. Recent work on the conventions of women's letters by both historians and philologists has helped to shape my reading of the couple's letters to each other during their often-extended separations. Women tend to dominate the field of epistolary research and are particularly adept at negotiating a path between the spoken and the unspoken in letters. While some acknowledge the current vogue of "affect theory,"¹⁰⁸ most are more interested in a close reading of the texts and contexts of letters as a means of understanding the past.

A historical overview of the writing of Italian women, edited by Panizza and Wood, contains Maria Luisa Doglio's chapter on letter writing from 1350 to 1650. Doglio quotes Cicero's aphorism, "a letter does not blush," to suggest that the emotional detachment granted by the medium of letters enabled women to write freely "what dared not be uttered face to face."¹⁰⁹ Doglio notes that, despite their intensely personal nature, the letters of Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi to her sons in exile in Naples, written between 1447 and 1470, still retain the structure dictated by the *Ars dictaminis* [Art of Letter-Writing], the *salutatio*, *exordium*, *narratio*, *petitio*, and *conclusio* [greetings, opening, narrative, requests and conclusion], which had come down from the Ciceronian rhetorical tradition.¹¹⁰

Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi's letters have also been the subject of studies by Ann Crabb, who reveals that all were autograph, although Alessandra was not a woman

¹⁰⁸ *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, N.C.: Duke University press, c. 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Maria Luisa Doglio, "Letter writing 1350–1650," in *A History of Women's Writing in Italy*, ed. Letizia Panizza and Sharon Wood (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13–30 (13).

¹¹⁰ Doglio, 16–17. For the *Ars dictaminis*; see James Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St Augustus to the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 194–268.

of learning.¹¹¹ This caused her to apologise for her lack of literary style: “Non guatare al mio bello scrivere: e s’io fussi presso a voi, non fare’ queste letteracce, ché direi a bocca e fatti mia, e voi e vostri” [Ignore my fine writing; if I were near you, I would not have to write these uncouth letters. We could tell each other in person about my affairs and yours].¹¹² However much her letters lack refinement, they are clearly a genuine reflection of the maternal devotion that Alessandra expresses without reserve when she writes: “Io non ho altro bene in questo mondo che voi tre mia figliuoli” [I have no other good but you, my three sons], admonishing them to “a voi si vole ricordare che stiate sani, ché io senza voi sono morta, e voi senza me vivete e potete istare in filice istato” [remember to stay healthy, because I am dead without you, whereas you can live and be happy without me].¹¹³ There are clear resonances between this devoted mother’s letters to her exiled sons and those that Eleonora wrote to her husband from her own enforced “exile” at her father’s court in Naples in 1477. Both are giving their writers some comfort in their loneliness and difficulties. It is no coincidence that both women have chosen to write in their own hands to express their most intimate feelings.

The nature of the letters exchanged between friends over a two-year period in the early sixteenth century (1513–15) is addressed by John Najemy, in his seminal study of the private correspondence between Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Vettori.¹¹⁴ While the letters deal with topics as diverse as politics and love, and they have long been studied by historians and literary critics from these perspectives, Najemy sees

¹¹¹ Ann Morton Crabb, *A Patrician Family in Renaissance Florence: The Family Relations of Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi and her Sons*, PhD diss., Washington University, 1980; *The Strozzi of Florence: Widowhood and Family Solidarity in the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); “How to Influence Your Children: Persuasion and Form in Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi’s Letters to Her Sons,” in *Women’s Letters across Europe, 1400–1700: Form and Persuasion*, ed. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 21–41.

¹¹² Crabb, “How to Influence Your Children”, 30.

¹¹³ Crabb, “How to Influence Your Children”, 22.

¹¹⁴ John M. Najemy, *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli–Vettori letters of 1513–1515* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 9.

them first and foremost as the letters of close friends, rather than as keys to historical detail:

Their letters presuppose the familiarity of a friendship with a long history. They knew a lot about each other's lives, temperaments, reading habits, and private pleasures and sorrows, and they could refer or allude to any aspect of these without lengthy explanation or great detail, sometimes indirectly or cryptically, often by means of a joke, an aside, or a literary quotation.¹¹⁵

In a chapter on Renaissance epistolarity, Najemy describes the three distinct types of letter writing practiced in that period; private, vernacular letter writing “in which the educated middle and upper classes of the Italian cities, and of Florence in particular, engaged routinely and prolifically”; the everyday, utilitarian letter writing of politics and patronage, and its more elevated cousin, the professional art of diplomatic and official letter writing; and lastly humanist letter writing, letters in Latin, “usually but not necessarily sent to actual recipients, and generally intended for circulation and even publication in carefully arranged collections.”¹¹⁶ Najemy suggests that the Machiavelli–Vettori correspondence contains elements of all three categories.

The intimate nature of many of Machiavelli's letters to Vettori suggests that he wrote in his own hand, although he never specifically refers to that possibility. This is made more difficult to establish because, as a civil servant in the Florentine Republic, and later as Secretary of the Florentine Chancellery, his natural writing style would have been the humanist script of the career secretary. This question of authorship is of fundamental importance in any distinction between authentic or formulaic expressions of emotions in private letters. An autograph letter is usually indicated by the inclusion of the words *de mano propria* [in my own hand] immediately before the place from which it was written and the date. A familiarity with original copies of such letters soon

¹¹⁵ Najemy, 9.

¹¹⁶ Najemy, 18.

familiarizes the reader with the writer's particular script, which unfortunately is usually considerably less readable than that of trained secretaries. The use of a secretary/scribe is generally indicated by the word *datum a* meaning "given at" before the place of writing and the date, and by the inclusion of the secretary's characteristic symbol or signature at the base of the last page of the letter.¹¹⁷ Of course, even when letters are clearly indicated as autograph, there remains the possibility that the sentiments expressed by the writer are not genuine, but either formulaic or deliberately deceptive.

Crabb describes the division of letter-writing into two basic handwriting styles, humanistic and mercantile. Humanistic script refers to the more formal style used by secretaries, often for Latin or literary Italian, resembling modern-day italic style. *Mercantesca* script was used by those "who wrote in Italian for practical rather than literary purposes."¹¹⁸ This is the style used by Alessandra Macinghi-Strozzi to her sons, and by Eleonora and members of her Neapolitan family in their autograph letters, a style described by Crabb as, "rather flat overall, with most of the letters narrow from top to bottom, but with the loops of letters with extensions extending well above and below the line."¹¹⁹ This script is infinitely less readable than the humanistic style used by secretaries, although a number of frequently-used truncations pose particular problems of interpretation.¹²⁰

Crabb also writes that writing was taught separately to reading, and at a later stage in the educative process. While the ability to read was "desirable for religious reasons", writing was considered to be "more a mechanical and professional skill than a social

¹¹⁷ Bryce suggests a third possibility, that contained in Ippolita Maria Sforza's autograph letter to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1486 where she includes the words "data a" [dated] before the actual date; see Judith Bryce, "Between Friends? Two Letters of Ippolita Sforza to Lorenzo de' Medici," *Renaissance Studies* 21 (2007): 340–65 (358).

¹¹⁸ Crabb, "How to Influence Your Children", 34.

¹¹⁹ Crabb, "How to Influence Your Children", 34.

¹²⁰ There appears to be only one guide to these truncations; see Adriano Cappelli, *Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane usate nelle carte e codici specialmente del medioevo*. 6th ed. (Milan: Hoepli, 2001).

one.”¹²¹ The process of writing was arduous, the materials inconvenient to use and the light often poor. Even King Henry VIII of England hated writing:

The King loathed writing, hated even signing his own name. Unlike his father – who, under the pressure of increasing demands for the royal signature, developed what has been described as a “cursive HR, formed with one long, flowing movement of the pen” – Henry VIII never seemed to bow to clerical pressure.¹²²

Similar sentiments had been expressed by Margherita Datini some two centuries earlier when she enclosed two letters to her mother with one to her husband, with the admonishment: “Give them to Monna Beatrice [to deliver] and tell her to take good care of them: I would not have the heart to redo them in a year.”¹²³

Judith Bryce has adapted Najemy’s title for the Machiavelli–Vettori correspondence for her study of the expressions of friendship, and/or intimacy, used by Ippolita Maria Sforza, duchess of Calabria, in two letters to Lorenzo de’ Medici, dated 3 July 1480 and 11 December 1486.¹²⁴ Unlike Machiavelli and Vettori, the correspondents in Bryce’s study are:

two individuals located in different, sometimes mutually antagonistic, Italian states, of different social standing, acting according to potentially conflicting political, dynastic, and other agendas, and, above all, operating across the gender divide.¹²⁵

It is no coincidence that an earlier version of this paper, presented at the Renaissance Society of America’s Annual Conference in Cambridge in April 2005, first alerted me to the questions of authenticity and convention inherent in the interpretation of Renaissance letters. Although the first of these letters is dictated, bearing the signature of the ducal secretary, Giovanni Pontano, Ippolita Maria appears to be expressing her

¹²¹ Crabb, “How to Influence Your Children”, 31.

¹²² Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 87.

¹²³ Crabb, “‘If I could write’,” 1188.

¹²⁴ Bryce, “Between Friends?”; the texts of these two letters may be found on pp.344 and 357.

¹²⁵ Bryce, “Between Friends?,” 340.

personal feelings of friendship for Lorenzo de' Medici as she recalls with pleasure the time they spent together earlier that year in Naples during the peace negotiations to end the Pazzi War. Bryce attempts to determine the nature of Ippolita Maria's feelings for the Florentine, an issue that is made more problematic because Lorenzo's letters to Ippolita Maria no longer exist. Bryce's suggestion that the second letter is autograph¹²⁶ may be supported by a comparison of the handwriting used in it with that in a private letter of thanks, dated 9 May 1480, from Ippolita Maria to Eleonora d' Aragona, her sister-in-law.¹²⁷ The writing style of both these letters falls somewhere between the humanist and *mercantesca* style, an indication of Ippolita Maria's thorough humanist education at the Sforza court in Milan. The duchess's decision to write in her own hand in the second letter, apparently in response to one also *de mano propria* from Lorenzo, suggests the existence of a relationship between the two that was deeper than that of 1480, must likely because of the Florentine's intervention on behalf of Ferrante in the Barons' War.¹²⁸ Bryce writes that she perceives in both letters "what appears to be a strong affective charge, communicating, one might argue, for the sake of communicating."¹²⁹ She even suggests the possibility of an unsuspected erotic attraction between the two, couched in allusion and metaphor that are difficult to capture five centuries later.¹³⁰ However, she stresses the need to consider the presence of an "invisible" third person in much Renaissance correspondence, the private

¹²⁶ This letter may be found in the digitised version of the MAP Archive; see <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/rMap/index.html>, Filza 39, doc. 596.

¹²⁷ ASMo. Carteggio Principi Esteri, Naples, busta 1247/3, autograph letter from Ippolita Maria Sforza to Eleonora d' Aragona, Naples, 9 May 1480.

¹²⁸ Humphrey C. Butters, "Politics and Diplomacy in late Quattrocento Italy: the Case of the Barons' War (1485–86)", in *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, University of London, 1988): 14–31.

¹²⁹ Bryce, "Between Friends?," 344.

¹³⁰ Bryce, "Between Friends?," 350, 360–64.

secretary, whose presence, only revealed by initials at the base of a page, makes privacy and intimacy problematic.¹³¹

The theme of privacy is also a concern referred to by Carolyn James in her introduction to a selection of Margherita Datini's letters, now available on CD ROM,¹³² James alludes to Margherita's resentment that she must communicate with her husband via a scribe chosen by him, rather than being able "to dictate her own letters, and to choose a scribe who copied her words faithfully."¹³³ She reveals that it was this resentment which drove Margherita to learn to read and write, a task accomplished only with great difficulty when she was already middle-aged. In her article on the Datini correspondence, Ann Crabb also comments on the couple's dislike of the presence of a third party in their correspondence, writing that they were "inhibited by the knowledge that their words would be read by others."¹³⁴ Some things were considered not suitable for letters, so that Datini often sent more intimate messages to his wife via a trusted close friend, rather than compromise their privacy in a letter dictated to a clerk. She also explores the whole question of the dictation of letters, writing that "autograph writing and the dictation (composing) of letters [were] seen as separate skills."¹³⁵ Crabb's inclusion of a photograph of one of Margherita's early letters, with its wandering lines and its "poor grasp of word placement on the page", reveals a startling resemblance to the writing of Eleonora d' Aragona in her few surviving autograph letters.¹³⁶ Despite the vast difference in their social status, it appears that both women found writing equally taxing.

¹³¹ Bryce, "Between Friends?," 253–54.

¹³² Carolyn James, "Introduction to the English Translation," in *Per la tua Margherita: lettere di una donna del '300 al marito mercante, Margherita Datini a Francesco di Marco 1384–1401*, ed. D. Toccafondi and G. Tartaglione (Prato: Archivio di Stato, 2002), CD ROM.

¹³³ James, "Introduction to the English Translation."

¹³⁴ Ann Crabb, "'If I could write': Margherita Datini and Letter Writing, 1385–1410," *Renaissance Quarterly* 60 (2007), 1170–1206 (1172).

¹³⁵ Crabb, "'If I could write'," 1175,

¹³⁶ Crabb, "'If I could write'," Fig. 1, 1187.

Yet another threat to the privacy of letters was the likelihood that they would be read by others after they had been seen by the intended recipient. Carrington, in an essay on the correspondence between Marguerite d'Alençon, (1492–1549), sister of King Francis I of France, and Bishop Briçonnet of Meaux, describes this “sharing” of letters in the sixteenth century, “when letters between friends were routinely circulated and even published, and were structured carefully to reflect the status of writer and reader, the linguistic competency of the writer, and the respective needs and concerns of both parties.”¹³⁷ Carrington suggests that the letters of Marquerite and the bishop were influenced by the ideas of Erasmus, who in 1522 wrote that “the wording of a letter should resemble a conversation between friends.”¹³⁸ Richardson, writing of the letters of a fifteenth-century English gentlewoman, Elisabeth Stoner, believes that “women seem to have seized upon the opportunity to write letters as soon as the vernacular letter became socially acceptable.”¹³⁹ On the issue of privacy, he writes that the practice, of committing sensitive information to a messenger to be conveyed orally, was as current in England as it was in Italy, and that it was similarly indicated by the stock phrase “as the bearer of this can inform you.”¹⁴⁰

In summing up the relative value of the autograph or dictated letter as a source of authentic emotional expression, I would maintain that letters which can be proved to be “de mano propria” clearly have the advantage, if only because they have not had to pass

¹³⁷ Laurel Carrington, “Women, Rhetoric, and Letter Writing: Marguerite d'Alençon's correspondence with Bishop Briçonnet of Meaux,” in *Listening to their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women*, ed. Molly Meijer Wertheimer (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 215–32 (215). Carrington adds that this correspondence was kept by Marquerite, and later copied and conserved as a unit.

¹³⁸ Carrington, 217.

¹³⁹ Malcolm Richardson, “‘A Masterful Woman’: Elizabeth Stonor and English Women's Letters, 1399–c.1530,” in *Women's Letters Across Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 43–62 (51). For the practice of reading letters aloud; see also James Daybell, “‘I wold wyshe my doings might be ... secret’: Privacy and the Social Practices of Reading Women's Letters in Sixteenth-Century England,” in *Women's Letters Across Europe*,” 143–61.

¹⁴⁰ Richardson, 50.

through the cipher that is the secretary. While it will never be possible to determine whether the feelings expressed by the writer are genuine, I would suggest that the autograph letter remains the closest thing to the writer's own voice, enabling him or her to express personal feelings and share intimacies that could not be communicated even to the most trusted of secretaries.¹⁴¹ Couchman and Crabb best express the feelings inspired by the reading of such a letter when they write: "To hold in one's hand a woman's letter, knowing that it was her hand that wrote the words, is as close as we are likely to come to conversing with her."¹⁴²

While there are textual references to other autograph letters written by Eleonora d'Aragona, such as those in Paolo Antonio Trotti's letters to her from Tuscany in 1478, the only surviving autograph examples in her *carteggio* are from the time of her visit to Naples in 1477.¹⁴³ These letters from Naples are also the first examples of Eleonora's correspondence conserved in the Modena Archive. It may be considered strange that Eleonora chose to write in her own hand while she was in Naples, given the difficulties inherent in the task and the fact that she had with her at least one man, Vincenzo di Lardi, who was described as "suo cancellero"[her secretary], and probably several others on whose letter-writing services she could call among her party of two hundred.¹⁴⁴ Presumably these people were occupied with more official communications to Ercole from Naples, leaving Eleonora to concentrate on more personal matters.

¹⁴¹ A possible exception to this was Ercole's private secretary, Paolo Antonio Trotti, to whom Eleonora did open her heart; see ASMo, Cancelleria, Ambasciatori, Firenze, busta 1, letters from Paolo Antonio Trotti to Eleonora d'Aragona, Florence, September–October 1478.

¹⁴² Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, "Form and Persuasion in Women's Letters, 1400–1700", in *Women's Letters across Europe, 1400–1700: Form and Persuasion*, ed. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 3.

¹⁴³ On 13 September 1478, Trotti acknowledged one such letter from Eleonora: "Illustriissima et Excellentissima Madama mia, Se la Vostra Signoria me ha scripto la lettera de sua mano de di xviii de questo cum molte lacrime..." [My Most Illustrious and Excellent Madama, If Your Ladyship has written to me in your own hand the letter of the 18th of the present month with many tears...]; see ASMo, Cancelleria, Ambasciatori, Firenze, busta 1, letter from Paolo Antonio Trotti to Eleonora d'Aragona, Florence, 13 September 1478.

¹⁴⁴ Caleffini, 248.

There is textual confirmation of this in Eleonora's first autograph letter to Ercole on 4 June 1477, when she writes: "Marti ve ò facto scrivere tucto lo generale" [On Tuesday I dictated a letter to you about all the general news].¹⁴⁵ Autograph letters were generally a sign of intimacy, and many parts of Eleonora's letters to Ercole from Naples convey her most intimate sentiments. There is also a real sense in these letters that Eleonora was writing things of a highly sensitive political nature, matters that she did not want exposed to a third party, however trusted.

Eleonora's handwriting is unfortunately extremely difficult to read, consisting of tightly packed lines of words, which have little space between them, with no indication as to the beginning and end of sentences. Punctuation is non-existent. A scattering of Neapolitan phonetic elements and verb structures does nothing to aid the interpretation of Eleonora's letters from Naples.¹⁴⁶ Her handwriting was also clearly a challenge for Paolo Antonio Trotti, who wrote to her from Ercole's camp in Tuscany in September 1478, begging her not to write in her own hand, as it was so difficult for him to read her writing that such letters reduced him to tears.¹⁴⁷

The majority of the letters sent to Eleonora from her family in Naples are also autograph, as are all the letters of Diomede Carafa to both Eleonora and Ercole. Carafa's letters are similarly extremely difficult to read because of the grammatical and linguistic idiosyncrasies contained in them. His use of Neapolitan dialect and his omission of the conjunction *che* [because, which, who] before dependent clauses often makes his syntax

¹⁴⁵ ASMo, Carteggio dei principi, Casa e Stato, autograph letter from Eleonora d'Aragona to Ercole d'Este, Naples, 4 June 1477. Appendix document 8.

¹⁴⁶ Tina Matarrese, "Ferrarese e napoletano nelle lettere di Eleonora d'Aragona," in *Lingue e culture dell'Italia meridionale, 1200-1600*, ed. Paolo Trovato (Rome: Bonacci, 1993), 203-08 (204). Of particular note is the use of the ending "evo" in place of "este" in the second person plural conditional tense eg *poterissevo* for *potreste*; see ASMo, Carteggio dei principi, Casa e Stato, busta 131, autograph letter from Eleonora d'Aragona to Ercole d'Este, Naples, 4 June 1477.

¹⁴⁷ ASMo, Carteggio tra principi estensi e ambasciatori, Firenze, autograph letter from Paolo Antonio Trotti to Eleonora d'Aragona, Florence, 7 September 1478.

difficult to interpret.¹⁴⁸ However Carafa's autograph letters do convey a sense of intimacy that was not possible in the clear humanist cursive of the professional secretary. Ferrante, who frequently wrote to Eleonora in his own hand, was happy if she did likewise, although he complained early in her marriage that he found her writing impossible to read and needed assistance in deciphering it.¹⁴⁹

Despite the emphasis in this dissertation on the importance of the autograph letter as a source of authentic expressions of emotion, the indispensability of the secretary, in particular, the confidential private secretary, must not be overlooked. Such a man was Ercole's secretary, Paolo Antonio Trotti, whose letters to Eleonora during the Pazzi War reveal the extent of both his authority and the trust placed in him by his lord. In his study of the roles played by humanist scholars at the courts of Renaissance Italy, Douglas Biow traces the emergence of the professional secretary to the humanist domination of courts in the Renaissance, and uses several notable examples, including Machiavelli, to illustrate their influence.¹⁵⁰ Kolsky's interest is in the role of the private secretary, describing a prince's private confidential secretary as his most trusted agent.¹⁵¹ He laments that "historians have not paid sufficient attention to the post

¹⁴⁸ For an explanation of Carafa's linguistic idiosyncrasies, see Moores, "Diomede Carafa," 367–69; Antonio Lupis, "Note linguistiche," in Diomede Carafa, *Memoriali*, ed. Franca Petrucci Nardelli (Rome: Bonacci, 1988): 387–422.

¹⁴⁹ ASMo, Cancelleria Estense, Estero, Carteggio dei Principi e Signorie, Napoli–Sicilia, busta1, autograph letter from Ferrante I of Naples to Eleonora d'Aragona, Naples, 29 July [1473].

¹⁵⁰ The Venetian polymath, Francesco Sansovino (1521–86), described the relative importance of the secretary of a prince: "of the great secretaries some serve principalities, others republics. Those that serve princes have greater weight and more responsibilities than the others, whence as a result they are more esteemed and honoured in the world... And today the best governed courts make great capital of their secretaries, whence it has happened that sometimes the secretary has been elevated to become the prince of the *Signoria*"; see Douglas Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 160.

¹⁵¹ Stephen Kolsky, *Courts and Courtiers in Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp.38–39. Kolsky writes: "The chancellery was a documentation centre run by the secretaries, who had in their charge a number of chancellors who often actually wrote the documents [...]. It was here that the official business of the state was transformed into documentary form: *grida*, decrees, letters and orders to local officials, copies of all the prince's letters, and directions to ambassadors and other envoy were amongst the documents issued."

of secretary in the Italian Renaissance”, an omission which he promises to remedy in the future.¹⁵²

4. Reading Affection in Renaissance Letters

In her study of Ippolita Maria Sforza’s letters to Lorenzo de’ Medici, Bryce alludes to the “tone of conspicuous intimacy” created by Ippolita Maria’s use of language and allusion.¹⁵³ She later refers to the duchess’s use of “the language of desire” in her second letter to Lorenzo, suggesting that this may not sexual desire, “but a play on presence and absence [...] a recognition of the ultimate inadequacy of epistolary exchange as a substitute for the person, an attempt through writing nevertheless to bridge the gap, and also to convey intimacy.”¹⁵⁴ “The language of desire,” may also be used to describe the expressions of yearning and loneliness used by Eleonora in her letters from Naples in 1477, especially as the birth of her baby approached.

Deanna Shemek has written three thoughtful papers on the expression of emotion, via the language of desire and expectation, in the letters of Eleonora’s daughter, Isabella d’Este.¹⁵⁵ Shemek analyses the letters which Isabella sent to her family in Ferrara after her marriage in 1490 to Francesco II Gonzaga, letters in which she expresses her sadness at being separated from them. To her sister, Beatrice, she writes, “I so regret being deprived of Your Ladyship’s sweetest company that I feel my soul has left my body,” and continues, “since I cannot visit you personally I will do so continuously with my soul, and often with letters, begging Your Ladyship to wish to treat me similarly.”¹⁵⁶ Unfortunately, although

¹⁵² Kolsky, *Courts and Courtiers*, p.57 n.9.

¹⁵³ Bryce, “Between Friends?,” 345.

¹⁵⁴ Bryce, “Between Friends?,” 360.

¹⁵⁵ Deanna Shemek, “Isabella d’Este and the Properties of Persuasion” in *Women’s Letters across Europe, 1400–1700*, 123–40; “‘Ci Ci’ and ‘Pa Pa’: script, mimicry, and mediation in Isabella d’Este’s letters” *Rinascimento* 43 (2003): 75–91; and “In Continuous Expectation: Isabella d’Este’s Epistolary Desire,” in *Phaeton’s Children*, 268–300.

¹⁵⁶ Shemek, “In Continuous Expectation,” 283.

she alludes to others of Isabella's letters that are autograph, Shemek does not make it clear if this distinction applies to the emotion-charged missives to her family in Ferrara.

Shemek has also written on questions of authorship and textual "voice" in dictated letters, a problem also addressed by Fubini in relation to the letters of Lorenzo de' Medici. For the most part, Lorenzo's letters are dictated, although Fubini can only suggest: "quanto alla questione della paternità di ogni singola lettera, si tratta in ultima analisi di una decisione che lasciamo al lettore" [as for the question of the authorship of every single letter, in the final analysis it's a decision we leave to the reader].¹⁵⁷

Shemek's comparison of Isabella d'Este's autograph letters with copies made for her *copialettere* reveals how few changes were made by secretaries. She does, however, give two instances where letters, supposedly by Isabella, could not possibly have been written by her. One was written in 1480, when she was six, to her future father-in-law, Federigo Gonzaga, thanking him for his letter wishing her recovery from a fever and for his gift of cherries. From the sophisticated style of the letter, its "elegant clichés and flattering hyperbole," this is clearly a chancellery letter written in Isabella's name, and could well have served as a "kind of work-book for her future epistolary practice."¹⁵⁸ Another of Isabella's letters reproduced by Shemek is almost exploitative. Written to her father in 1477, when Isabella was in Naples with her mother, and when she would have only been three years old, it is a letter of petition, couched in the formal language of its genre, seeking preferment for the son of her wet-nurse.¹⁵⁹ It can only be conjectured that this letter was composed by the wetnurse, or someone sympathetic to her interests. This practice presents another challenge to decisions about the authenticity of supposedly autograph letters.

¹⁵⁷ Shemek, "'Ci Ci' e 'Pa Pa,'" 78, n. 10; the words quoted are from Riccardo Fubini's introduction to Medici, *Lettere*, 1:x.

¹⁵⁸ Shemek, "'Ci Ci' e 'Pa Pa,'" 85.

¹⁵⁹ Shemek, "'Ci Ci' e 'Pa Pa,'" 88. The letter is conserved in the Modena Archive; see ASMo, Casa e Stato, busta 133, fasc. 1684, c. 1.

In her paper on Isabella d'Este's correspondence with Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti, Carolyn James highlights the importance of letter-writing, in particular by women, as a means of keeping abreast with political events beyond the boundaries of their own states.¹⁶⁰ Immediately after her marriage to the *marchese* of Mantua, Francesco Gonzaga, in 1490, at the age of sixteen, she set about creating a network of correspondents who could satisfy her "insatiable appetite" for up-to-date news and information that was beyond the scope of normal diplomatic reports. James suggests that Isabella's choice of Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti as one of her most trusted private correspondents was encouraged by his inclusion of her maternal grandmother, Isabella da Chiaromonte, queen of Naples, among the illustrious women in his work, *Gynevera de le clare donne*, and his praise of her "not only for her traditionally female qualities but also for her ability to govern well and preserve peace within the state."¹⁶¹ From her position as the latest in a long line of strong women, Isabella d'Este apparently warmly received Arienti's biography of her grandmother, when he sent it to her for her approval in 1492. However, her reliance on him as a news-gatherer only became significant ten years later when she assumed the reins of government in her husband's absence.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Carolyn James, "An Insatiable Appetite for News: Isabella d'Este and a Bolognese Correspondent," in *Rituals, Images, and Words: Varieties of Cultural Expression in late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. F.W.Kent and Charles Zika (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 376.

¹⁶¹ James, "An Insatiable Appetite," 377. This no doubt refers to Arienti's description of the queen's regency in Naples when Ferrante was fighting the Angevins and his own rebellious barons in the war of succession: it can be believed that in his absence, acting as as his regent, "Quando il regno fu invaso dal duca Ionna per occuparlo cum lunga querra...et il re Ferdinando cum florid exercito defendendose, Isabella per sei anni sola gubernò la città de Neapoli, capo del regno, cum iustitia et tranquillità et amore de cittadini" [When the kingdom was invaded by duke Giovanni in order to involve it in a long war...and with king Ferrante defending himself with an excellent army, for six years Isabella governed the city of Naples alone, as head of the kingdom, with justice and peace and the love of the people]; see Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti, *Gynevera delle clare donne*, ed. C. Ricci and A. Bacchi della Lega, in *Scelta di curiosità letterarie inedite o rare dal secolo XIII al XIX* (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 1969) dispensa 223 (hereafter cited as Arienti, *Gynevera*).

¹⁶² James, "An Insatiable Appetite," 379.

5. Studies in the History of the Emotions

The studies of expressions of affection in Renaissance letters discussed above may also be included within field of study called Emotional Historiography which is growing in popularity. Although the American historian, Frank Manuel, in his early article on the role of psychology in historical studies, initially admitted to being ambivalent about the subject, he later wrote that “any contemporary use of psychology in history must postulate the existence of the unconscious, a belief that the unconscious of past epochs has left behind visible traces, and a conviction that these traces are decipherable.”¹⁶³

The challenge was accepted by his compatriot Peter N. Stearns, who with his wife and colleague, Carol Z. Stearns, has dominated the field of studies in the history of emotions since the 1980s, publishing a number of articles in scholarly journals,¹⁶⁴ and founding in 1967 and editing the “Journal of Social History”, which has been described as “an institutional power base for the history of emotions.”¹⁶⁵ The American medievalist, Barbara Rosenwein, has always been interested in the “multiple and sometimes hidden meanings in human thought, behaviour, and institutions,”¹⁶⁶ maintaining that historians have not been encouraged to see the “considerable evidence of feeling”, which often lies hidden in otherwise dry historical documents.¹⁶⁷ Plamper writes that Rosenwein’s paper on the historiography of emotions “became an instant classic,” when it was

¹⁶³ Frank E. Manuel, “The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History,” *Daedalus* 100 (1971): 199–225 (199, 209).

¹⁶⁴ Peter N. Stearns, “History of Emotions: Issues of Change and Impact,” in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Michael Lewis and Jeannette M. Haviland–Jones, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2000), 16–29; “Historical Analysis in the Study of Emotion,” *Motivation and Emotion* 10 (1986): 185–93; and Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 813–36;

¹⁶⁵ Jan Plamper, “The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns,” *History and Theory* 49 (2010): 273–65 (263). *Journal of Social History* is published quarterly by the University of California Press.

¹⁶⁶ Plamper, 249.

¹⁶⁷ Plamper, 250.

published in 2002.¹⁶⁸ In his article on romantic love in the pre-modern period, Herman Lantz writes that, prior to the post-war period, historians had shown no interest in the man–woman relationship, or in the institution of the family, as shapers of historical events.¹⁶⁹ Lantz does not include the Renaissance in his study, skipping from the courtly chivalry of the Middle Ages (which Jaeger places in the twelfth century)¹⁷⁰ to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when “there was a move toward greater personal autonomy, greater individualism, and an increase in affective relations.”¹⁷¹

There is still an enormous gap in the study of the emotions in many historical periods, particularly the Italian Renaissance. I aim to fill at least a small part of that gap with this dissertation on the affection and trust which developed in the early years of the Estense marriage. The future for the study of emotions in history is bright. In the United Kingdom, the Queen Mary Centre for the History of the Emotions at the University of London was opened in November 2008. In Australia, the Australian Research Council Centre for Excellence for the History of Emotions has been established at the University of Western Australia, with funding of \$24.25 million over seven years and links to several learned institutions both in Australia and abroad.

6. Dynastic Marriages in the Renaissance

There is a growing body of literature on the lives of dynastic brides, girls as young as eleven from noble or royal families, who were consigned by their fathers to politically advantageous marriages at courts all over Europe. While the men these girls married were usually unknown to them, and often considerably older, and the success of the

¹⁶⁸ Plamper, 250; Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying About Emotions in History,” *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821–45.

¹⁶⁹ Herman R. Lantz, “Romantic Love in the Pre-Modern Period: A Sociological Commentary,” *Journal of Social History* 15 (1982): 349–70 (349–50).

¹⁷⁰ C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: in Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

¹⁷¹ Lantz, 354.

marriage was measured in terms of their capacity to produce a healthy male heir, in a surprising number of cases these marriages became happy and harmonious working partnerships.

In her article on the forty-year marriage of Barbara of Brandenburg and Ludovico Gonzaga (1433–78), Swain was the first to examine the possibility of an emotional element within the context of Renaissance dynastic marriage, which she admitted was not an easy task as “most fifteenth-century marriages are hidden from historians in a textual hiatus between the terms of the initial betrothal and the final settlement of the will.”¹⁷² Recognising that letters between husbands and wives provided the only real window into the realities of such marriages, Swain saw similarities between the Gonzaga marriage and those of Bianca Maria Visconti and Francesco Sforza and the Estense marriage under discussion in this dissertation, noting also that Barbara established warm friendships with both Bianca Maria and Eleonora. Through her examination of the voluminous correspondence which passed between Barbara and Ludovico during their brief but frequent separations, Swain found that the couple shared “a vivacious and wide-ranging marital dialogue” and that they appeared close and happy, although Barbara always deferred to her husband in the best traditions of Barbaro and Alberti.¹⁷³

Evelyn Welch writes of the need for young dynastic brides to quickly conform to local expectations, to the extent that they could be stripped of their own clothes and their servants sent home and replaced with attendants chosen by her husband.¹⁷⁴ Welch has also written on the notoriously bad marriage of Eleonora’s sister-in-law, Ippolita

¹⁷² Swain, 171.

¹⁷³ Swain, 179. Francesco Barbaro, *De re uxoria*, ed. A. Gnesotto, *Atti e memorie della R. Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Padova*, n.s., 32 (1915–16): 7–105; Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, ed. Ruggiero Romano and Alberto Tenenti (Turin: Einaudi, 1969).

¹⁷⁴ Evelyn S. Welch, “Women as Patrons and Clients in the Courts of Quattrocento Italy,” in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000):18–34 (21).

Maria Sforza and Alfonso, duke of Calabria. She suggests that Ippolita's humanist education and her unwillingness to accept a passive, compliant role in Naples made her an unsuitable partner for Eleonora's less-refined, and sexually promiscuous, brother.¹⁷⁵ Judith Bryce suggests that Ippolita's unhappiness and sense of isolation at the Neapolitan court was the impetus for her creation of a *studiolo*, "a personal space with specific functions which she herself identifies as reading and writing."¹⁷⁶

In her excellent recent article on friendship within a dynastic marriage, Carolyn James compares the marriage of Ippolita Maria and Alfonso with that of Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga, suggesting that the friendship that characterized it had been consciously fostered between the young couple as soon as they had become betrothed. James is very aware of the significance of respect within a marriage, writing of Francesco Gonzaga that he "was delighted to have an intelligent wife to whom he could delegate some of his political duties." I would suggest that what James observes in the Gonzaga marriage may have been learned by Isabella and Francesco from the example of Eleonora and Ercole in Ferrara.¹⁷⁷

Until comparatively recently, little had been written about the marriage of Eleonora's younger sister, Beatrice, to the king of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, since Berzeviczy's 1931 biography.¹⁷⁸ He suggests that, although there existed a strong bond of affection between Beatrice and Matthias, the queen was unpopular with her subjects because she mistrusted the Hungarians and surrounded herself with Neapolitans, to

¹⁷⁵ Evelyn S. Welch, "Between Milan and Naples: Ippolita Maria Sforza, Duchess of Calabria," in *The French Descent*, 125–36 (125). See also Eileen Southern, "A Prima Ballerina of the Fifteenth Century" in *Music and Context: Essays for John M. Ward*, ed. Anne Dhu Shapiro (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Dept. of Music, 1985), 183–97.

¹⁷⁶ Judith Bryce, "'Fa finire uno bello studio et dice volere studiare': Ippolita Sforza and her Books," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 64 (2000): 55–69 (57).

¹⁷⁷ James, "Friendship and Dynastic Marriage" *Literature and History*, 13.

¹⁷⁸ Albert Berzeviczy, *Beatrice d'Aragona*, ed. Rodolfo Mosca (Milan: Corbaccio, 1931); Albert Berzeviczy, "Rapporti storici fra Napoli e l'Ungheria nell'epoca degli Aragonesi (1442–1501)," *Atti dell'Accademia Pontaniana di Napoli* 58 (1928): 180–202 (194).

whom she gave preference at court. There has been an upsurge of interest in the court of Matthias Corvinus and Beatrice d' Aragona among Hungarian scholars, of whom Péter Farbaky is but one example. The English historian, Valerie Rees, is also working on Beatrice, while Guerra has recently published a study of Beatrice's letters to Eleonora d' Aragona.¹⁷⁹

Fiona Downie's study of the marriages of two queens of Scotland, Joan Beaufort (died 1445) and Mary of Guelders (1433–63), queens of James I and James II of Scotland, explores the importance of royal marriage as an instrument of early modern politics and diplomacy.¹⁸⁰ Natalie Tomas has written two monographs on the role of women in public life in Renaissance Florence. In the first she looks at the significant part that some comparatively ordinary women were playing both within and outside marriage, although she laments that those who did not become "rulers, saints or heretics" have been largely ignored by historians because their lives topics "do not constitute 'real history'."¹⁸¹ Tomas's second, more recent, work looks at the contribution made by successive Medici women to the political survival and advancement of their husbands and sons.¹⁸² This work, like Downie's book, raises questions of female authority that have intersected with my own exploration of the Neapolitan and Ferrarese courts.

Jane Fair Bestor's PhD dissertation and subsequent article on the mechanics of inheritance, with its emphasis on the role of Ercole's marriage to Eleonora d' Aragona,

¹⁷⁹ Valerie Rees, "'A Woman of Valour': Towards a Reappraisal of the Presence of Beatrix of Aragona in the Hungarian Court," paper presented to the international conference, *Mathias Rex 1458–1490: Hungary at the Dawn of the Renaissance*, Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Science, 20–25 May 2008. I thank Dr Rees for giving me access to this paper. Enrica Guerra, *Il carteggio tra Beatrice d' Aragona e gli Estensi (1476–1508)* (Rome: Aracne, 2010).

¹⁸⁰ See above n. 8.

¹⁸¹ Natalie R. Tomas, *"A Positive Novelty": Women and Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Clayton: Monash University, 1992).

¹⁸² Natalie R. Tomas, *The Medici Women: Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

has proved an excellent source of historical detail and references to little-known documents.¹⁸³ In her study of the concept of family in the Renaissance and the role of women within marriage, Barbara Diefendorf describes the extension of these bonds of marriage far beyond the individual couple and looking at marriage from the point of view of “an alliance of families and not individuals, a matter of collective strategy and not personal will.”¹⁸⁴

Outline of Dissertation Structure

In the first chapter of this dissertation, “Education: Eleonora in her Father’s Court”, I will look at Eleonora’s early life in Naples, first at the court of her grandfather, Alfonso the Magnanimous, and after his death in 1458, at that of her father, Ferrante I. I will then examine the influences and the events which shaped the woman she was to become in later life. It will therefore be a review of the circumstances in which Eleonora lived until her departure from Naples at the age of twenty-three, the influence of her family on her early formation, the cultural milieu to which she was exposed at the Aragonese court and the details her first marriage and subsequent divorce, all of which will provide a context for the development of those particular qualities which she brought to her marriage to Ercole d’Este, and account for the skills and resilience that would keep her safe and loved even when her father and her husband were at war.

In Chapter 2, “Negotiation: The Wedding in Naples”, I will use a collection of diplomatic documents in the Estense Archive in Modena to follow the progress of the marriage negotiations between Ferrante and Ercole’s negotiator, Ugolotto Facino.

¹⁸³ Jane Fair Bestor, “Kinship and Marriage in the Politics of an Italian Ruling House: the Este of Ferrara in the reign of Ercole (1471–1505),” PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1992; “Bastardy and Legitimacy in the Formation of a Regional State in Italy: the Estense Succession,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38 (1996): 549–85.

¹⁸⁴ Barbara B. Diefendorf, “Family Culture, Renaissance Culture,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987): 661–81 (668–69).

Two small collections of letters document the months before Eleonora's departure from Naples in May 1473. The first of these is a series of autograph letters from Ercole to his new wife, which, while the expressions of affection they contain are formal and stylized, suggest that he is anxious to welcome Eleonora to Ferrara to begin their life together. The second set consists of the letters written to Ercole by Ferrante's chief negotiator, and Eleonora's former mentor, Diomede Carafa, who uses them to express both his great affection for Ercole's young wife and his determination that the duke will treat her well in her new life in Ferrara. The wedding celebrations in Naples in May 1473 will be observed through three eye-witness accounts in letters to Ercole, all of which are rich in colourful detail and praise for Eleonora's loveliness and charm amidst Ferrante's displays of royal *magnificentia*. The chapter will end with an analysis of two letters from Eleonora's brothers, Alfonso and Federico, both of whom reveal their great affection for her, although in totally different ways.

In Chapter 3, "Transformation: From Naples to Ferrara", Eleonora will be followed as she travels from Naples to Ferrara, stopping along the way to be welcomed by local civic and religious dignitaries. The political significance of the journey will be interpreted through an examination of the two sets of instructions which she carried with her, one from Ferrante and the other from Carafa, each quite different in emphasis, but both intended to guide and support her as she entered the uncharted waters of foreign diplomacy and protocol. The spectacular events of Eleonora's visit to Rome and her audiences with Sixtus IV are the subject of a previously unedited letter from Teofilo Calcagnini to Ercole, which is rich in hyperbole and the courtier's effusive praise for Eleonora and her qualities. Eleonora's arrival in Ferrara for her triumphal progress through the city to the ducal palace will be seen through the eyes of several local chroniclers, who always manage to fill the gap when no other original documents are

available. A letter from Eleonora to Barbara of Brandenburg provides the first opportunity for the young duchess's own voice to be heard. Although this letter is not autograph, in her note of thanks to the older woman for the Gonzaga wedding gift, Eleonora reveals herself to be a kind and caring young woman, who is very proud of her Neapolitan heritage.

Chapter 4, "Procreation: The Early Years of Marriage", will review that the first four years of the marriage were a period of transition and adaptation for Eleonora, as she created her own court and produced three healthy children, two daughters and the longed-for son. It was early in this period that Eleonora received from her old mentor, Diomede Carafa, his treatise on good government. This work will be shown to have had a fundamental bearing on the style that she adopted in her own administration in Ferrara. A study of the letters that arrived in Ferrara from members of Eleonora's family will reveal that their affection for her was unaffected by the miles which separated them, although Diomede Carafa's letters to Ercole suggest that there a gulf was widening between Ercole and Ferrante over their diverging foreign policies. For Ercole, the years after Eleonora's arrival in Ferrara were a time for consolidation, for confirming his legitimacy as ruler of Ferrara, and for removing all opposition to his authority. As evidence of Ercole's determination to stamp his authority in his own domain, this chapter will examine his decision to condemn his own half-brother, Alberto d'Este, to a long exile in Naples, and to execute his kinsman, Niccolò di Leonello, for attempting a violent coup against him when Eleonora was alone in Ferrara.

Chapter 5, "Separation: Eleonora Returns to Naples", discusses Eleonora's visit to Naples with her two small daughters to attend Ferrante's wedding to his Spanish niece, Giovanna. Eleonora's visit to Naples will be seen through a series of laboriously

written letters, which she sent to Ercole to keep him informed about what was happening at the court and about Ferrante's involvement in the political crisis in Milan which had dominated the diplomatic scene since the assassination of Galeazzo Sforza. These letters were also the vehicle for Eleonora's frank and intimate expressions of her love for Ercole and of her sadness that they would be apart for so long. Both Eleonora's letters and a small collection which Ercole sent to her immediately after her departure from Ferrara will be analysed in this chapter for the evidence they present of the intimacy which had blossomed between the couple since their marriage and which was making this separation so painful for them both. Eleonora's letters also allow insights into her state of mind on returning to her childhood home and discovering how much both she and her loyalties had changed in the four years since she had left Naples.

The final chapter of this dissertation, "Confrontation: Conjugal Love and Filial Duty", will examine the challenges that threatened Eleonora's loyalty by Ercole when he decided not only to support the Florentine alliance against his father-in-law in the Pazzi War but also to accept the position of *capitano generale* of their army. Despite the anomalous situation in which Eleonora found herself as the daughter of Ercole's enemy, evidence will be presented which reveals that the marriage remained strong and loving. Particular attention will be paid to the letters which Ercole's private secretary, Paolo Antonio Trotti, wrote to Eleonora from the Florentine camp in Tuscany, an analysis of which will reveal that she was unhappy about the war, and about the part that Ercole had chosen to play in it, although her private feelings never compromised her loyalty to him in any way. As the war entered its final phase in August 1479, Ercole wrote a number of autograph letters to his young wife, making no secret of his deep affection for her and confirming that any differences they may have had over his part in the war had done nothing to diminish his love for her and his trust in her ability. It was only as

serious attempts were being made to find a peaceful solution to the conflict that evidence emerged that Eleonora had been under considerable pressure from her father to persuade Ercole to abandon both the Florentine alliance and his *condotta* as captain of its army. Two sets of instructions, which Eleonora and Ercole sent with her chamberlain, Brandelise Trotti, to accompany his mission to her brother, Alfonso, duke of Calabria, will be analysed in this chapter and it will be suggested that they played a significant part in paving the way for Lorenzo de' Medici's personal peace mission to Naples in December 1479 and for the negotiations which led to the peace treaty of March 1478 and the end of the Pazzi War.