

# Acknowledgments

Throughout the process of writing this book, I experienced a rollercoaster of emotions, ranging from immeasurable motivation, pleasure, and joy to stress, frustration, and despair. That you are even holding this book (or looking at it on a screen), I owe to the tremendous amount of help, support, and encouragement that I have received along the way. It took a village to birth this book and I want to take this opportunity to thank those who I have been fortunate to meet along the way.

I want to thank Jelle Haemers, Walter Prevenier, and Monique Van Melkebeek for making me fall in love with studying medieval women, marriage, and sexuality many years ago and for their continuous interest, guidance, and support throughout my research. Sara McDougall, Sara Butler, Martha Howell, Cordelia Beattie, Deborah Youngs, Shennan Hutton, Jackson Armstrong, Adam Kosto, Maryanne Kowaleski, Ariadne Schmidt, Kaat Wils, Maïka De Keyzer, Brigitte Meijns, and Paul Trio all commented on earlier papers and draft versions of this manuscript and were generous with their feedback. They offered me opportunities to grow and helped me to refine my thinking, strengthen my arguments, and polish my writing. I am eternally grateful to have been able to learn from and work with these excellent scholars. Erika Gaffney and Merry Wiesner-Hanks made the process of publishing smooth, transparent, and enjoyable. Their professionalism, insight, and patience relieved the pressure during particularly stressful periods.

Moreover, I am thankful for the chances offered by the Research Foundation Flanders, the Belgian American Educational Foundation, the University Foundation, and KU Leuven for enabling me to pursue this project. Since 2015, the KU Leuven History Department has been my cherished academic home, but I was warmly welcomed at the University of Edinburgh and Columbia University. My time in Edinburgh and New York formed pleasant, educational, and inspiring changes of scenery. The staff at the many different archives, libraries, and coffee places where I wrote, thought, and did research also deserve a shoutout.

When thinking about the years of research that lead to this book, I will always reminisce on the coffees, lunches, debates, research seminars, city trips, and festive evenings and nights with my peers who I met at the KU Leuven History Department. I am particularly thankful to Zanna, Andrea, Jelle, Ben, Laura, Jolien, Anna, and Hannah for being the best possible *compangons de route*. Of everything that I have gained during my time

working on the research presented here, I cherish these friendships the most. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family, especially those who I consider my home—*mama, papa*, Celine, Wouter, and Ferdinand—for their unconditional support and love.