

deeply rooted medieval gender concepts should not be uncritically passed on by historians. Men could also fall prey to love and parental coercion, while it was just as important for women to make good strategic marriages as it was for men. The standard representation of abduction might have corresponded to some people's experiences since there was more social pressure on women to select a good spouse. However, it certainly did not account for many other medieval men and women. Even the late medieval records sometimes challenge the highly gendered representation of the man as the aggressor and the woman as the subject by naming women among the abductors and men among the abductees or by using language that assigns an equal degree of responsibility for the abduction marriage to man and woman.

Late medieval society was characterized by networks, dense webs of social ties, and negotiations and family feuds over power and influence. Medieval abductions should not be ripped from their societal context. In place of the binary opposition of men to women, or the individual to the family, it is paramount to acknowledge that many abductions were more complex phenomena often involving many actors, although they are not always immediately visible in the sources.

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