freedom of trade, while for others its significance might lay in the emergence of global capitalism and European hegemonic domination.

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Dennis Romano — *Patricians and Popolani: The Social Foundations of the Venitian Renaissance State*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. Pp. x, 220.

The myth of Venice as the ideal republic, stable, just and united, has informed the imaginations of historians from the period of the Renaissance. In particular, that aspect of the myth that identified the social cohesion of the republic and the absence of civil discord attracted observers from all across Europe, observers who hoped that the example of the Serenissima might be replicated in their own fragmented polities. Of course this image of Venice was indeed a myth, as the conspiracies of Bajamonte Tiepolo and Marin Falier indicate; however, it was a myth with a certain degree of truth. It is the purpose of Dennis Romano's book to investigate that basis of truth and place it in the changing social context of the Venetian republic.

Romano has chosen the dates 1297 and 1423 to contain his analysis, that is, from *serrata* that closed the Great Council until the election of Francesco Foscari as doge and the muscular pursuit of an "Italian" policy, and the abolition of the *arengo*, the ancient popular assembly which had once elected the doge himself. Between those dates Romano sees a fundamental alteration of the Venetian social fabric from one in which horizontal structures of social and class interaction gave way to vertical concepts of hierarchy, or "...exclusivity and hierarchy replaced older, freewheeling tendencies. In guilds, scuole, even in family life, a more hierarchical, status conscious ordering of Venetian society overwhelmed the more open associations of the trecento" (11).

In order to prove this contention, Romano leads his readers through a carefully crafted synthesis of the Venetian state in the early Renaissance. The government, guilds, *scuole*, workships, religious devotions, friendships, patron-client relations, families, neighbourhoods and class are all exceptionally well reduced to their essential characteristics and investigate to illustrate Romano's thesis. This is not to say that the broad brush of statistical and prosopographical methods is used to the exclusion of the more intimate aspects of individual histories. Indeed, Romano argues himself for the importance of the examples of individual experience in supporting his wider contentions. And, generally, these specific examples are well integrated into the larger argument.

The sources Romano uses to support his position are the basic documents maintained by the republic. The vast wealth of the archivio di stato di Venezia are creatively and effectively mined; and the materials of *notarile*, in particular, are employed to very good purpose. These documents, together with a very well digested knowledge of the considerable scholarchip in the area, provide Romano's conclusions with a degree of authority not easily achieved in the complex kind of historical research he undertook. The book clearly began as a doctoral dissertation; but it has superseded that original purpose inasmuch as it is easily accessible to general scholars in the field and the conclusions are broad and provocative; nevertheless, the meticulous attention to detail and the heavy use of scholarly apparatus remain to permit the specialist to pursue any aspect of the material.

If there are elements of the book which might be strengthened they are few. The one I might note is how the use of particular examples remains restricted, although the author makes the case effectively for their importance. I am convinced that Romano's contention that the increasingly hierarchical, aristocratic and exclusive values of the fifteenth century republic can be illustrated from the late fourteenth century through the study of *grazie*, wills, and various agencies which crossed class bounds (e.g., *scuole*, neighbourhood and parish organizations). Indeed, much of the excellent

material of the book illustrating how the basis in reality of the myth of Venice in the early Renaissance and Middle Ages changed because of the attractive power of the central authority in which patricians had a monopoly on power leads naturally to the concluding chapter "From Community to Hierarchy." More examples would strengthen the important — and I am convinced correct — conclusions offered by Romano. The number of individual studies is too small — occasionally almost anecdotal — and the corroboration offered by wider readings of documentary (such as testamentary or *scuole* membership lists) too diffuse. It is in many ways a relief to see an important contribution to historical research argued in fewer than 200 pages of text and notes; but, the supportive material within the text can equally be stripped too thin.

Still, Dennis Romano has written an impressive book. It is clearly and effectively written, well considered and an important addition to the ever growing bibliography on the social history of the Italian city-states of the Renaissance. The few comparative comments about contemporary Florence or Genoa are useful and remind the reader how the experience of the Italian polities varied from state to state, and one must never generalize about the peninsula, only about the specific place under study at a given moment in its history. Romano has done this with Venice between 1297 and 1423 and he has done so with consummate skill.

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David Warren Sabean — *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. Pp. x, 250.

Oral traditions and the sources for popular culture are often difficult to locate as to a precise time and place. What persists in one locate is often absent in a neighboring one. Under the best of circumstances attempts to tie together diverse sources encounter massive roadblock. In this stimulating and challenging book David Sabean has faced formidable tasks. The six incidents featured here took place over more than two centuries, from the second part of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. All six occurred in Württemberg and the accounts of these incidents can be found in the archives in Stuttgart. The varied subject matter of these events ranges from attempts to enforce attendance at the Lord's Supper to cases of false prophecy, witchcraft, and problems with pastors and culminates in a massive exercise of superstition.

The author's primary emphasis centers on the individual as understood by state and local officials and on how the individual perceived those in authority. In the process of analyzing the individual two important strands become evident. The first focuses on the development of the more modern state with its need for the fiscal and human resources that were essential for internal security and for survival in a Europe filled with marauding armies and seemingly endless warfare. Sabean's concept has merit, but most of the evidence presented in the course of this study deals with local officials who are but one part of a complex structure of authority and rule.

The second, and in many ways the more successful strand, came out of the Reformation and the need to reform character. An effective way to accomplish this, it was often asserted, was to celebrate publicly the Lord's Supper on a regular basis. In this way religious practices were used to enhance secular discipline. More than simple, external compliance was demanded of parishioners. Those who abstained from taking the sacrament were placed on the fringes of society. Normal justice would no longer be available to these people.

Additionally, pastors utilized the sacrament as a means of settling disputes or resolving complaints. Villagers often refused to go along with this interpretation because they saw conflict as a civil matter that had to be settled in the court. To these villagers no reconciliation or solution of