

Hurtubise treats individual diversity as it contributes to collective strategy or at least becomes absorbed with time; conflict has small role in this picture of the Italian family.

Une famille-témoin teaches by rich example, but sometimes we hanker for a bit more of the distance and order which a general argument or theory can offer to put the many particulars in a more unitary frame. While the author in his introduction acknowledges his sympathetic interest in recent efforts which inject history with social science, its impact on his own book is implicit and somewhat limited. For example, while he uses notions like family strategy, he does not explicitly address the meaning or power of the concept. Nor indeed does he define what, for his purposes, a family is. From the construction of the book we deduce that "family" here means those who bore a common name. In some sense this definition may be functional; those who appear in the book as Salviati are those members of the group whom the author can trace in the archives. But from the perspective of social experience the family may have been differently composed. In particular, it would be nice to see more clearly what the Salviati themselves understood by family, for their views and ours might diverge. Did the family think of itself as a collectivity with a direction and identity distinct from that of its individual members? Here we regret that we cannot see more clearly how the Salviati handled situations of competition or disharmony among family members. But since consciousness is where the documents least well serve the scholar's aspirations, in the face of such matters he may either abdicate or resort to more abstract theory. While in the interpretation of matters of fine structure Hurtubise willingly seeks assistance in other historians' propositions, on larger, more theoretical issues he is inclined to demur. Historians should certainly not wade over their heads in the lake of social scientific theory and we respect Hurtubise's modest self-restraint in this regard; nevertheless, some more explicit account of how he framed and gave boundaries to his project would help the reader do justice to the bounty of narrative.

Thus, in summary, this is not a book about "a" family, though a *famille-témoin*, which, because typical of its status, tells us about more than itself. In reconstructing the history of the Salviati Hurtubise impresses us with his indefatigable probing of the archives and his careful, intelligent commentary; his book will well reward the patient reader.

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Charles M. Johnston and John C. Weaver — *Student Days: An Illustrated History of Student Life at McMaster University from the 1890s to the 1980s*. Hamilton: McMaster University Alumni Association, 1986. Pp. viii, 135, illus.

In the preface to this delightful and thoughtful book, the co-authors state that their objective is "to identify and illustrate the main ingredients of student life" at McMaster University "across nearly 100 years." They achieve that large goal with relative ease as they paint, generally in broad strokes, the life of undergraduates at what was once a small Baptist institution on Bloor Street. They succeed in drawing three elements which they believe need to be more richly coloured over the years: "the evolution of student autonomy, the trend toward fragmentation of the student body, and the growth of equality for women." And, throughout the text, there is a steady stream of appropriate photographs, nearly every one of which is captioned with intelligent charm and humour. The whole book, text and photographs alike, is so engaging that the reader tends to forget that it is very much the product of thorough research.

That said, a few observations can be made which illustrate that the co-authors are only human. The final chapter, covering the years from 1975 to 1985, is one of Weaver's responsibilities; and he allows it to get out of hand because he attempts to portray too much and loses the touch which

he possessed in earlier chapters. This section veers closer to being a history of the university, rather than that of student life. Perhaps the weakness of this section demonstrates that no historian can secure that necessary distance for perspective when treating the near-present. This criticism permits the reviewer to observe that he preferred those chapters which were Johnston's work because he possesses an enviable and felicitous magic with words.

One can, however, mount some small criticisms aimed at Johnston. The reviewer wonders, for example, if the students in the fall of 1914 were as oblivious to the war which had broken out before their return to classes, as he suggests. It seems very doubtful. In this same chapter, which encloses the war years, Johnston states that the Canadian Patriotic Fund was "set up to provide for the comfort of Canadian soldiers overseas." Such was not the case: the Fund was organized to supplement the incomes of the families of the men who were serving king and country.

As it happens, this reviewer was an undergraduate at McMaster from 1950 to 1954; consequently, the fifth chapter, dealing with the fifties, was read with special interest. It is natural, then, to protest that these years were not as marked by the student apathy which the subtitle of the chapter suggests. And, because the student newspaper, the *Silhouette*, is cited in making this argument, it should be noted that one editor of that era was only happy with a constant storm of controversy; anything less he characterized as apathetic. The reviewer, however, can move beyond questioning a source and, drawing on most of his remaining faculties, recall one episode of that era which belies the label of apathetic.

In the early fifties a very real storm broke over the campus around the question of sponsoring some Russian students to come for a year of studies — at what was still, then, a Baptist university. Whether these students would have ever come or been allowed to come remain academic questions because McMasterites voted down the proposition, but only after a heated and protracted debate. It still seems likely that the student body would have voted affirmatively had not two events occurred which placed some on the horns of a dilemma. First, someone hoisted the Russian flag over University Hall; and then a small group of young Hamilton communists arrived on the campus to urge a "yes" vote in the leaflets which they distributed. That tore it. But one could scarcely characterize the episode as an example of apathy, particularly if one remembers that McCarthyism was still flourishing in the United States.

Having gotten that off this chest, the conclusion must return to the beginning and emphasize the excellence of this book which is finely crafted and eminently readable.

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William Chester Jordan — *From Servitude to Freedom. Manumission in the Senonais in the Thirteenth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986. Pp. viii, 149.

Using a variety of unpublished sources, mostly from the Archives of the Yonne, the author has provided a stimulating discussion of the history of manumission in one relatively well-documented area of northern France. He discusses what was meant by manumission, particularly the limits of the benefits it conveyed, and then goes on to examine the reasons which led lords to grant manumission, and peasants to desire it; and the problems to which it gave rise. He bases his work on a case study of the manumissions of one landlord, the monastery of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens, but ranges widely within the Senonais in supplying supporting evidence from other sources.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is that in which Jordan discusses payment for the manumissions. The sums required were often enormous, and show that the peasants set a