

convaincantes (surtout au sujet des conséquences pour le chevalier d'avoir choisi le mauvais cheval en 1919) et il y a aussi quelques erreurs : Arthur Meighen ne vient pas de l'Ouest (p. 184), King n'a pas battu Fielding au 2<sup>e</sup> mais au 4<sup>e</sup> tour (p. 181) et l'allié québécois de Gouin et Dandurand au cabinet de 1921 ne fut pas l'Ontarien Charles Murphy, mais James A. Robb (p. 195). Mais, les quatre premiers chapitres sont plus solides, surtout la description de la lutte entre Lemieux, le chevalier servant, et Bourassa, le chevalier errant, entre 1896 et 1919. Ce travail constitue une contribution importante à nos connaissances de cette période de l'histoire politique canadienne.

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Stanley Chojnacki — *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 370.

Stanley Chojnacki's *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice* is a collection of previously published essays drawn from his career of researching the patrician culture of Venice. To avoid the inconsistencies and redundancies typical of such collections Chojnacki has reworked his essays somewhat and provided an insightful and self-reflective introduction. The book informs the reader on at least two fronts: first, by providing the fruits of nearly 30 years' analysis of one historical subject; and second, by situating that research very clearly within its historiographical context. Chojnacki is able to step back from his work and evaluate its methodological and thematic development, showing how his interest in the place of women in patrician culture has grown from a tangential concern to a principal focus of his work.

Certainly Venetian society was patriarchal. Yet Chojnacki reveals how individual patricians, both women and men, asserted some measure of independence, even if limited by the needs of family or the state. Along with providing solid statistical generalizations, Chojnacki emphasises the "varied and unpredictable circumstances of individual experience". In a patrician society like that of Venice, the "concerns of private life influenced the course of political development" (p. 2); thus married women, Chojnacki found, exerted influence on their children and other relatives and in-laws, helping to shape governmental policy.

The sources that Chojnacki uses to peek into Venice's upper-class homes are varied, although he leans heavily on a close reading of governmental legislation, marriage and dowry records, and wills. He handles all of these with consummate skill, teasing from them important conclusions, many of them diverging from what we know of patrician culture elsewhere. One of the principal battlegrounds between patrician families and the state was the dowry, the dramatic inflation of which became one of the major problems of Renaissance society and a constant challenge to noble families who needed to cement socially and economically advantageous marriages for their daughters, something which sorely stretched most families'

resources. However, unlike her sisters in Florence, a Venetian married woman retained control over her dowry, giving her considerable clout as her husband and in-laws sought to stay in her good graces. Such influence on the part of women is notoriously difficult to uncover from sources amenable to statistical analysis, yet Chojnacki has made the best of these.

The essays are gathered into three sections of four chapters each. Part 1 concerns the role of the State in regulating sexuality, dowries, marriages, and births. Even though the Venetian government consisted entirely of patricians, its goal was to maintain the purity of patrician bloodlines by “clarifying and controlling class, age, and gender identities at their sexual core, wherein lay the key to the orderly continuity of society and regime” (p. 37). Yet these interests often clashed with the need of patrician families to provide for all of their children. Regulations surrounding dowries proved to be the most contentious, as the State sought to set a cap on dowries so that the lesser noble families could find husbands for their daughters. The upper noble houses, whose status was based on wealth and antiquity, found ways around the legislation so as to attract the best possible grooms. The inability of most patrician families to fund the marriage of more than one daughter and son resulted in a large number of unmarried women and men. Most unmarried daughters were destined for convents (by 1581 the home of some three-fifths of patrician women), wherein chastity was often a fiction, despite frequent governmental efforts to enforce it. As for bachelor males, Venice’s government was much harsher than Florence’s in suppressing sodomy, based on worries over the city’s demographic health and divine wrath. Yet the state’s efforts to supervise more tolerable heterosexual outlets were not entirely successful, and concerns over the increasing number of ennobled bastard sons compelled the Council of Ten in 1526 to legislate the registration of all patrician marriages and the swearing of witnesses as to the legitimacy of the union.

The chapters in part 2 pursue in greater detail the role and independence of action of patrician women as wives and mothers who, Chojnacki argues, contributed a great deal to the “relative interclass harmony and stability” for which the city’s patriciate became famous. The notorious dowry inflation helped strengthen traditional kinship bonds by inducing relatives to aid harassed fathers of marriageable daughters. Moreover, by a close analysis of wills, Chojnacki has discovered that during the fifteenth century husbands’ affection for their wives actually deepened as a result of their wives’ growing economic power. While Venetian society remained patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrimonial, propertied patrician mothers exerted considerable influence in shaping the destinies of their sons.

Part 3 turns the focus from women to men, detailing in interesting fashion the problems that young male patricians faced in growing up to fulfil their socially inscribed roles, or, in some cases, how they avoided them. Renaissance women married young in order to attract a husband, while men delayed marriage. By the later fifteenth century young women might be offered a choice between marriage and religious life, as some parents were recognizing them as individual personages requiring some time to mature. The range of opportunity for patrician daughters still remained extremely limiting, but so it was for patrician sons, especially those destined for marriage, business, and government. Men, however, had the advantage of

encountering marriage as the completion of the “passage to adulthood” (p. 194) after a period of adolescence unavailable to their sisters. Venice’s government sought to train young men in public responsibility, beginning at age 18 with the ceremony of the *Barbarella*, a rite of passage in which they testified to their age and patrician status. This ritual required family members to guarantee a young man’s pedigree, and Chojnacki discovered these included a significant number of maternal kin, affirming the importance of married women in forging complex and enduring kin relationships. Once 20, patrician males could be admitted into the Great Council to begin their civic service. By the fifteenth century the growing number of young patrician men forced the government to offer stipendiary appointments for them as crossbowmen on Venetian merchant vessels which promised also opportunities to make international business contacts. These positions Chojnacki astutely describes as welfare for needy nobles.

Despite the great economic and social benefits ascribed to marriage, Chojnacki observes that only slightly more than half of patrician males committed themselves to a bride. Dowry inflation accounts for only part of the story, for patrician husbandhood carried with it an enormous burden of demands from both family and government, and, while those who remained bachelors were never accorded full status as patrician adults, many preferred the relative freedom that bachelorhood allowed them, which was greater than that of their unmarried sisters.

*Women and Men in Renaissance Venice* is a fitting tribute to a career of careful scholarship. It is also a very fine collection that for the most part reads like a monograph rather than a collection of essays, although the frequency of references to issues such as dowry inflation reminds the reader often enough of the book’s origins. With a rare balance between statistical generalization and individual experience, Chojnacki’s essays not only deserve a wide audience, but are models of the social historian’s craft, just as the volume as a whole is a model of the collected essays format.

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Serge Courville — *Le Québec. Genèses et mutations du territoire*, Québec, Presses de l’Université Laval et l’Harmattan, 2000, 508 p.

Un livre comme celui-ci ne peut que déjouer l’effort de recension. Plus qu’un livre, c’est un dictionnaire, voire une encyclopédie : un bouquin qui se lit du début à la fin, mais qui peut aussi être lu en biais, à l’inverse, de bas en haut. C’est une référence; une oeuvre qui se doit d’occuper non pas un 3 cm de tablette, mais s’ajouter au coin de la table de travail déjà occupée par l’*Atlas historique du Québec* et l’*Atlas historique du Canada*.

Ce livre, destiné aux élèves plus qu’aux spécialistes gourmands de nouvelles interprétations, se divise en cinq parties. La première décrit brièvement le territoire québécois dans sa géographie, dans son évolution juridique et dans son développement. La deuxième partie examine le territoire avant l’apparition de l’Européen et