

sons and networking. Owners, staff, and liquor board officials were aware of the presence of gays and lesbians in specific hotels, but the issue did not become public.

By the late 1940s, as public drinking became more respectable, pressures mounted for greater diversity in liquor licensing, with clubs being licensed in 1947. During this period the city had a vibrant nightlife. The problem of “bottle clubs” (unlicensed cabarets) and a “new knowledge” of alcohol based on the acceptability of middle-class drinking led to the creation (with much controversy) of cocktail bars in 1954, ending the beer parlour’s monopoly on public drinking. That year, parlours were reclassified as “public houses” in an attempt to define away the image of working-class excess. Middle-class drinking of cocktails (also in hotels) was portrayed as a form of consumption that promoted “relaxation and social interaction” (p. 110), not the guilty beer guzzling of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

Campbell’s book is scholarly yet accessible and not overloaded with theoretical or historiographical detail (although Foucault pops up in the conclusion). Missing or underdeveloped issues include the connection of beer parlours to political patronage, corruption (beyond the role of breweries), and organized crime, perennials in Vancouver municipal and provincial politics. Although not tasked with direct regulation of the parlours, the municipal police were the primary social control agency in Vancouver’s downtown, and their records could have been consulted in more detail. It also would be useful to fit beer parlour drinking into the larger framework of provincial liquor policy. Retail sale for off-premise consumption also was governed by class, racial and gender attitudes, and official attitudes toward proper behaviour.

In the end, it was not the cocktail bar but a rising standard of living and the home that undercut the tavern. Liquor stores and expanding consumer purchasing power were not unrelated to the declining relative importance of beer parlours. In Ontario in the early 1950s, for example, more than a third of all alcohol was sold in taverns, bars, and restaurants; by the late 1970s on-premise sales had declined to only less than a fifth.

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Monica Chojnacka — *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

In a slim, but very welcome volume, Monica Chojnacka musters into the limelight the frequently overlooked working women of early modern Italy. The pre-modern women who appear in most sources and then in historical studies are usually members of social and religious elites. Furthermore, the literature for Italy often downplays the role of women as workers, since, by comparison with northern Europe, they are strikingly less visible in regulated or paid employment. Chojnacka’s focus on non-elite urban women, specifically the *popolane* of Venice from 1540 to 1630, therefore moves us toward a fuller picture. The attention to ordinary women also allows her to challenge a general belief, based largely on studies of fifteenth-century Florentine elites, that patriarchy radically deprived Italian women of mobility and

agency. Chojnacka acknowledges that ordinary women, like their social betters, faced gendered constraints, but suggests that those limitations worked differently on women of higher and lower rank. Instead of suffering seclusion and utter impotence, she contends, *popolane* women moved about — within and beyond the city — and exercised “social power ... the ability to make independent decisions as well as to influence the actions of other people” (p. xvi). She seeks a balance that recognizes both women’s vulnerability and their capacity to act. This sensible argument finds a sympathetic ear from others of us who study women in various parts of Italy.

Rather than organizing her study, as have many historians of women, around life stages, Chojnacka has chosen interestingly to map instead a social geography. The chapters begin with a focus on women in their households and then expand outward in concentric circles to neighbourhood, city, and region. Within each zone, she considers patterns of behaviour characteristic of single women, wives, and widows, but she emphasizes commonalities of experience. In the introduction the author comments that broad historical factors were reshaping Venetian life in this period — in particular, the evolving economy of manufactures that brought new kinds of jobs and the intellectual and institutional innovations arising in the wake of the Catholic reformation. Yet the book’s major concern is to chart the everyday dealings of early modern women rather than to track or explain larger patterns of change. A section of illustrations, with elaborate captions but few dates, complements this approach.

To develop her thesis about ordinary women’s social power, Chojnacka assembles a rich medley of archival sources — extensive in their variety, though in some instances limited in their numbers. While she begins with an elaborated anecdote about Paolina and Pollonia, two sisters on their own who seek protection from the *ospedale* of the Derelitti, Chojnacka does not use the techniques of microhistory and thick description. For each topic she draws on a different mix of sources, in most cases finding clusters of examples from which to explicate the theme. An exception is the first chapter on household and residence, which emerges from a quantitative study of nearly 20,000 hearths registered in 47 parish censuses dating mostly to the 1590s. These valuable records yield a range of patterns of male- and female-headed households, the latter often gathered geographically as if for mutual support. Chojnacka remarks on the relative independence of nuclear families from their kin, a “northern” pattern that contrasts with more extended family structures often posited for other parts of the peninsula.

The rest of the chapters work more anecdotally from a shifting array of documents. Using tax rolls, petitions for relief from financial obligations, leases, and other notarial contracts, chapter 2 examines women’s property and income. Chapter 3 draws especially on a selection of Inquisition trials to explore neighbourhood and meanings of social identity. Chapter 4 looks at women migrants to Venice using tribunal records, again in a mix with parish censuses and a handful of dowry contracts. Chapter 5 enlarges on the theme of mobility as women travelled outside their neighbourhoods and even outside the city. Concerning mobile women, Chojnacka wants to argue both distinctness from the native-born and integration. Chapter 6 changes course; based in the records of four custodial institutions for girls in need and women in trouble, it elaborates on the networks that linked elite and ordinary

women across geography and class. Her emphasis points away from a Foucauldian preoccupation with discipline and toward a view of institutions as potentially protective and even empowering.

The book offers strong thematic continuities, as mobility and agency penetrate a variety of women's activities. Of particular interest are sociability and work. Chojnacka develops a fresh sense of the complex texture of relationships with men and with other women that shaped *popolane* lives. In making the case for significant female management of property, she highlights the seldom examined importance of siblings — sisters and brothers. Rather than assuming that male dominance is the whole story, she proposes for women's dealings with men a model of collaboration and, in a few situations, even friendship. At the same time, ordinary women did spend much of their time with other women. Chojnacka strikingly depicts neighbourhoods where men and high-status women were largely absent from the streets, and *popolane* engaged with their peers in daily rounds of social and economic activities. Women's work typically occurred here, for most an improvisational motley of tasks and exchanges rather than a job or a career. By implication, work identity lies deeply enmeshed in broader social connections. Chojnacka explores female money-making where she can, but inherited assets loom larger than earnings or business profits. Despite the book's title, women's work remains somewhat elusive.

All told, one of the great merits of the study is Chojnacka's inventive and patient deployment of diverse sources. At the same time, because the data are richer on some matters than others, at points the patchwork feels a bit uneven. Perhaps because so many kinds of documents are in play, some readings assume too much transparency. The impact of law and genre on language and representation demands a steadier eye, and arguments from omission or negation sometimes presume an overly close equation between text and world. For example, a male habit of demurral in witchcraft trials need not betoken men's general absence from neighbourhood affairs. Nonetheless, Chojnacka succeeds in drawing for Venice a more nuanced portrait of *popolane* women's lives than we have yet had for any other Italian city. Her accumulated results point toward a significant adjustment of our understanding of gender in the peninsula. Many ordinary women did circulate within and beyond their city, and they did participate in shaping their own well-being and that of their families and neighbours.

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Enda Delaney — *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921–1971*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000. Pp. xvi, 345.

This text is a welcome addition both to McGill-Queen's "Studies in Ethnic History" and to the historiography of Irish emigration. It is particularly encouraging to see such a well-researched, carefully argued monograph highlighting the vital impor-