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government's aggressive patrolling of servants' speech, coarse talk by gondoliers, and other members of Venice's labouring classes. The government concentrated the vast majority of its coercive power on the prosecution of insults against nobles. Horodowich plausibly connects this development with the increasing monopolization of the government by an ever smaller aristocratic oligarchy. The government defined itself in terms of its noble class and hence viewed insults towards individual nobles as conceptually synonymous with assaults on the government itself.

Chapters 5 and 6 shift the focus from law to culture by considering the role of gossip in Venetian public life and the speech of Venice's famously eloquent courtesans. Both chapters are good examples of the anxieties and contradictions that accompanied Venetian awareness of the political implications of speech. While gossip was generally condemned as a frivolous and potentially destructive form of distinctly female speech, it nevertheless was an essential method of political deal-making and intelligence-gathering in the ostensibly masculine culture of republican politics. Similarly, Venetian courtesans, who sold verbal companionship as well as sex, were clearly in fundamental violation of the codes of conduct championed in advice literature, which tended to speak with one voice on the primacy of female silence. Yet their fame as eloquent interlocutors and the degree to which Europeans flocked to Venice to seek them out not only contributed to the city's economy but also constituted what Horodowich calls "a type of diplomatic link between Venice and the rest of absolutist Europe" (p. 18).

One of the book's core arguments is that historiography on European state-building has tended to overlook language as an important category of analysis. While there may be relatively few studies of state-building as linguistically oriented as *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice*, it is difficult to imagine many dissenting voices to that thesis. The centralizing states of the west were constantly communicating and justifying the expansion of their powers, and control over speech and language was always central to that process. In spite of the book's assertion of an argument that few would contest, however, it is fascinating to see Horodowich's nuanced and subtle historicization of the argument in its Venetian context, making the book an important contribution to state-building literature.

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MacFarlane, John — *Triquet's Cross: A Study of Military Heroism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009. Pp. 250.

On March 6, 1944, Paul Triquet of the Royal 22e Régiment learned that he had been awarded the Victoria Cross, the British Commonwealth's highest decoration for valour in battle, making him the first and, as it turned out, only French Canadian to receive the award during the Second World War. The recommendation for the award had been made in recognition of Triquet's role the previous December in the Battle of Ortona. In their quest to control this Italian town, Triquet and his men encountered strong German resistance and engaged in street fights so intense that the battle came to be described as "Little Stalingrad." The turning point came when Triquet and his men captured Casa Berardi, a house strategically located near the town centre. With only a handful of men left under his command, Triquet succeeded in holding the house until reinforcements could arrive. It was generally agreed that Triquet's determined leadership had been crucial to the Canadian victory at Ortona, which was a key part of the Allied effort to retake the Italian peninsula. Triquet's bravery under fire and ability to rally his men against enormous German pressure attracted the attention of his superiors and led to the recommendation for the Victoria Cross. When news of his exploits reached Canadians back home, Triquet emerged suddenly as a hero whose valour and leadership appeared to be neatly encapsulated by the words he was reported to have uttered to one of his men about the Germans: "they won't pass here."

While Triquet would often tell reporters that he had not said these words and that it was in fact a young soldier who had died during the battle who made this defiant statement, the truth no longer seemed to matter to a Canadian public eager to celebrate a hero. By the time his exploits became known, Triquet had already lost control of the narrative of events. In this fine study of the politics of heroism, Brian MacFarlane shows how the media, government, and military created images of Triquet to advance their own particular agendas. Triquet would be removed from the front for a rest and then sent back to Canada to promote the sale of bonds and to drum up support for enlistment. He would be paraded in front of crowds by English-Canadian officials to exhibit the bravery of French-Canadian soldiers and thus to counter accusations that French Canadians had not been pulling their weight in the war. Politicians and recruiters also hoped that Triquet's exploits might motivate more French Canadians to enlist.

MacFarlane makes it clear that Triquet's Victoria Cross was both a great honour and a heavy cross to bear. It turned out that Triquet was unsuited for the role of hero that he was expected to assume. The son of a French father and French-Canadian mother, Triquet had dreamed as a boy of becoming a soldier and followed his father into the military, but it took a while for Triquet to adjust to the strict discipline of military life. A bit of a loner and exhibiting what one of his superiors described as a difficult personality, Triquet would nonetheless find his greatest happiness in the military, which provided him with the camaraderie he craved and the structure that he needed. By the time Triquet was shipped to England at the beginning of the Second World War, he had matured into a disciplined soldier and was eager to see combat.

It was thus ironic and, as it turned out, rather tragic that, at the very moment of Triquet's greatest triumph on the battlefield, he would be removed from the front and catapulted into a role that he was not at all interested in taking on. When the national media descended on Cabano, the small Quebec town where he was raised, to celebrate the country's newest star, neither the townspeople nor Triquet were prepared for this onslaught. Triquet was portrayed as a man who was very much a part of that community; he would pose as a happily married man for a public eager to celebrate a genuine hero, even though he had become estranged from his wife prior to the war and no longer had much to do with the town. While the English-speaking media made him out to be a hero, not all French Canadians in the town wished to celebrate the newest and most visible symbol of a war that they did not entirely support. Whispers about his family life and about his excessive drinking made the Church reluctant to embrace him fully.

The postwar years brought new difficulties for Triquet. In 1947 he was forced into retirement due to his excessive drinking and increasingly erratic behaviour. When he later sought a leadership role in the army, his superiors had little faith in his ability to take on a command. While Triquet had struggled to come to terms with the media attention during the war, afterward he found that the public had largely moved on to other things and no longer seemed interested. By the 1950s, a period of rising consumerism and individualism, military heroes like Triquet were no longer being celebrated in the same way that they had been in the past. By the 1960s, English-speaking Canadians were also turning away from the British connection, and figures like Triquet, a Victoria Cross winner, seemed less relevant to a population seeking to define its own independent cultural and military identity. In Quebec, meanwhile, French-speaking Canadians were also rewriting the past and overturning icons, in the process purging any reminders of French-Canadian involvement with Canada's military and imperial past.

The Victoria Cross thus presented Triquet with a double burden. While it was a great honour for a man who had made the military his life, it also removed him from the fighting and separated him from his men. He was forced to take on the role of hero back home when all he wanted to do was get back to the front. Triquet's wishes, however, were not important. As MacFarlane suggests, a nation's appetite for heroism during wartime can override an individual's desires and can also take precedence over the truth. In a cruel irony, Triquet was destined to spend the postwar years coming to terms with his status as a hero at a time when his types of exploits were no longer being celebrated. While many of Triquet's difficulties can be traced to his personal failures, the public's turn away from him was in keeping with the general postwar attitude toward veterans of the Second World War before these men emerged in the popular imagination as members of the "Greatest Generation." This designation, as MacFarlane shows, has always been a difficult fit for French-speaking Quebec, where the Second World War holds a much more complex place in the public mind. Triquet may have been largely forgotten by the public following the war and descended into obscurity after his death, but this book should renew interest in his life at a time when his type of heroics are once again being embraced by the public and French-Canadian historians are taking another look at Quebec's military past.

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