nous aussi de ce morceau du patrimoine universel. D'utiles tableaux chronologiques, des cartes géographiques et une bibliographie sommaire complètent l'ouvrage. Dans le cadre restreint qui lui était imparti, J. Auberger devait aller à l'essentiel et privilégier les aspects significatifs propres à servir son propos : l'histoire condensée de la Grèce et de Rome qu'elle a préparée dans cette optique est tout simplement remarquable et l'analyse des convergences et divergences observées dans l'organisation sociopolitique des deux sociétés est le résultat du travail d'une historienne qui connaît fort bien son sujet. Les démonstrations sont conduites avec une plume alerte. Au moment où dans le secteur de l'éducation on constate un recul paradoxal des études classiques, alors que leur pouvoir d'attraction continue pourtant d'agir sur un grand public de plus en plus friand de voyages culturels sur les sites antiques, d'expositions sur la Grèce et Rome ou de traductions de textes anciens, ce livre, qui dit les choses comme elles sont et fait fi des poncifs, arrive à point nommé pour revaloriser ce champ d'études pluridisciplinaire. Il faut rendre hommage à J. Auberger, qui, en plus de favoriser ainsi l'accès au Monde gréco-romain, a le souci de montrer ce que son étude peut apporter d'intéressant à l'intellectuel québécois d'aujourd'hui.

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Dennis Romano — *Housecraft and Statecraft: Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice, 1400–1600*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Pp. xxvi, 333.

James S. Grubb — *Provincial Families of the Renaissance: Private and Public Life in the Veneto*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Pp. xvii, 344.

A popular topic of historical research in the late nineteenth century, private life in the Renaissance period, is proving equally attractive to historians in our own *fin de siècle*. Recent developments in social history concerning the study of women and the family, as well as methods borrowed from other disciplines, ensure that radically different approaches to the topic are now adopted. The works of Dennis Romano and James S. Grubb, two well-respected historians of Venice and the Veneto, are fine examples of the modern genre. Combining vigorous analysis with an old-fashioned regard for careful archival research, these stimulating studies greatly enrich our knowledge of family life in the Italian Renaissance.

By studying domestic service in Renaissance Venice, Romano explores an important topic in an important period of Venetian history. Much has been written about the city's patrician families, and work in Venice has also been the subject of much research in recent years, but this is, surprisingly, the first in-depth investigation into household service in Venice. Faced with the difficult tasks of establishing a new topic and identifying suitable documentation (always problematic concerning

private life — especially in Venice), Romano has done an impressive job. He approaches the topic in a thought-provoking way, combining a study of the economic and social realities of domestic service with an analysis of its cultural meaning within Venetian society. He thus aims to demonstrate the importance of household management to the political life of the Venetian Republic as well as to reinstate a neglected social institution within the history of Venetian society and its economy.

The master-servant relationship, which was a common tie uniting inhabitants of Venice, is offered here as a means of understanding the increasingly patriarchal and hierarchical nature of Venetian society in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This view of Renaissance Venice as a place of increasing social stratification follows Romano's earlier work on the fourteenth century, *Patricians and Popolani: The Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (1987). The uneasy correspondence between the symbolic use of domestic service as a metaphor for social and political life by the Venetian servant-keeping elite (explored in part 1), and the social and economic realities of service as a contractual labour relationship (part 2), did, according to Romano, make for dynamic master-servant relations (part 3).

Romano's study provides strong evidence for the central role of domestic service within Venetian society, as well as its complexity as a social, economic, and cultural phenomenon. It sheds light on a multitude of topics, ranging from the diverse structures of servant-keeping households within Venetian society as a whole to alternative payment strategies and the problems posed by domestic servants; careful attention is also paid to the different experiences of male and female servants. The study is based on an impressive range of documentary evidence — notarial and institutional among others — from a number of archives, including the *Archivio degli Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione* and the *Archivio Curia Patriarcale*, as well as the more usually frequented *Archivio di Stato* in Venice. Analysed quantitatively as well as qualitatively, these sources are, for the most part, handled very sensitively. The inclusion of specific examples of servants' experiences is a particular strength as it enables the reader to gain some understanding of these elusive subjects as real historical actors.

The great variety of forms of servant-keeping — and of contemporary opinions on the topic — which are detailed in this book warn against narrow or fixed interpretations of domestic service. Romano's determination to prove that Venetian society was increasingly stratified and that "housecraft" in the city was an intrinsic part of "statecraft" does, however, focus attention predominantly on the small, unrepresentative elite of servant-employers made up mainly of wealthy patricians. It also occasions less than wholly convincing interpretations of the institutional evidence analysed in chapter 2. Here, Romano places great emphasis on the transfer of responsibility for servants to the *Censori* magistrates in 1541, discerning a major tightening of policy governing master-servant relations and a shift in focus towards male servants. The chaotic and dynamic nature of Venetian bureaucratic organization in the sixteenth century, together with the fragmentary condition of the institutional evidence (not to mention the limited number of cases tried by the *Censori*), urges caution concerning the use of these magistrates as signifiers of changing attitudes among the servant-keeping elite. Whereas the *Censori* issued regulations

directed at male servants and boatmen in August 1541, rules for female household servants were passed in the following month by a different patrician judicial council, the *Quarantia Criminal*; other aspects of female servants' lives were also regulated by the *Signori di Notte al Civil* and the *Provveditori e Sopraprovveditori alla Sanità*. *De facto* actions taken by the *Censori* against theft by servants were, moreover, contested by the *de jure* authorities, the *Signori di Notte al Criminal*, during the later sixteenth century.

Though dealing with a similar topic, James S. Grubb's study of provincial families in the Veneto appears, at first, to be the antithesis of Romano's work. Whereas the Venetian scholar champions his subject and promotes a *grande thèse,* the Veneto specialist is markedly cautious and makes uncommonly modest claims for his book. Grubb's work purports to be an investigation of unremarkable people in an unexceptional part of Italy. Unprepossessing though this sounds, Grubb is as much of a trailblazer as Romano.

This important work, which was 15 years in the making, focuses on the private and public lives of a neglected social group within an insufficiently studied location: middle-ranking inhabitants of two lesser fifteenth-century cities, Vicenza and Verona. The choice of these subjects exposes the limitations of Italian family history, hitherto based, as it has been, on a few significant families in a cluster of major cities, predominantly Florence. Yet Grubb's intention is not completist or revisionist in nature. By analysing the social, economic, and political priorities and strategies of more obscure urban kinsfolk, he seeks simply to broaden our understanding of Italian family life, underlining features which correspond with previous studies and highlighting variations. Much less ambitious than Romano's study of domestic service, this is an equally worthwhile endeavour.

Grubb adopts an unashamedly empirical and eclectic approach. Information gleaned from 13 rare and rather disparate provincial family memoirs is compared with commensurate civic, notarial, and testamentary documentation as well as a variety of learned texts and treatises dating from the same period (like Romano, Grubb is interested in differences between norms and praxis). The questions asked of this material are influenced by the observations of other historians of the family such as David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber on Tuscany and Stanley Chojnacki on Venice, and the Veneto findings are tested against their data. By espousing an old-fashioned empirical methodology Grubb does not, then, turn his back on current historiographical conventions. His study proves him to be well-versed in and at ease with fashionable concepts and modish terminology.

This is, like Romano's study, an engrossing work. It meticulously examines eight different aspects of the private and public lives of families in the Veneto: marriage, children, death, household and family, work, land, patriciate and nobility, and spirituality and religion. Though the sample of families studied is — understandably, given the problems of sources — small, the comparisons with other Italian findings are telling. Like Romano, Grubb explores the subtleties involved in, for example, the payment of dowries in the predominantly rural, cash-starved Veneto. The emphasis placed on spiritual matters is refreshing, though, given its importance, the positioning of the chapter on this topic at the very end of the book is unfortu-

nate. In his work, Grubb renders a valuable service to historians of other Italian regions by introducing important local research, such as the many studies of Gian Maria Varanini and Gigi Corazzol's useful work on rural credit, to a much wider audience.

Wary of the dangers of generalizing from such a narrow base, Grubb is as cautious in his epilogue as he is in his introductory remarks. This may not be to the liking of readers who prefer the reassurance of more definite conclusions, but it is entirely consistent with his aims and is a fitting end to this unduly modest book.

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Sue Peabody — *"There are no Slaves in France": The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. x, 210.

This compact study treats the following question: how and why did French public policy toward black slaves and freedmen of colour living in France change in the course of the eighteenth century? Sue Peabody approaches this issue by closely examining royal edicts, declarations, and administrative regulations, as well as law cases testing these regulations and the correspondence of royal officials and judges concerning public policy toward slavery and toward people of colour in general. This is not an exhaustive investigation of law cases, but an in-depth examination of a few key cases for the purpose of bringing individual contestants and their lawyers into clear focus. The book also demonstrates jurisdictional and personal conflicts that created ambiguities in public policy and warns historians once again to distinguish between law and practice.

Relatively few blacks and people of colour lived in France, only about 5,000 by the end of the century, compared with at least 10,000 in England, a country one-third as populous as France. What is curious is the belief among royal administrators that the number was increasing rapidly and constituted a major social problem by the 1760s. Peabody traces a double development. On one hand, the *Parlement* of Paris and the Admiralty Court of France continued to manumit slaves even into the 1780s. On the other, after 1762 the central administration, the admiralty courts, and most *parlements* in the provinces began to enforce a new code ending all manumissions, prohibiting intermarriage between races, and registering not only slaves, but all people of colour in France.

In the first two-thirds of the century French law was strongly influenced by the Freedom Principle, that is, the notion that once on French soil a slave was free. This principle was based on a few legal precedents such as an ordinance of Louis X in 1315 referring to *affranchissement* of serfs, a case at Bordeaux in 1571 where the *Parlement* of Guyenne freed a shipload of slaves, and Loisel's *Institutes coutumières* (1608) and especially later commentators such as Eusèbe de Laurière in