



Women and Men in Early Modern Venice: Reassessing History

Satya Brata Datta

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The major aim of this book is to articulate the discursive arguments in an endeavour to reassess the overwhelmingly positivist-empiricist tradition of Venetian historiography. The author maintains that reassessing mainstream historiography in the field entails not only focusing on both its obvious and hidden shortcomings, but also the task of composing a new kind of text that highlights both its potentiality and its limits. With this in mind, the author has taken the common women and men of Venice as the major historical subjects of the study. With the exception of some minor studies, mainstream historical research on the Republic of Venice has largely avoided focusing on the life experiences of ordinary women and men in their subjective and material circumstances, viewed from their own perspective. Satya Datta investigates the actual activities of common people - both women and men - and their multiple experience in shaping their own history under given, but changeable, societal conditions. The second chapter focuses on the social experiences of commoners (mainly artisans, both men and women), while the third reduces the scope of analytical frame by delving into the cultural experiences of art-related artisans. The remaining two chapters deal exclusively with the role of women. The aim of chapter four is to highlight an unusual topic: the feminist experiences of three Venetian intellectual women. The fifth chapter concentrates on an ignored field of study: the issue of invisibility of women, which is explored by adopting a gender perspective on the working experiences of ordinary women; it discusses the meaning of women's invisibility by inquiring into the working experiences of Venetian lace-makers in the 16th and 17th centuries. Datta's historical analysis specifically interprets the economic and the socio-cultural facets of the life of early modern common people, two crucial and understudied aspects of women's working experience, particularly.

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