

ends with a brief note about the manuscripts of the *Journal*, but it does not discuss their relation to this translation. It seems likely that this text is the translation of the German critical edition, but this is never stated explicitly. Both Pfanner's critical edition and a more recent translation (Frumentius Renner, 1982) contain detailed introductions to the manuscript tradition.

There is also some confusion in relation to authorship. Although the entire *Journal* was attributed to the abbess, it seems that Caritas was most likely only personally involved in writing the first 55 chapters. While a footnote refers to this, it is not emphasized, nor is any other critical convention of translation mentioned, though this does not seem to have been MacKenzie's aim. The annotated bibliography is a useful introduction to examining the life and historical circumstances of Caritas, the Poor Clares of Nürnberg, and the influence of the Reformation on women.

Despite its neglect of the Franciscan context, this book is an excellent resource for introducing students to the study of women in the Renaissance and Reformation. Women of this period are elusive creatures in the scholarly world, and MacKenzie's edition allows

one, Caritas Pirckheimer, to tell her own story. Students and teachers of gender history, particularly the history of religious women will find that this is a valuable addition to any university classroom.

Alison More
St. Bonaventure University



Holly S. Hurlburt. *The Dogaresa of Venice, 1200-1500: Wife and Icon.* (The New Middle Ages Series.) Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. viii + 301 + illustrations.

Medieval women of the political elite are usually approached either as consorts of ruling men or, more rarely, as women who “ruled in their own right.” In either case, a main responsibility of such women was to perpetuate a lineage. The late medieval republic of Venice, however, was ruled by a *doge*, an official elected for life, legally prevented from creating a dynasty. His wife—the *dogaresa* (plural, *dogaresse*)—thus held a position that seems anomalous compared to that of elite women elsewhere. Usually a member of one of Venice's patrician families, the *dogaresa* acquired her office

solely through her husband's election. In most cases dogaresse were already mothers, and, as Holly Hurlburt shows in this careful, theoretical, and complex study, the Venetian state co-opted her motherhood in its creation of the dogaresa as an icon. However, the dogaresa's real motherhood was not part of her political role. In fact, without the careful legislation of her office, her motherhood, and all it implied, would threaten the state. Because the doge was always elected, there would never be a female doge, nor an opportunity for a dogaresa to serve as regent: the dogaresa was *always* a wife.

"Who was this woman, the dogaresa? Why does her image continue to resonate in the city whose last doge reigned over 200 years ago? How have the dogaresse of Venice's late medieval heyday been shaped by myth and memory?" (2) These questions frame Hurlburt's study, comprising an introduction, five long chapters, a brief epilogue, two appendices, and copious notes. The introduction reviews the (slim) historiography of the dogaresa and the (extensive) imaginative hold her figure has had from the Middle Ages to the present, and identifies Hurlburt's themes: "women, family, and gender, real and ideal, governmental form

and state identity, and myth and memory" (13).

Chapter 1, "Legislating the Dogaresa," grapples with how, because she was almost always a mother and because of the potentially lengthy tenure of her husband's office, Venetians sought to circumscribe the potential of the dogaresa's power—in effect creating an office for her through a series of rituals. The *promissione ducale*, a legal and ceremonial text, was the doge's oath of office, which defined responsibilities and limitations, restricting hereditary potential and eliminating family influence for the couple. These restrictions demonstrate a number of ways in which the person and office of the dogaresa encompassed a series of contradictions. (Hurlburt continuously points out the many contradictions inherent in the dogaresa's position, and liberally theorizes these tensions. For example, patrician women were to conform to gender expectations, but the dogaresa also was expected to meet certain standards of personal display and public movement.) Her oath confirmed her "potential agency" (39), stressing her "obedience to the doge and state." Through the oath, and the protocol governing its administration, the dogaresa moved from being a "private

patrician to a civic figure.” The doge’s conspicuous absence from the ceremony emphasized her relationship to the state (p. 41).

Chapter 2, “Introducing the Dogaressa,” elucidates how a dogaressa came to be. After her husband’s election, the new dogaressa assumed her office in a series of rituals—an entrance (her *entrata*), a feast, giving and receiving gifts, and swearing an oath. Her *entrata* processed throughout Venice, echoing a marriage ritual. These elements of oath-taking and ceremony combine to form, Hurlburt argues, a true office for the dogaressa.

Chapter 3, “The Dogaressa’s Office,” explains the responsibilities of this office, examining the dogaressa’s relationship to the religious centers of Venice, her role in dressing the part (she avoided normal sumptuary legislation), her role in diplomatic relations (primarily entertaining foreign visitors), and her relationship to public and ritual space. Hurlburt also examines the unique portrait medals produced with the dogaressa’s image. Her use of the fourteenth-century protocol, the *Capitolo della Basilica di San Marco* to excavate the dogaressa’s official and religious function is a key contribution of her book (p. 84). The limitations

and expectations placed on the dogaressa literally framed her use of space around the “ritual center of Venice”—the doge’s palace and San Marco (p. 89). Legislation limiting public access to the palace and the use of a special cloak when in public highlighted concern about protecting the dogaressa as an important woman but more so as a “symbol of state” (92).

In the last two chapters, on death, memorialization, and memory, the dogaressa themselves come to life, either through their own efforts or because of modern obsessions with scandal. Chapter 4, “Death and the Dogaressa,” shows how death always heralded the end of a dogaressa’s tenure—either her own, or more likely, the doge’s. As the *entrata* bonded the dogaressa to the state, so did a funeral sever that tie—the dogaressa were abruptly and completely dissociated from their office. Death, however, provided an opportunity for the former dogaressa to challenge official strictures designed to prevent dynastic influence. Through memorialization of her husband, or creation of her own funerary monuments, a dogaressa might claim public memory for herself, her husband, and their family.

Chapter 5, “Recalling the Dogaressa,” seems to confront and embrace the problem of an “icon,”

seemingly static in nature, for the historian. Because the dogaressa in her own time “tread a fine line” between an ideal and her own reality, she served as a “prism” for understanding “the precise hazards posed by female political figures” and the unique political structure of the Venetian republic (p. 156). Hurlburt examines two specific dogaresses: Alucia Gradenigo Falier (d. 1387) and Marina Nani Foscari (d. 1473), both of whose dogaressal careers were dramatically ended by political scandal. Over time, these scandals were sexualized and romanticized, literally, by focusing on the roles of the dogaressa. The chapter moves well out of the usual range for medieval historians examining especially the Romantics, including Lord Byron and painters such as Francesco Hayez. Hurlburt reiterates that the Romantics’ observations reflected their own times as well as the medieval period they described.

The book closes with two appendices: Appendix 1, “Personal Data,” on the 33 dogaressa who held the office from 1200 to 1500, includes their estimated dates, names, number of children, husband, and burial information. Appendix 2, “Ceremonial Protocols,” gives three fourteenth- and fifteenth-century transcriptions of Latin

protocols for elections, entrances, and funerals.

This is a good, even important book. Unfortunately many typographical errors slipped through; overall the book deserved more careful editing. The prose is dense and sometimes hard going. Because of the importance of the dogaressa’s *entrata* and of different religious institutions around Venice, a map of the city would have been helpful. Throughout, Hurlburt compares the dogaressa with her Italian counterparts in Florence, Milan, or Mantua, for example, observing how parallel concerns about gender played out, often in surprisingly similar ways given the different political structures. The particularities of Venetian history, or even the wider Italian context should not, however, discourage scholars of other regions from reading this book. Hurlburt successfully explores questions about motherhood, women’s speech, stage of life, marriage and marriage rituals, patronage, death, historiography, and self-representation in her study of the late medieval dogaressa.

Miriam Shadis
Ohio University

