

Christianity, and often developed from being dissenters from the Anglican Church in the 1640s to becoming Quakers in the later 1650s, as Winstanley himself did, in fact. Gurney shows how digging experiments elsewhere were conducted by Digger groups which were much alike in composition. In each case “the same distinctive convergence of religious radicalism, egalitarianism and concern for the necessitous poor was to be found” (p. 190).

These chapters also show, however, how difficult it has been to identify the Diggers and reconstruct their history before and after the digging experiment. Gurney’s reconstruction is most successful when he can rely on the local sources: Diggers from outside the area are much more difficult to trace back. But that does not detract from the value of Gurney’s study.

There are some minor defects to the book. The absence of a separate bibliography is regrettable, since it forces the reader to search through the many footnotes to retrieve the full title of a particular book or article. Gurney also fails to explain some more abstruse legal terms – such as *mainpernor* – and terms unfamiliar to non-specialists of rural English history. Finally, it is a pity that Gurney, who obviously has a full grasp of the vast literature on Winstanley, rarely explicitly contrasts his findings with those of others. As studies of Winstanley have appeared regularly and are likely to continue to do so, it would have been useful for the reader to know exactly where Gurney stands in the field of Winstanley studies, and what interpretations – old or modern – he opposes or endorses.

These are minor blemishes in a study that successfully blends social and intellectual history in recreating the environment in which one of the most original thinkers of mid-seventeenth-century England originated and acted. As such, this book should be regarded as the starting point for any student of Winstanley and the Diggers.

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LANZA, JANINE M. *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law*. Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington 2007. ; doi:10.1017/S002085901000009X

The recent literature on widowhood in early modern times emphasizes the vulnerability of women without men. The standard of living of women fell after the loss of a spouse. The absence of a well-developed welfare system, the unequal distribution of property, and restrictions on the income-earning capacities of women often led to further impoverishment. In her analysis of the meaning of widowhood for women from artisan ranks in early modern Paris, Janine Lanza seeks to counterbalance this interpretation and emphasizes the possibilities available to widows. Lanza re-evaluates female widowhood and stresses that widows could act independently and occupy positions of authority.

From Wives to Widows is divided into two parts. The first discusses the framework in which widows lived their lives and investigates the norms embedded in law, religious teaching, and guild statutes. The second part, with chapters on the workplace, remarriage, and poverty, addresses the choices widows made within the constraints imposed upon them by society.

In the first chapter Lanza points to the discrepancy between patriarchal norms and practice in which widows used legal regulations to achieve their own ends. But a careful examination also reveals that even though the law reflected a patriarchal notion of the family, it left widows much latitude to manage their own affairs and defend their family interests. The law made a distinction between widows and married and single women; it enabled widows to fulfil their new role as household heads and recognized their need to provide for their families. Moreover, as Lanza rightly points out, legislation, such as the edict on second marriages, applied as much to men as to women. Restrictions on the transmission of property during second marriages should not be interpreted as constraints on a widow’s authority therefore, but rather as instruments to protect the property rights of children.

Even though the Church tried to intervene in widows' lives, it is obvious that religious institutions had far less impact on the lives of artisan widows than the civil law or guild statutes did. The conclusion that widows acted in ways that contradicted Church teaching does not come as a surprise. After all, as Lanza points out in her introduction to this chapter, the teachings of the Catholic Church did not provide a practical model for women who needed to maintain themselves through work. The tension between the Old Testament ideal that exhorted widows to remarry and the New Testament teachings which urged widows to remain chaste and thus unmarried was never resolved. Religious writers advised widows to remain single, withdraw from the world, live a pious life and perform good works. The remarriage rates and the large proportion of widows remaining active in early modern French society show clearly that few women could meet those exacting demands. Instead, widows expressed their religious obligations by offering masses, making charitable bequests to religious institutions and the parish poor, and by giving to individual priests and nuns, as became clear from the examination of testamentary practices as revealed by eighteenth-century wills.

In addition to civil law, guild statutes had a more direct impact on the lives of artisan widows. Guilds tended to overlook women. Formal statutes ignored female activity, but widows, again, formed a separate category as almost all Parisian guilds granted women the right to inherit a mastership and continue the trade of their late husband until they remarried. Widows faced important limitations and constraints that set them at a disadvantage, though, compared with other masters – they lacked access to cheap labour as they were not allowed to train apprentices; they lacked access to decision-making as they were excluded from meetings. Yet widows can also be considered privileged members of working society, as the guild structure offered them the opportunity to occupy important positions. Regulations were revised over time, but guilds never revoked widows' rights. Lanza's interpretation is consistent with the revisionist view of guilds which refutes the long-held assumption that corporations became increasingly restrictive towards women during the early modern period.¹

Whether individual widows took advantage of their privileged position and continued their late husband's work depended upon personal inclination, age, health, and the nature of the work. The personal stories of widows as well as the significant number of women who practised a trade show that widows were highly integrated within the corporative world. Which factor was decisive in a widow's choice of whether to continue work is difficult to assess, however, and the comprehensive discussion of the incentives available to individual women therefore remains somewhat hypothetical. The success of many widows nevertheless shows that a male wage-earner was not necessarily indispensable for the survival of the family.

Remarriage and poverty are examined in the last two chapters as the other options a widow might choose if she did not continue the trade of her late husband. The examination of marriage negotiations, property arrangements, and the motives (emotional and otherwise) behind women wanting to remarry reveal that, in addition to legal emancipation, the experience of married life made widows much more powerful than first-time brides. There was less interference by the wider family, and widows organized their marriages to suit their own needs and attempted to keep control over the household – if they entered into a second marriage.

The representation of the "poor widow" referred as much to the patriarchal ideology that emphasized the vulnerability of women alone and to the biblical obligation to

1. For an overview of this recent trend see Clare Crowston, "Women, Gender, and Guilds in Early Modern Europe: An Overview of Recent Research", *International Review of Social History*, 53 (2008), Supplement, *The Return of the Guilds*, pp. 19–44.

support widows as to the actual destitution of those women. High costs during an illness preceding the death of their husbands, excessive debts, insolvency, or the failure of work may have compelled widows to seek maintenance arrangements with family or neighbours, and to ask for guild support or parish assistance. In general, however, the widows of artisans were more sheltered from poverty than the widows of the working poor were.

Lanza bases her findings on thorough archival research, but rarely gives an overview of exact figures. Her choice of a more impressionistic rather than quantitative approach does not stem from the lack of quantitative sources. For example, she discusses the “poor widows” register (p. 216), which recorded the poor relief donated to women over a period of no less than twenty-one years (1719–1740), with not only the names of each recipient but also the amount each woman received being given. This seemingly wonderful rich source calls for a systematic analysis. But Lanza merely mentions that “the vast majority” were widows, that 25 per cent had children, and that 315 of the 803 recipients in the years 1719 to 1727 had identifiable employment.

At points, a more quantitative approach would have made her argument more persuasive. Her claim that artisan widows seem to have remarried less frequently than the general population of widows, a claim substantiated by “evidence” that shows “a great many” independent widows running shops in eighteenth-century Paris (p. 182), is not very convincing unless we know how many widows failed to continue the trade of their late husbands and unless we can measure the relative impact of “a great many”. One could also argue that widows of guild masters remarried more frequently than widows from other social ranks, since, as Lanza states (pp. 174, 180), the need for labour and help in their businesses was an important incentive for widows to enter into a second marriage. Moreover, their flourishing enterprises and the possible access they provided to the guild made them highly attractive marriage candidates.

Many of Lanza’s findings concern the privileged and thus limited group of widows of master craftsmen. For women from other classes, widowhood will have been less a period of autonomy. Yet it is precisely her focus on artisan widows that enables her to draw conclusions that reach beyond this case study. Lanza has convincingly shown that widows formed a group apart and that women cannot be studied as a single bloc. The experience of widows of master craftsmen, for example, is inconsistent with the decline thesis, according to which the position of women in the labour market deteriorated during the early modern period. Gender roles were more diverse than is too often presumed, and interacted with other identities. The French Revolution changed the situation for artisan widows, as Lanza argues. Guilds were abolished and replaced by an ideology of liberal individualism that excluded women. *From Wives to Widows* has shown that the roles women could play in the *ancien régime* were not only “dictated to them by their gender” but also by their marital status, their status within the guild, and the roles they might come to play as household heads.

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PRICE, RICHARD. *Making Empire. Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2008. xxix, 371 pp. Ill. Maps. £50.00; \$99.00. (Paper: £18.99; \$36.99); doi:10.1017/S0020859010000106

“It was impossible not to be hooked by the stories that I found in the Cape Archives”, remarks Richard Price in his engaging description of how *Making Empire* came to be written, “the book [...] has been the most enjoyable of all the books I have researched and