moreover, may feel the need for a more systematic social and historical contextualiza-tion, addressing, for example, the extent to which the military profession was connected to social mobility, or how the development of professional figures affected the idea of nobility. To be fair, these questions lie beyond and outside the scope of this book (although readers may find hints of them in more than one place). This volume success-fully engages with and illuminates an understudied set of works and makes a valuable contribution to the reassessment of literature in the second half of the sixteenth century, when new works and new genres successfully rejuvenated Italian culture.

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Violence and Justice in Bologna 1250–1700. Sarah Rubin Blanshei, ed.
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The city of Bologna played an important role in the political, military, and economic history of the Italian Peninsula—first as a republican commune turned Signoria under the rule of the Bentivoglio, and later as the Papal States' second city. No less significant was Bologna's prominence in shaping intellectual, cultural, and religious trends from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. Home to Europe's oldest university and an early stronghold of the Dominican Order and its inquisitors, Bologna's impact on the development of legal thought and judicial practice was particularly marked. Nonetheless, until the second half of the twentieth century its strategic importance remained largely overlooked. The essays in *Violence and Justice in Bologna* attest to the growing attention devoted to Bologna by Italian and international scholars of judi-cial history in the last few decades. They also reflect the potential of the city's uniquely rich holdings of statutes and legislation, as well as criminal court records, for a *longue durée* exploration of attitudes toward violent conflicts and their resolution.

The book provides a useful overview of how the conceptualization of specific typol-ogies of crime, and attitudes toward their prosecution, developed in tandem with Bologna's convoluted political history. A punctiliously edited volume, it contains ten tightly focused essays, written by both emerging and established scholars. *Violence and Justice in Bologna* is geared primarily toward a specialist audience, with background knowledge of the medieval Italian communes and of the political tumults of Renaissance Bologna.

The volume is divided into two sections. The first examines judicial procedures and practices from the perspective of institutional history, with essays by Gregory Roberts, Massimo Vallerani, Sarah Rubin Blanshei, Trevor Dean, and Colin Rose. The second section deals with perceptions of specific typologies of violence, and includes

contributions by Sara Cucini, Margaux Buyck, Carol Lansing, Melissa Vise, and Christopher Carlsmith.

Half of the essays in the volume analyze criminal justice in a circumscribed period. Particular attention is devoted to the critical thirteenth century. Roberts challenges the view that communal law and governments in this century sanctioned vendettas, and argues that Bolognese authorities actually sought to curtail them through reconciliation and peace accords. Focusing on the second half of the Duecento, Vallerani calls into question the presumed relationship between *accusatio* and *inquisitio* trial procedures. Lansing's close examination of rape cases from the late thirteenth century undermines the presumption that lower-class women and their kin were reluctant to press charges for this crime. Two of the book's chapters deal with the era of the Bentivoglios' rule in the fifteenth century. Dean examines the interrogation techniques—notably, the use of torture—that were employed in homicide cases in the mid-Quattrocento. Cucini investigates the Bentivoglio regime's judicial and extrajudicial responses to plots and conspiracies.

The other five essays in the book are more directly concerned with surveying the evolution of specific trends in the course of longer time periods. Charting procedural changes that occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Blanshei stresses the increased use of peace accords and poverty pleas over time. Rose points to the modifications in court procedures that took place in the early modern era, following the establishment of the Tribunale del Torrone. The essays by Buyck, Vise, and Carlsmith offer explanations for the causes, conceptualizations, and attempts at repression of particular kinds of violence—namely, poisoning, blasphemy (understood as violence against God), and student violence—over time.

Although the book's ten chapters focus on different aspects and draw on a wide array of methodological approaches, they are in dialogue with one another and, taken together, present a nuanced portrayal of the nonlinear transformations of Bolognese criminality over the course of four and a half centuries. As Blanshei points out in her insightful introduction, the findings presented in the volume challenge traditional presumptions regarding the connection between state formation and governmental efforts to obtain a monopoly over violence. They also serve to dismantle earlier depictions of violent behavior in the premodern era as predominantly spontaneous. Delineating the preexisting social relations and the complex political and judicial contexts for the eruption of different types of interpersonal violence and the efforts to punish them, the volume constitutes a significant contribution to the historiography of medieval and Renaissance Italy.

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