

Maria R. Boes. *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Germany: Courts and Adjudicatory Practices in Frankfurt am Main, 1562–1696*.

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The early modern period saw the growing importance of professional government functionaries in shaping power relations all across Europe. Notaries, map makers, archivists, inquisitors, tax collectors, and others helped define social norms, property relations, and political status. Maria R. Boes's new book on criminal prosecution and punishment in the imperial city of Frankfurt points specifically to the role of legal advocates, equipped with the legitimacy conferred by Roman law in post-Renaissance Germany, in promoting their values through the court system. In Boes's treatment, this had the effect of marginalizing Gypsies, Jews, women, and men accused of sodomy, while privileging locals, Lutherans, men, and, especially, patricians.

Crime and Punishment is less a monograph than a collection of nine stand-alone essays (several published previously), preceded by two background chapters introducing the city and its legal procedures. The essays are largely built around evidence from Frankfurt's *Strafenbuch*, a list of 1,338 criminal sentences adjudicated by the city's legal advocates between 1562 and 1696. Understandably, the nature of the book's composition has led to considerable repetition. There is also no standard introduction, which might have included historiographical orientation and a summary of the kinds of crimes that were prosecuted overall. Still, the book offers much to its readers; it reveals how the supposed consistency of Roman law was applied by Frankfurt's advocates with remarkable inconsistency. Boes also uses these records, where possible, to find the views and behaviors of ordinary people outside the courts. Here she often finds more tolerance and permissiveness among Frankfurt's commoners than among its political and judicial elites.

Six essays deal closely with only a few cases each, offering evocative examples of the advocates' prejudices. Chapter 4 examines four trials of Gypsies in the 1680s and 1690s. Chapter 5 looks at eleven Jews sentenced over the 134-year time span, while chapter 6 examines two additional cases involving Jews in the 1680s. Chapter 8 looks at one infanticide case from 1645 that reveals the vulnerability of female servants, but also women's abilities at building relationships among one another in a world in which the cards were stacked against them. Chapter 9 looks at the trials of two women in the 1690s in which infanticide and suicide were intertwined, revealing how shame, fear, and anxiety of unwed mothers could lead to heartbreaking outcomes. The two sodomy trials between 1562 and 1696 are the focus of chapter 10. Given the small numbers of cases in each of these essays compared to the number recorded in the *Strafenbuch* overall, it's hard to know whether they are characteristic of adjudicatory practice in early modern Frankfurt or the experiences of the kinds of people tried. That is, taken as a whole, they tell us much more about the advocates.

Three other chapters are based on a broader collection of evidence. In chapter 3 Boes examines witness testimonies, bolstered by a strong array of other documentation, to reveal the visual codes and identification systems that allowed ordinary Frankfurters to police one another's behavior. These codes also encouraged selective reporting, since ratting out one's social inferior was safer than accusing a patrician or, for that matter, a patrician's wife. Chapter 7 points to double standards for women in basically every facet of the criminal system. Chapter 11 examines thirty-four murder trials of soldiers or ex-soldiers. While the earliest of these killings were brutal assaults on townspeople, increasingly soldiers were tried for killing fellow soldiers who had offended their sense of military honor. It is worth noting here just how frequently soldiers appear elsewhere in Boes's book, assaulting Jewish residents, raping unwed women, and generally promoting social disorder.

Some academic readers may be put off by some of Boes's presentist judgments of her subjects. Still, I strongly recommend this book to readers interested in mechanisms of social discipline and criminal prosecution, religious persecution and toleration, and gender and sexuality in early modern Germany. Boes's careful archival research brings to life complicated and intimate stories from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Frankfurt that speak to each of these topics in important ways.

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