

Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna.

Sanne Muurling.

Crime and City in History 5. Leiden: Brill, 2020. ix + 254 pp. \$146.

The present book brings to light a dimension hardly considered by researchers in recent decades: the activity of women as criminal actors. This oversight is due, above all, to the scarcity of recordings of the offenses of women, which meant that women, statistically speaking, constituted a minority of the cases prosecuted by the courts of justice. The author offers a historical study of criminology in relation to women's agency, in which women are active or responsible, not passive, subjects of criminal offenses. Although the phenomenon is framed and studied in the wider context of Italy and Europe in the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, this study's scope is the temporal, cultural, and social environment of Bologna.

Chapter 1 lays out the methodological strategy adopted throughout the study. Chapter 2 presents the legal, social, family, labor, and economic conditions affecting women in Bologna after the Renaissance based on the latest studies, and qualifies the usual understanding of these constraints, pointing out the relative freedom of women in the city. Chapter 3 examines the gender pattern assumed by the judicial authority of the *Tribunale del Torrione* in the criminal prosecution of punishable acts committed by women. Chapter 4 examines how women and men employed the criminal court as a forum for conflict resolution. The accusations against women were more numerous than the criminal prosecutions carried out, which is an indication of both judicial paternalism and forms of agency effectively developed by women in Bologna. Chapter 5 explores the differences and similarities in the forms of violence between men and women. The examination reveals that women's criminal behavior was more common than heretofore considered, and was not merely an anomaly, as shown by the cases of theft examined in chapter 6.

The author assumes gender as a methodological key in order to understand in greater depth the dynamics of women's participation in crimes, as well as their treatment in the courts of justice. The central question that drives the study is how socioeconomic and legal conditions can explain the patterns of behavior present in crimes committed by women. An important key to these conditions, the author claims, is a tension between urban and rural, in which female agency in crime appears to be an urban phenomenon that resulted from the relative independence, greater social and economic opportunities, and vulnerability of women. With this, the notion that women are naturally less capable of committing crimes than men is discredited as a general or universal phenomenon. Also challenged is the idea that a dichotomy can be made between men's crimes and women's crimes (e.g., infanticide, sexual deviance, witchcraft), as women also take part in non-feminine offenses like theft and violence.

The difference may be more quantitative than qualitative. It may also be a result of the discretionary capacity of the magistrates to stop an investigation in the framework of judicial paternalism. The offenses would not have been registered in the sentences and, as a result, the total number of cases not prosecuted would have contributed to a relative invisibility of women in these records. But socioeconomic conditions, such as fewer job opportunities, or even the municipal regulation of women's mobility during the night and early morning hours, must also be considered as factors for the small number of records of women as offenders. It should also be noted that in Italy, until the twentieth century, law and criminal justice were essentially masculine domains. As a result, the deviant behaviors of women have been more the object of institutionalized treatment and custody than of criminal justice. Another factor that reduced the presence of women in courts of justice in modern Italy was the practice of peacemaking, pardoning, and reconciliation that was applied to the deviant behaviors of women.

Another relevant factor is the difference between the number of complaints filed and the number of proceedings that conclude with a sentence. This sheds light on the participation of women and men in crimes, but also shows the priorities and gender bias that the judicial authorities adopted in deciding which cases would have relevance based on their perpetrators and the impact on the community.

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Milan Undone: Contested Sovereignities in the Italian Wars. John Gagné.

I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021. xi + 452 pp. \$49.95.

This book by John Gagné offers an interesting description and interpretation of the progressive erosion and collapse of the social, cultural, and political ties that formed the base of the Sforza's sovereignty over the duchy of Milan. After half a century of dominance by the Sforza, Lombardy witnessed several changes of rulers between 1499 and 1535: Louis XII (1499), Ludovico il Moro (1500), again Louis XII (1500), Massimiliano Sforza (1512), François I (1515), Francesco II Sforza (1521), Charles V (1535). As explained in the introduction, frequent wars and lasting institutional instability during those years produced a "political chaos" (24) that the author proposes to understand as both the contrary and the precondition of sovereignty. From this point of view, the volume aims to grasp a better comprehension of the multilayered structure of power in Renaissance Italy by an accurate analysis of the concerted demolition of the foundations of Sforza authority sought by the French rulers and their supporters.

The monograph is divided into three parts, each of which focuses on a particular aspect of the Lombard society affected by the decline of the Sforza Duchy: