

## Reviews

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the melody or not. Although the addition of a few photographic reproductions of manuscripts might have rendered the visual differences more immediate, Björkvall explains all the graphical variants very clearly.

In conclusion, this is a much welcome publication that will greatly benefit every scholar interested in the later developments of liturgical music and poetry, one that sets the criteria for textual editions and that allows the advancement of our understanding of an often-undervalued genre.

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SARAH RUBIN BLANSHEI, *Politics and Justice in Late Medieval Bologna*. (Medieval Law and Its Practice, 7.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010. Pp. ix, 671; many tables and 1 map. \$251.

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Criminal trials today revolve around proving or disproving a defendant's guilt. Imagine, however, a courtroom where the paramount issue at hand is a defendant's (and as often a plaintiff's) political status, which, once established, can nullify the trial. This, in fine, is how Sarah Rubin Blanshei typifies Bologna's criminal process in the decades before the city's surrender to the rule of Bertrando del Poggetto in 1327. Documenting medieval regimes' commitment to due process, as opposed to theorists' expounding about equality before the law, has until now remained an important desideratum. Yet the stakes for Blanshei are even higher. In what surely amounts to the single greatest contribution to Bolognese political history in recent decades, this study illustrates both the creativity and the debilitating impact of republican ideology as translated into legal practice.

Demography and commerce alike drove traditional elites into new alliances in cities across late-medieval Europe. The case of central-northern Italy is considered unique given the large extent of political fragmentation there, on the one hand, and the great vitality of urban industries, trade, banking, and universities, on the other—all of which facilitated the expansion of political participation and the rise of republicanism, a force headed by a new professional class known as the *popolo*. These regimes have received mixed reviews by modern scholars, reaching a nadir in the work of the late Philip Jones but stretching back nearly a century to non-Marxists such as Nicola Ottokar, who famously replaced Gaetano Salvemini's paradigm of class struggle with that of mindless struggle, one paving the way to the *signorie* of the early Renaissance. Republicanism never lacked equally heterogeneous defenders, however, from Ernesto Sestan to Lauro Martines to John Najemy, and Blanshei's study comes down squarely on this side. In the process she has erected a monumental evidentiary base, which, moreover, points to a rather unhappy ending. For while this book underscores the dynamism of one republican regime, it also spotlights the ultimately destructive legal mechanisms *popolani* devised in order to protect themselves from the menacing *magnati* or *potentes*, a group continually revised to fit Bologna's changing political circumstances.

Blanshei aptly describes the latter process in terms of "closure," a series of mechanisms by which a group restricts its competitors' access to the criminal justice system, for instance, by making it easier for a member of the former to prosecute someone among the latter or by all but prohibiting the reverse attempt. There is a careful study here of each legal ploy, including protestations, summary justice, and the use of torture, which was applied more liberally on one side of the status divide, making admission of guilt by a "magnate" all but certain, provided, of course, that a defendant's magnate identity could be proven. Thus the twists and turns of status form the main theme of this study and the

axis of its illuminating discussions of criminal processes, which Blanshei analyzes admirably to convey the politicization of Bolognese law. She also demonstrates how, given the shifting alliances of power among *popolani* and *magnati*, closure operated in different directions simultaneously, that is downward, upward, and, most importantly, laterally, the broader implication being that legal status needs to be seen as a sociopolitical process of participation, not a result of lasting definitions. Such inventiveness came to haunt Bologna's governing classes, for it so altered the terms of power as to render the city virtually ungovernable. In this sense, Blanshei sounds a sobering note on the legacy of Italian republicanism, albeit without diminishing its achievements.

This monograph offers a legal-political analysis rather than a straightforward narrative history. Given its great length and attention to detail even outside the elaborate appendices, however, it is surprisingly readable. True, chapter 5, consisting of nearly two hundred pages, could have been substantially pared down or even published as an independent volume; and the epilogue does little to compensate for the absence of a real conclusion situating the Bolognese case in a broader regional perspective. Indeed, Blanshei appears reluctant to engage explicitly in comparative work even within Italy or to draw on more recent historiography concerning law and society beyond the peninsula. Yet these are quibbles that do not diminish the achievement of this work, which is characterized by a rare competence brought about by meticulous archival research and which provides an accessible survey of the city's myriad and interlocking guilds, arms societies, officials, and clans, each of which tried to find its own voice in what appears to be a colossal, even if not chaotic, shouting match.

After more than thirty years of labor, Blanshei has become a fixture of Bologna's Archivio di Stato. The Fat City, it seems, has opened itself to her, and Blanshei has reciprocated by filling a major gap in its medieval historiography. But the real irony of such a monograph, I am afraid, is that much of its immediate target audience, Bolognese or even trecento political historians, will be deterred by an English-language work of such magnitude. It took sixty-five years for a major history of medieval Bologna such as Alfred Hessel's *Geschichte der Stadt Bologna von 1116 bis 1280* to be translated into Italian. (The Florentines were equally slow with Robert Davidsohn's *Geschichte von Florenz*.) It is not unlikely for the same sad fate to befall Blanshei's tome, but there is every reason to believe that its contribution will not have diminished even by 2075.

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ADRIAN J. BOAS, *Domestic Settings: Sources on Domestic Architecture and Day-to-Day Activities in the Crusader States*. (The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1500, 84.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010. Pp. xxvii, 393; 100 black-and-white figures and 13 tables. €199.  
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This is "the book of the Ph.D. thesis," with the great advantage that its author, Adrian Boas (associate professor of archaeology at the University of Haifa), has not rushed into print with his doctoral research but rather has laid it down like a good wine, to mature. The thesis was submitted in the mid-1990s, and Boas then embarked on other lines of research, which have in themselves generated a series of major works on the medieval archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean: *Crusader Archaeology: The Material Culture of the Latin East* (1999), *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades* (2001), and *Archaeology of the Military Orders* (2006). The delay means that he was able to return to his earlier work with a breadth that would surely have been absent had he published it sooner.