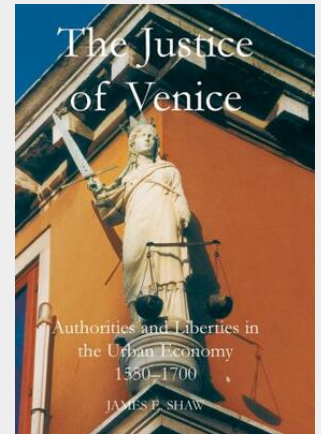


Shaw

## The Justice of Venice

Authorities and Liberties in the Urban Economy, 1550-1700

The rulers of Venice prided themselves on their unique brand of justice, which was a source of both ridicule and admiration for foreign commentators. Dr Shaw uncovers what this special justice meant for ordinary subjects by studying the history of one of the oldest magistracies of the city, a body responsible for handling petty market crime and small claims litigation. This volume examines how changing ideas about justice at the level of the political elite were related to judicial and policing practices in the courtroom and on the street. It shows how failure to invest in the state bureaucracy allowed corruption to flourish and effectively delegated power to private interest groups such as the guilds. At the same time, the volume reveals that the bottom level of civil justice was fast, cheap and accessible. Everyone had the chance to be heard, and the poor and disadvantaged could hope for justice along with the rich and powerful. This volume will be essential reading for historians of Venice and specialists in the history of early modern cities, and also of wider interest to scholars interested in the connections between economic, legal and social structures. By studying one of the oldest courts of the city this volume discusses the impact of Venice's unique brand of justice on its ordinary citizens. The criminal cases shed light on the black market economy; the civil cases demonstrate that justice was cheap, fast and accessible to all.



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