Prostitution, Community, and Civic Regulation in Early Modern Bologna

by

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Abstract
While during the late Middle Ages most major European cities legalized and regulated prostitution, historians have argued that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries religious reform and shifting ideas about acceptable sexual and gendered behaviour resulted in the criminalization and repression of prostitution. Scholars have also demonstrated that early modern cultural depictions and social attitudes increasingly cast prostitutes and their clients as greedy and immoral, as socially and publicly disruptive, and as sinners in need of reform.

This dissertation argues, however, that in the northern-Italian city of Bologna secular and religious civic authorities, magistrates, law enforcement, and the general populace approached prostitution primarily as an issue of economics and public order, and secondarily as an issue of morality and public decorum. Due to the city’s economic reliance on university students who sought sex and companionship, since the late Middle Ages civic authorities regulated prostitution as a civic, commercial issue and prostitutes as fee- and fine-paying workers governed by their own civic magistracy, the Ufficio delle Bollette. This approach developed further in the early modern period due to Bologna’s continuing
economic reliance on students, the demands and needs of workers (both male and female) in its growing, seasonal silk industry, its particular political traditions, and its local social customs. As a result, late sixteenth- and early seventeenth century Bolognese civic authorities neither criminalized prostitution nor attempted to repress it, but instead issued comparatively relaxed, moderately restrictive legislation. Likewise, the Bollette’s officials and functionaries negotiated between legislation, their own desires, and the needs of individual prostitutes when enforcing regulation. Finally, the hundreds of women who registered annually as prostitutes were more-or-less integrated into local communities through residence and through familial, work, and affective relationships and had greater opportunities for agency than broader cultural, religious, and social ideals would lead us to expect.
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Introduction

On 7 July 1604, the Bolognese civic government ordered all prostitutes, courtesans, female procurers, and other ‘dishonest’ women to register in person at the Ufficio delle Bollette (the Office of Receipts).\(^1\) Any woman who failed to do so within eight days would be fined ten lire. Further, all previously granted exemptions were now null and void and women were reminded that they could not leave the city nor change residence without the written permission of the magistracy’s officials or notaries. By December 1604, a total of 611 individual women registered with the Bollette.

Who were these women? What legal, social, and economic restrictions did they face and what privileges did they enjoy? How were they received by Bolognese society, both in general and at the local, neighbourhood level? This dissertation explores these questions by examining civic legislation on prostitution, its enforcement by the Bollette, and the social reception and life-experiences of registered prostitutes in early modern Bologna.

During the period, European jurists, legislators, religious and secular authorities, and common people alike defined prostitution primarily as extra-marital promiscuity, though it might also involve the exchange of goods or money. Consequently, any woman who had sex with more than one man to whom she was not married could be considered a prostitute. In common parlance ‘prostitute,’ ‘whore,’ and ‘disreputable’ or ‘dishonourable woman’ were flexible labels that authorities and the general populace used to describe women who engaged in, or were suspected to engage in, a range of sexual acts and relationships, including monogamous pre-marital or extra-marital sex, adultery, and promiscuity. When applied to individuals, these labels always were nuanced by context, especially by the social status and wealth of the speaker relative to the woman and by their previous interactions with one another.\(^2\) Thus, a poor servant might refer to a relatively well-off prostitute as a courtesan, even if she lacked the elite clientele, education, and cultural refinement that characterised such women. The use of these terms by governing and judicial institutions was somewhat more stable, especially when referring to prostitutes as a group. Yet it also varied

\(^1\) Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna (henceforth BCB), Bandi Merlani, V, fol. 235r (8 and 9 July 1604). Though the proclamation ordered male procurers and ‘dishonest’ men to register, they were not required to do so in practice.

by geographical region and over time. For instance, in sixteenth-century Bologna, where prostitution was legal, the Latin ‘meretrix’ or the Italian ‘meretrice’ denoted a woman who was registered with the Bollette, while the more ambiguous ‘donna inhonestà’ (‘dishonest woman’) referred to an unregistered, clandestine prostitute or to a woman who lived by the avails of prostitution, such as a procurer. In cities where prostitution was illegal, ‘prostitute’ identified promiscuity as well as criminality. In early modern Europe, the concept of ‘prostitution’ and terms like ‘prostitute’ and ‘whore’ were temporally and regionally specific, yet always flexible and negotiable. Consequently, the terms could be applied to women as needed by religious and civic authorities and the general public.

Like the meaning of ‘prostitute,’ attitudes towards such women were also nuanced by place, time, and context. Legal prostitution had been common in Europe since the mid-fourteenth century, when religious and secular authorities tolerated it as a ‘necessary evil.’ Though sinful because it could involve pre-marital sex, promiscuity, and adultery, it was clear that prostitution was inevitable in growing cities. Endemic poverty, life-cycle poverty, constant cycles of famine and plague, and a society that undervalued and underpaid female work led tens of thousands of migrant and local women to trade sex sporadically or regularly for compensation. Though during the period ‘prostitution’ was defined primarily by promiscuity rather than veniality, medieval women and men were aware that economic need motivated women to engage in prostitution. Medieval society approached prostitution as a ‘necessary evil’ because secular culture prized male virility. As a consequence, social customs encouraged men, especially the young and unmarried, to engage in pre- or extra-marital sex.¹

In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries civic governments across the continent legalized and municipalized prostitution in order to provide for men’s desires and to protect

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‘respectable’ daughters and wives from assault or rape. Dijon, Toulouse, Augsburg, Southwark, and Florence restricted licit prostitution to specific civic areas or to municipally-run or private brothels. Authorities also attempted to protect sacred spaces and honourable citizens from the immorality and social disturbance of prostitution by barring prostitutes’ presence from certain churches, buildings, and spaces, by restricting their movements on specific days and at specific hours, and by requiring them to wear visual and audible signs that clearly identified them. Rather than harsh physical punishment, relatively small cash fines were increasingly imposed on recusant women, the proceeds of which funded pious and civic works. Over the late Middle Ages, prostitution shifted from a private concern to a social, civic matter that required civic regulation.

Change came in the sixteenth century. Motivated by religious reform and shifting ideas about acceptable sexual and gender behaviour, Catholic and Protestant authorities either repressed or criminalized prostitution. French, German, and English authorities closed their municipal brothels and red-light districts and made prostitution a punishable offence. While most northern-Italian cities did not criminalize the trade, legislation became increasingly restrictive, marginalizing, and disciplinary. For instance, in the late Middle Ages, Roman authorities imposed few restrictions on the trade and did not have a municipal brothel. However, from the 1560s they segregated prostitutes into a single city district, restricted their appearance and freedom of movement, and required them to pay an annual tax. Florentine civic authorities similarly limited prostitutes’ residence to particular streets, renewed the requirement that they wear distinguishing signs, and required them to register with a civic magistracy and pay regular taxes. These measures confined prostitution and restricted prostitutes in order to make women available to men and bring profit to magistracies and governments through fees and fines while also limiting the trade’s effect on public order, ‘respectable society,’ and wider moral order.

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5 Rossiaud, Medieval Prostitution; Otis, Prostitution in Medieval Society; Roper, The Holy Household; Karras, Common Women.

6 Elizabeth S. Cohen, “Seen and Known: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late Sixteenth-Century Rome,” Renaissance Studies 12, no. 3 (1998); Storey, Carnal Commerce.

7 Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà.”
While generally still viewed as a ‘necessary evil’, northern-Italian cultural attitudes towards prostitution and its practitioners slowly shifted during the period. In the sixteenth-century, literature, poetry, theatre, popular songs, and broadsheets portrayed prostitutes as greedy, ambitious, cunning, disobedient, and arrogant. Women were depicted as magnets for public disorder, crime, and violence who would eventually get their just rewards: the loss of their beauty and luxurious life-styles and eventual death alone and in misery in a charitable hospital.\(^8\) By the seventeenth century, elite and popular literature increasingly highlighted the spiritual dangers of prostitution, warning prostitutes and clients of their sins and encouraging them to repent lest they face eternal damnation.\(^9\) During the period lay and clerical reformers established, financed, and supervised charitable institutions where girls in danger of falling into prostitution could be saved from the trade and its sins.\(^10\) Girls were enclosed in order to protect their virginity and put to work so they could amass a dowry to make an honourable marriage. Pious men and women also established and supported convents and temporary shelters for repentant prostitutes who were willing to accept enclosure and chastity in exchange for shelter and sustenance.\(^11\) Though prostitutes as a group were increasingly depicted as sinful, criminal, and disorderly, individual women were viewed as redeemable, and thus society sought to offer them the chance to repent and rejoin respectable, ordered society. For those who could not, or would not, accept such aid, northern-Italian civic governments continued to offer them a place within society as licit, though increasingly restricted, prostitutes.

English-language scholarship on early modern European prostitution is vast and has gone through significant expansion and refinement over the last 40 years. Drawing on the sources

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\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 48-53; Grieco, “Pedagogical Prints.”


and methods of social history, in the 1980s and 1990s, scholars of women and sex analyzed legislation in order to understand how early moderns approached and viewed prostitution. Studies of specific cities revealed that rather than a single, homogenous European policy, approaches differed between geographical regions and shifted over time. Early studies also revealed that cities regulated prostitution for a myriad of reasons: to limit sexual crime by providing young men with sexually-available women, to protect citizens from the immorality and public disorder of prostitution, to strengthen and defend established gender ideals, to shore up marriage, to combat male sodomy, and to increase birth rates.\textsuperscript{12} Jacques Rossiaud and Leah Otis, both historians of southern France, first expanded on the sixteenth-century criminalization of prostitution.\textsuperscript{13} Scholars of Protestant areas, most prominently Lyndal Roper on Augsburg, discerned radical shifts in civic approaches to prostitution caused by religious reform that led to criminalization.\textsuperscript{14} Mary Elizabeth Perry found a similar situation in sixteenth-century Seville. Though municipal authorities did not criminalize prostitution, Perry argued that because prostitutes were undeferential to gender ideals, they were considered dangerous “deviant insiders” and as a result came under harsh confinement and restriction.\textsuperscript{15} Guido Ruggiero asserted that early sixteenth-century Venetian secular authorities increasingly repressed prostitution, working particularly to hide them from honourable people.\textsuperscript{16}

Later scholarship, especially on northern Italy, examined prostitution from the perspective of prostitutes themselves. In the 1990s, scholars recovered exceptional, celebrated courtesans, such as Veronica Franco, challenging the idea that all women involved in the trade were impoverished and socially ostracized.\textsuperscript{17}

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13 Rossiaud, \textit{Medieval Prostitution}; Otis, \textit{Prostitution in Medieval Society}.


15 Perry, “Deviant Insiders.”

16 Ruggiero, \textit{Binding Passions}, especially pp. 48-56.

\end{flushright}
further complicated the category of ‘prostitute’ by highlighting the variety of ways in which women practiced the trade as well as their varying economic levels: the occasional and regular, the wealthy, the poor, and the destitute.\(^{18}\) The analysis of court records, especially testimonies given by women and their neighbours, revealed that rather than being isolated and ostracized from ‘respectable’ society, prostitutes commonly had relationships with family, friends, and neighbours.\(^{19}\) Many of these relationships were reciprocal, meaning women gave economic, social, and emotional support to others and could expect support in return. Cohen’s work has identified a fundamental truth about prostitution in early modern society: prostitutes were both included and excluded from local social and economic communities in contextually based and complicated ways.

The field has also changed in its view of prostitutes as desperate, pitiful, passive victims of oppressive patriarchal culture and society. Over the decades scholars have argued increasingly that northern-Italian prostitutes had a measure of social and economic agency, often enough to navigate some of the restrictions they faced as poor, (usually) unmarried, women who engaged in extra-marital sex. In the 1980s and 1990s, Lucia Ferrante argued that some Bolognese girls and women used their “sexuality as a resource,” either to make marriages or to make ends meet, and she found some freely admitted this to the authorities since the latter generally shared their view.\(^{20}\) Ferrante also found that while some prostitutes entered charitable institutions because they truly repented their sinful lives, others did so for more practical reasons: in order gain stable (if temporary) shelter and sustenance or in order to ‘regain’ their honour through seclusion so they could marry.\(^{21}\) Elizabeth S. Cohen demonstrated that prostitutes in Rome claimed social honour and local courts provided them the chance to defend that honour when it was publically challenged.\(^{22}\) Analysing Roman prostitutes’ wills, Alessandra Camerano argued that the women would admit their work if it meant the majority of their goods would go to their children rather than be confiscated by

\(^{18}\) Cohen, “‘Courtesans’ and ‘Whores.’”
\(^{19}\) Cohen, “Seen and Known.”
the local convent for repentant prostitutes. While prostitutes certainly were legally, socially, economically, and culturally disempowered and oppressed, scholars question the extent of these restrictions, arguing that women found space or navigated socially or legally sanctioned avenues to their benefit.

In the same vein, historians with access to surviving administrative records have demonstrated the institutional avenues that allowed women to bypass repressive legislation. In his study of Florence’s Office of Decency, John K. Brackett revealed that magistrates sold exemptions that allowed prostitutes to live outside of segregation zones or to go without distinguishing signs. The Office’s functionaries also abused their positions, cancelling charges without warrant and collecting excessive fees and fines. Brackett further argued that the magistrates’ work was constantly frustrated by women who escaped notice or whose elite patrons protected them from arresting officers. Similarly, examining arrest records from the court of the Roman governor, Tessa Storey showed that low-level arresting officers (birri) were often unable to arrest prostitutes with elite lovers because of their own low social status. She revealed that reported arrests of prostitutes were quite low, approximately 31 per year in a city of about 1,000 prostitutes. Storey further notes the small number officers as opposed to the large number of prostitutes (about 80 to 1,000), and reveals that officers generally policed areas most populated by prostitutes, since it was easier to catch women flouting the law there. Because early modern law enforcement structures were weak, much of the regulation of prostitutes and prostitution depended on public denunciations. Storey ultimately argues that though sixteenth-century Roman legislation became increasingly restrictive and marginalizing, most inhabitants were slow to reshape their views and practices around the new laws, and since social attitudes were slow to change, the new laws were enforced inconsistently.

Most recently, scholars of Venice, Milan, and Bologna have highlighted how social concerns about women’s poverty shaped legislation, enforcement, and the broader social treatment of prostitutes. In the 1980s, Italian-language feminist historians, especially in

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24 Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà.”
25 Storey, Carnal Commerce, especially Chapter Four: “Policing Prostitution.”
26 Ibid., p. 100.
27 Ibid.
Bologna, set prostitution firmly within a framework of poverty. In 1981 Luisa Ciammitti highlighted prostitutes as one of the key targets for social welfare aimed at women from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.\(^{28}\) Lucia Ferrante, who dedicated much of her life’s research to early modern Bolognese women, has argued that early modern society in general, and magistrates, judges, and pious reformers and benefactors in particular, realized that economic difficulty led women into prostitution and this realization shaped legislation, enforcement, and charitable work.\(^{29}\) Ferrante examined several Bolognese charitable enclosures established in the late sixteenth-century to save poor girls and women from falling into or remaining in prostitution.\(^{30}\) In another article, she investigated the tribunal of the Bolognese Ufficio delle Bollette, demonstrating that in an effort to keep women solvent – and probably also from depending on civic charity – the magistracy allowed registered prostitutes to sue indebted clients and lovers for compensation, considered the women’s “just price.”\(^{31}\)

In the twenty-first century, scholars have renewed their focus on the link between early modern prostitution and poverty. Re-examining sixteenth-century Venetian legislation, Ann Rosalind Jones has argued that civic authorities approached prostitution not just as a moral problem but also as a social problem arising from women’s economic vulnerability.\(^{32}\) She notes that edicts aimed to prevent women from entering the trade by targeting pimps and procurers who tempted them with promises of riches and luxury. She also highlights the efforts of church- and state-supported enclosures designed to save poor girls and women who were at risk of engaging in prostitution. Stefano D’Amico has argued that seventeenth-century Milanese society generally accepted prostitution as an economic survival strategy as long as it did not disturb local peace through excessive noise or violence.\(^{33}\) Most recently, Nicholas Terpstra has argued that concerns over female poverty directly led to the

\(^{28}\) Ciammitti, “Fanciulle, Monache, Madri,” especially pp. 455-460.


\(^{30}\) Ferrante, “Honor Regained”; Ferrante, “‘Malmaritate’”.

\(^{31}\) Lucia Ferrante, “‘Pro mercede carnali.’”


restructuring of Bologna’s charitable economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Reformers saw women’s poverty as a key social issue, and saw marriage as the key to alleviating poverty. In order to improve social order and the lives of individual women, benefactors focussed their efforts on keeping young girls from entering prostitution until they could be honourably married, and on returning separated wives to their husbands. To do so, they developed new institutions, both formal and informal, to shelter and feed women and protect their chastity until they could be reinserted into ‘honourable’ society as new brides or returning wives. Terpstra stresses that this new approach was ‘practical’: it aimed to help women and their families help themselves by encouraging them to invest in dowry savings-plans or channelling them into charitable workhouses so they could amass dowries via ‘respectable’ labour and eventually marry. All of these recent scholars have made important additions to the long list of motivations for the regulation of prostitution and the reform of prostitutes: the desire to increase social order by helping women to marry and thereby relieve their poverty by keeping them out of prostitution and in honest work.

This dissertation expands on and contributes to existing scholarship on early modern prostitution and prostitutes by offering fresh evidence from an understudied northern-Italian city, Bologna. The second largest city in the Papal States after Rome, at the turn of the seventeenth century Bologna housed approximately 65,000 people within its walls. The city’s native population was swelled with male and female itinerant workers in the city’s booming silk trade, visiting merchants, dignitaries, and their retinues, and foreign students. Home to one of Europe’s oldest universities, an estimated 1,500 students resided and studied there, and the city derived much honour and profit from their presence. As a result of its unique economy and population, the Bolognese government had regulated prostitution as early as the thirteenth century and continued to do so throughout the late medieval and early modern periods. To date no extensive study of Bolognese prostitution has been completed.

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34 Terpstra, Cultures of Charity, “Introduction.”
36 Ibid., p. 3.
37 Athos Bellettini, La popolazione di Bologna dal secolo XV all’unificazione italiana (Bologna, Zanichelli, 1961), table 1, pp. 25-28.
In the 1930s, historian Luigi Simeoni examined the Ufficio delle Bollette and its changes and continuities in jurisdiction throughout the fourteenth- and fifteenth-centuries, which included the surveillance of spies, ambassadors, foreigners, and, in the later century, the supervision of municipal prostitution. Medievalist Carol Lansing published an essay on women, prostitution, and concubinage in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. As discussed previously, Luisa Ciammiti and Nicholas Terpstra included discussions of prostitution in their larger works on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Bolognese charity. Many of Lucia Ferrante’s articles have focused on prostitutes and their interaction with the law and local communities at the turn of the seventeenth century or at its end, but have not addressed long-term changes and continuities in legislation and enforcement, nor women’s long-term experiences.

This study investigates prostitution in Bologna, with a particular focus on the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It examines legislation, its enforcement by the Ufficio delle Bollette, prostitutes’ social reception, and their long-term experiences. It uses traditional prescriptive sources, such as civic statutes, proclamations, and edicts. It also extends to a range of descriptive sources, the extensive bureaucratic documentation produced by the Bollette in its day-to-day work, which survives almost uninterrupted from 1583 until 1630. These sources are particularly valuable since few such records survive for contemporary northern-Italian cities. The Bollette’s documentation includes a plethora of material: the annual registers of prostitutes, registers of landlords and innkeepers, and books and unbound files of denunciations, interviews, testimonies, marriage certificates, records of confession, and internal paperwork. Where appropriate, contemporary cultural works, such as pamphlets, broadsheets, and songs are used to add nuance to the wider social and cultural context.

Bologna’s unique economic reliance on university students and the seasonal silk industry, its particular political traditions, and its local social customs dovetailed in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legislation and enforcement. As a result, secular and

religious civic authorities, the Bollette’s functionaries, and the general populace approached prostitution primarily as an issue of economics and public order, and secondarily as an issue of morality and public decorum. Since the late fourteenth century the civic government ensured that licit prostitutes were available to university students, and this continued throughout the early modern period. While in the sixteenth century other northern-Italian cities sharply repressed prostitution, Bologna instead relaxed its regulations on the trade. Prostitutes were neither required to wear distinguishing signs, nor to live in assigned, segregated streets. The annual registers reveal that rather than attempt to reduce the number of prostitutes, the civic government allowed it to expand, since the city and magistracy profited from the women’s fee and fine payments.

Bolognese prostitutes had greater opportunities for agency than moral, religious, and cultural ideologies would suggest. Though they were to be fined for not registering, records reveal that women could persuade the Bollette’s administrators not to punish them if they had been ill or were miserably poor. Registered prostitutes could sue indebted clients in the magistracy’s court for compensation and they faced few legal restrictions when choosing a residence. As will be shown by mapping their residences, registered prostitutes lived throughout the city, and many chose areas beneficial to finding work and maintaining social and familial networks. More refined prostitutes could utilize their relationships with patrician men to keep their names out of the registers, avoid arrest and fines, and demand respect from local residents. Finally, the Bollette’s registers demonstrate that prostitution was a life-long form of work for many women, one that kept them in the city, its streets, and neighbourhoods for decades. Rather than ending their lives suffering alone in syphilitic hospitals, as contemporary broadsheets and songs warned, the evidence demonstrates that some prostitutes ceased to register, and presumably left the trade, by marrying, entering charitable enclosures or domestic service, or by convincing the Bollette’s officials that they had reformed their lives.

This dissertation comprises five chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Chapter One examines developments in civic regulation of prostitution from the mid-thirteenth to the late-fifteenth century. Analysing civic statutes and the statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette, it will argue that over the period the civic government shifted from a moral, exclusionary
approach to the commercial, inclusionary approach that characterized early modern regulation. While in 1250 prostitutes were prohibited from living within the city walls, by 1462 they were resident, regulated, fee-paying workers subject to their own civic magistracy. This chapter identifies the government’s unique economic and political interest in its university as one of the key factors for its shift in approach. The city’s financial health derived in great part from the money brought by foreign university students and the university’s success was a key aspect of civic identity and local pride. In order to keep students in Bologna, but away from respectable girls and wives, the commune increased their access to prostitutes by intervening in and supervising the trade. Regulation in this period was also shaped by the political concerns of particular Bolognese governing bodies, by the changes in the regulation of prostitution in other northern-Italian cities, and by Bologna’s own experiments with regulation.

Chapter Two investigates the sequence of legislative acts adopted during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the temporal focus for the rest of the dissertation. During the period, the civic government continued to regulate prostitution primarily as a commercial issue and to treat prostitutes primarily as workers within the civic economy. By 1519 the civic government had assigned two new streets for prostitutes’ residence in addition to the brothel area in order to improve the access of students and itinerant workers to commercial sex – one between three of the city’s four student colleges and one near the centre of its growing silk industry. The continuing treatment of prostitution as a primarily commercial issue is also evident in the increasing reliance on cash fines rather than physical violence as punishment for noncompliant women, and the eventual abandonment of prostitutes’ restriction to assigned residential zones. By the 1540s the civic government focussed on regulating individual prostitutes through universal annual registration and licensing, rather than on separating, containing, or policing prostitutes as a group.

This chapter also examines Bishop Gabriele Paleotti’s short-lived and ultimately failed attempt in 1567-1568 to radically suppress prostitution along harsher moralistic lines. His failure reveals how ingrained the civic government’s approach to prostitution as an issue of civic economics and social order, rather than an issue of morality, had become by the mid-sixteenth century. The unique local politics of Bologna also played their part Paleotti’s failure, as the civic oligarchy sought to protect its local rights, privileges, and traditions from
the interference of clerical authorities. Ultimately, the Bolognese government proved unwilling to alter radically its approach and rejected Paleotti’s regulatory regime in favour of a return to its commercial system. It fact, this approach expanded in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: women were required to register annually and to purchase licences regularly, but legislators no longer ordered their visual identification through distinguishing signs. They also provided registered women the opportunity to bring their commercial disputes with indebted clients to the Bollette’s tribunal. The continuing expansion of the university’s student body, the foundation of new colleges across the city, and the rapid growth of the silk industry in the period meant that students and workers lived in growing numbers throughout Bologna. In order to provide commercial sex to these men, the government continued to permit women who engaged in commercial sex to live throughout the city, though it occasionally forbade them from living near specific convents and churches that complained about their noise and lack of decorum. Indeed, sumptuary, residential, and spatial restrictions in the period aimed not so much to protect the ‘honest’ and pious from the immorality of prostitution, like they had in the Middle Ages, as to reduce the social disorder of individual women who dressed above their stations or the public nuisance occasionally created by noisy and sometimes violent clients.

Chapter Three will engage in an in-depth analysis of the Ufficio delle Bollette’s bureaucratic records from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in order to discern what legislation was enforced in practice, who enforced it, and how. An analysis of the office’s annual registers and day-to-day bureaucratic records will reveal that by the 1580s, if not earlier, the Bollette’s jurisdiction was focussed entirely on registering and licensing prostitutes, innkeepers, landlords, and foreigners; it no longer enforced sumptuary and spatial restrictions as it had in the fifteenth century. The fact that the Bollette no longer enforced sumptuary and spatial legislation, coupled with the general decline of the enforcement of similar restrictions in contemporary northern-Italian cities, suggests that by the late sixteenth century Bolognese authorities no longer considered the spatial or visual separation of prostitutes pressing or necessary.

The chapter also will argue that the Bollette’s administration shared the civic government’s commercial approach to prostitution and primarily treated prostitutes as fee- and fine-paying workers. It also shows that the staff’s work was shaped by their face-to-face
interactions with the women and this familiarity led them to negotiate on a contextual basis between the dictates of legislation, the requests of individual prostitutes, and their own desires for profit and honour. As will be demonstrated, the officers granted privileges and exemptions to women with wealthy and socially powerful clients. They were also willing to let young or never-registered women go if the women promised to put themselves under the watchful eye of a male family member or a ‘respectable’ woman. The Bollette’s officials also let long-registering prostitutes go unlicensed, though not unregistered, due to poverty or illness. As this chapter will argue, the majority of the women the Bollette registered were the poorest of prostitutes and the officials knew if the women could not work they could not afford to pay their fees. Because their own salaries came directly from fees and fines, the Bollette’s notaries and functionaries could be harsh with those who habitually avoided registration or who were indebted to the office for large sums of money.

How did contemporary Bolognese lay and clerical residents react to the prostitutes living and working in their midst? Chapter Four will show that residents’ treatment of such women was contextually-based on the women’s inclusion in or exclusion from local social and economic networks, their relationships with men, and their public behaviour. Mapping where prostitutes lived demonstrates that they resided throughout the city’s outskirts and about half lived in unofficial red-light districts while the other half lived in streets dominated by ‘honest’ men and women. The chapter shows that prostitutes moved house about as often as their working-poor neighbours and that their moves were not always prompted by the need to escape the gossip of neighbours, but rather by the desire to increase their access to clients and other work, to find better or more affordable lodgings, or to live near friends and family. Indeed, this analysis demonstrates the local support networks that registered prostitutes created and maintained with family, long-term amici, other prostitutes, and neighbours. Civic proclamations and complaints made to the Bollette and the archbishop’s court reveal that lay and clerical residents were sometimes concerned with the specific instances of social and public disorder caused by prostitutes, their clients, and amici, rather than with prostitution per se. In Bologna, wider social attitudes towards prostitutes were generally in step with civic legislation.

Finally, Chapter Five explores the experiences of seven individual women who registered with the Bollette over long periods in order to explore the social, legal, and
individual constraints they faced, the opportunities that were open to them, and how they navigated the former and latter. It demonstrates that they used the options laid open to them by civic legislation, the flexibility and pragmatism of the Bollette’s staff, and their general social acceptance. It argues that these women’s lives were shaped by their social status, their economic circumstances, their age, and their social and familial networks as much as, if not more than, their involvement in the sex trade. For some women, prostitution was a life-long form of work, spanning two or three decades, while for others it was an occasional or short-term way to make ends meet or to raise a dowry. As this chapter will underscore, long-term prostitution did not necessarily impede a woman’s chance of marrying, taking up other forms of work, or leaving the trade altogether. Indeed, Bolognese society accepted the fact that women engaged in prostitution for economic reasons and many people did not necessarily see these acts as leading to spiritual, social, or economic dead ends. There was even room for prostitutes to build and maintain social honour through residential stability, mutual and lasting relationships with other local residents, and public demonstrations of their stable relationships with men. While prostitution was certainly not a social, religious, or cultural ideal, Bolognese society, like Bolognese legislation, understood the economic benefits of prostitution for women. This led to a range of opportunities for prostitutes and perhaps made it a little bit easier for them to navigate the gendered and economic restrictions they faced in early modern northern-Italian society and culture.
Chapter One
The Regulation of Prostitution from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Century

Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries Bolognese authorities struggled with the question of how best to regulate prostitution. The work of prostitution was considered to be sinful since it involved extra-marital sex, promiscuity, and was without the goal of procreation. Yet authorities realized that the trade was inevitable in cities with rapidly increasing populations of men who wanting access to commercial sex and women looking for work. This was especially true for the Bolognese, whose population was expanding steadily with migrant men and women as well as an increasing number of foreign students attending its university. Medieval religious and secular authorities thus approached legal prostitution as a ‘necessary evil’. Licit prostitution could prevent the social disruption caused by men who might seduce or rape ‘honourable’ wives or daughters while at the same time provide civic authorities the opportunity to control it through legislation and even profit from it through fees and fines. Though the business of prostitution was sinful, it was also socially, spiritually, and economically useful.

Late medieval Bolognese civic authorities were thus faced with the problem of how to allow prostitution to operate in the city while ensuring that its sins, immoralities, and public disorders affected as few inhabitants as possible. An analysis of Bologna’s 1250 and 1376 civic statutes and the 1462 statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette (Office of Receipts) demonstrates that over the period civic authorities moved from a moral, exclusionary approach to prostitution to an economic, inclusionary approach based on the marginalization and regulation of the trade within the city. This chapter argues that inclusion, marginalization, and regulation were indivisible. In order to allow licit prostitution Bolognese regulators enacted programs of marginalisation that hinged on the construction of prostitutes and procurers as a particular group and the use of laws that restrained them through residential confinement, geographical limitation, and sumptuary law.

While officials were concerned with protecting ‘honourable’ and pious citizens from the sin, public disorder, and immorality of prostitution, an analysis of the statutes promulgated in late medieval and early modern Bologna reveals that other considerations
also informed regulation. This chapter argues that changes in the political climate of Bologna led to official statements on the regulation of prostitution. For instance, when the merchant- and banker-headed *Popolo* took control of the government from the older magnate families in the mid-thirteenth century, new statutes were promulgated in order to construct and justify the new group’s claim to power. The same was true when an oligarchic government took control from the Popolo in the fourteenth century, and when the *signoria* headed by the Bentivoglio family took power in the fifteenth century. Meant to be wide-ranging statements of the government’s position on all civic matters, the statutes discussed everything from the establishment of government offices to civic order, including murder, theft, and kidnapping. Scholars agree that in the period municipal governments sought to extend their authority over all aspects and all inhabitants of the urban population in order to establish their power.¹ They also argue that civic governments increasingly used the law to assert their power and authority, not just to ensure civic peace. Governments stood to gain a great deal of authority by labelling people as specific groups within the civic body and by codifying rules for them. By deciding who was ‘in,’ who was ‘out,’ and by defending social values and customs, civic authorities established powerful positions through which they could judge society and either reward or punish individuals and groups. Thus when new governments arose in Bologna they promulgated new civic statutes in order to establish their power. Prostitutes were a social and economic part of the urban fabric and thus were included in civic statutes.

A comparison of Bologna’s 1250 and 1376 civic statutes and the Bollette’s 1462 demonstrates that the civic government’s approach to prostitution shifted from an exclusionary to an inclusionary approach that regulated prostitutes as fee-paying urban workers under their own civic magistracy. While in 1250 prostitutes were prohibited from living permanently within the city, by 1376 they were permitted to live in a series of brothels. By 1462, Bolognese authorities had established a permanent municipal brothel where all prostitutes and procurers were required to live and regulated prostitution through the Ufficio delle Bollette. Moreover, the methods they used to marginalise prostitutes and

procurers changed over time, while others remained. For instance, all three statutes are based on the use of residential confinement, geographical restraint, and sumptuary law, but all approached these tactics differently. This chapter argues that these continuities and changes were informed by the economic, political, and social concerns of particular governing bodies, by changes in the regulation of prostitution in other parts of the peninsula, by the past successes and failures of the regulation of the business of prostitution in Bologna itself, or by all three.

An examination of the factors that motivated officials to regulate the business of prostitution and the continuities and changes of this regulation sets the stage for the rest of this dissertation, which focuses on the regulation of the business of prostitution and on the experiences of licensed prostitutes and procurers in sixteenth and seventeenth century Bologna.

1. Economic, Political, and Social Concerns: The Mid-Thirteenth Century

By the thirteenth century Bologna was home to approximately 50,000 people, a thriving centre of merchants and bankers that was renowned across the continent for its university. A self-governing commune under aristocratic control since 1123, in the thirteenth century Bologna saw the rise of the Compagnie delle Arti, a social, economic, and political faction made up of the city’s upper guildsmen. As in many other contemporary peninsular cities, these guildsmen challenged the aristocratic families for dominance over the city, and the two groups aligned themselves between those who supported the emperor, as the aristocrats did, and the pope, as the guildsmen did. In 1228 tensions came to a head when the city’s aristocratic government was weakened by the defeat of its armies by Modena. A revolt ensued, concluding with the installation of a Popolo government led by the upper guildsmen.

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3 Sarah R. Blanshei has argued that factional conflict in thirteenth-century Bologna was “extreme and tightly meshed with the magnate-popolo struggle” and that this conflict encouraged and influenced criminal law enforcement in the city. Sarah R. Blanshei, “Criminal Justice in Medieval Perugia and Bologna,” Law and History Review 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1983): 268-269.
In order to construct and protect their power, the Popolo reformed the governmental structure of the city, establishing a Council of the Popolo and the nine-member Anziani Consoli (Council of Elders), a new executive body whose members were elected by the guilds. These councils ruled the city together with the aid of a foreign Podestà. This restructuring put civic power firmly in the hands of the non-aristocratic factions of Bologna and, as Sarah Rubin Blanshei has recently argued, was characterised by an exclusionary self-identity and exclusionary policies that further undermined aristocratic power. For example, in 1257 the popular government freed the serfs of the contado in order to destabilise the financial strength of the aristocrats, which rested upon their work. In 1271 and 1272 the Popolo directly attacked the nobles by introducing anti-magnate legislation. In 1278 Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII (1275-1313) renounced his claim to the Romagna and formally ceded it to the papacy. Because they had supported the emperor, the magnates were now without a powerful benefactor. They continued to assert their political and social claims to the city, though to little effect, until they were expelled successfully from the city in 1306. In the midst of these political struggles, the Bolognese commune gained control of the Romagna when in 1249 they defeated the Modenese at Fossalta. Emboldened by this victory, in 1250 the Popolo promulgated a set of civic statutes that put into writing their ascendancy over both the region and the local magnates.

In order to assert their authority and ensure civic peace, the Popolo government established regulations and prohibitions for the city’s economic and social groups. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries great waves of immigrant men and women came to the city from the outlying countryside in search of work and opportunity. Bologna’s university also attracted increasing numbers of students from across Europe. These students were of great economic importance to the city, so much so that by 1350 the communal government was fully financing the university. As Paul F. Grendler has explained, the commune began to pay the salaries of law professors in the 1220s and of medical professors by the 1310s.

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4 Blanshei, Politics and Justice, p. 16.
8 Grendler, “The University of Bologna,” p. 475
9 Ibid.
did so in order to guarantee the university’s stability: a permanent, highly respected faculty would always attract students, increasing the city’s prestige and its income. Students and scholars also required goods and services, and this made commercial sex and/or concubinage inevitable. In order to defend civic and social order, the Popolo government thus provided students with sexually-available women whom it regulated and controlled through legislation. Because prostitution posed a threat to the moral fabric of the city, regulators had to ensure that prostitutes and procurers could do as little social and spiritual damage as possible. Thus, the civic statutes of 1250 marginalised prostitutes through residential constraint, geographical limitation, and sumptuary laws.

1.1 - Residential Exclusion

The first element in the commune’s approach to the regulation of prostitution was residential constraint. Citing the need “to cleanse the city of all shame,” it expelled prostitutes from the city and forbade them to return. As the rubric on prostitution in the 1250 statutes began:

In order to remove the shames of wicked and gluttonous women, and in order that the city may be purged of every shameful act from its quarters, in which [the women already] have been banished from the city and its fortifications, we order that public prostitutes and female procurers must not remain within [the boundaries of] the city’s ditches and fortifications.10

Bologna’s second set of walls had been completed in 1070, and construction had begun on a third set ca. 1206 (see Map 1.1). The third set was not completed until 1327, and so the 1250 statutes refer to its partially-constructed sections of walls, fortifications, and ditches (fossata).11 Under the statutes, prostitutes and procurers who resided within the city walls for


Churches and civic political locations:
1) San Nicolo delle Vigne, later San Domenico
2) Santa Maria della Baroncella
3) San Michele Arcangelo del Ponticello
4) Santa Maria dei Carrari
5) Santa Maria dei Bulgari
6) Santi Cosma e Damiano
7) Sant’Andrea degli Ansaldi
8) The curia of Sant’Ambrogio
9) The area five houses up to the curia of Sant’Ambrogio
10) Santa Tecla dei Lambertazzi
11) San Geminiano delle Scuole
12) Santa Maria Rotonda dei Galluzzi
13) San Barbaziano
14) Santa Maria della Chiavica
15) Santi Simone e Giuda Maccagnani
16) San Martino di Porta Nova
17) San Benedetto

Markets:
A) Mercato di Mezzo
B) Piazza di Porta Ravegnana

City walls:

Penultimate city walls, completed in 1070
Ultimate city walls, under construction 1206-1327
more than eight days were to be fined 25 lire.\textsuperscript{12} Landlords, innkeepers, and brothel-keepers who harboured such women for more than eight days were to be fined the same amount, though those who neglected to pay their fines were also threatened with the demolishing of their homes. If the landlord was nowhere to be found or if the prostitute would not reveal where she or he was, all of the prostitutes living in the house were to be placed into servitude.\textsuperscript{13}

City walls acted as barriers between the city, which had legal rights, privileges, and protections, and the countryside, which was without these. Indeed, walls created a separation between the ordered, legally protected space of the city and the lawless countryside, where bandits and other outlaws roamed. By forbidding prostitutes to live within the city walls, the communal government expelled them from the urban community and denied them the legal rights, privileges, and protections that it offered.

Nevertheless, prostitutes and female procurers were permitted in the city for short periods (eight days) so that they could service students and other men. Consequently, it was necessary to provide some protections for the women in order to protect public peace. As the 1250 statutes continued:

[We order] that their complaints about insults uttered against them or even about offences committed against them while going to the lodgings of the students not be taken up [by the officials], with the exception of complaints about stolen goods, or blood or bruises, or about the mutilation of body parts.\textsuperscript{14}

In order to ensure civic peace the commune was willing to hear prostitutes’ complaints about thefts or physical violence committed against them while they were in the city.\textsuperscript{15} However, the statutes also stated that verbal insults and thefts against prostitutes would not be prosecuted, nor would physical attacks that were not overly violent in nature. Verbal

\textsuperscript{12} This information appears on the same page as the quotation cited above. ASB, Comune-Governo 1116-1513, Statuti sec. XIII-1510, vol. V, n. 38, Libro II, Rubric 106, reprinted in Muzzarelli, La legisazione suntuaria, p. 47. For the purposes of comparison, the statutes of 1250 assigned the fine for kidnapping at 300 lire, while it assigned a fine for rape by knights (\textit{miles}) at 500 lire and at 300 lire for an infantryman (\textit{pedes}). Blanshei, "Criminal Justice," pp. 263-264.


\textsuperscript{14} "et quod earum accusationes non recipiantur de iniuria verborum vel etiam de offensionibus que fient eis dum vadunt ad hospitia scolariorum nisi de rebus si que essent ablate vel de sanguine vel de livido vel debilitatione membrorum." Ibid., p. 47.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 47. Although prostitutes were not allowed to reside permanently within the city, they were permitted to enter it as long as they avoided specific civic sites and stayed for no longer than eight days.
insults, such as the shouting of obscenities and derogatory names, however, were not to be prosecuted because such abuse affirmed dominant gender roles that prescribed chastity, silence and obedience to all women and highlighted the fact that prostitutes were none of these. The public dishonouring of prostitutes helped to construct the status of these women as outsiders in the minds of those who heard or witnessed such assaults, thereby strengthening the marginalisation of prostitutes. Because prostitutes were not allowed to reside within the city, in order to protect peace and order the commune granted them some legal protection while they were inside of it. However as ‘dishonest’ women, they had to be left open to acts of public ridicule and dishonour.

1.2 - Geographical Restriction

Customer demand played an important role in the communal government’s decision to allow prostitutes and female procurers access to the city in the 1250 statutes. Though men could have gone outside of the city walls to engage such women, it was easier and, thus, more desirable to access women within the city, especially in its inns and drinking establishments. Allowing prostitutes within the city also allowed them to stay with customers overnight. Yet authorities could not allow the trade to be practiced near the city’s most important religious and civic buildings. For this reason the 1250 statutes include a list of churches and buildings, all of which lay in the ancient Roman heart of the city, within the first set of walls. It included many of Bologna’s oldest churches and their parishes (see Map 1.1). For instance, prostitutes were ordered to avoid Santa Maria dei Bulgari and Santa Tecla, two of the city’s oldest churches. In the same vein, other religious sites were protected under the statutes, such as the church of San Niccolò delle Vigne, where Saint Dominic, founder of the

16 The churches listed were San Niccolò delle Vigne (identified as Sanctus Nicholaus Predicatorum and Minorum Fratrum), Sant’Archangeli (San Michele Arcangelo del Ponticello), Santa Maria dei Bulgari, San Damiano (Santi Cosma e Damiano), Sant’Andrea degli Ansaldi, and San Geminiano delle Scuole. Prostitutes were also forbidden from being near the curia of Sant’Ambrogio, between the house of Bonaventure Talamati up to Santa Tecla dei Lambertazzi (roughly where San Petronio now sits), between the curia of the commune to Santa Tecla (again where San Petronio now sits), and the house of Lord Giuliano de Voscereri. The parishes prohibited to prostitutes were Santa Maria Rotunda dei Galluzzi, Santa Maria de Carrai, Santa Maria della Baroncella, San Barbatiano, and Santa Maria della Chiavica. Finally, prostitutes were forbidden to be near the chapels of Santi Simone e Giuda Maccagnani, San Martino di Porta Nova, and San Benedetto. ASB, Comune-Governo 1116-1513, Statuti sec. XIII-1510, vol. V, n. 38, Libro II, Rubric 106, reprinted in Muzzarelli, La legislazione suntuaria, p. 48. For a fascinating reconstruction of the “class geography” of the city, see Wray, Communities and Crisis, pp. 72-74. For her use of the term “class geography,” see p. 72, n. 43.

Order of Preachers, had been buried in 1227.\textsuperscript{18} If prostitution was to be allowed within the city, it had to be prohibited from the vicinity of the city’s key religious sites in order to stop it from polluting them with sin and immorality.

The statutes also prohibited prostitutes from congregating near the political centre of the city, the \textit{curia} of the commune, located by the church of Sant’Ambrogio. The thirteenth-century Piazza Maggiore, which was located on the western side of today’s San Petronio, was also off limits.\textsuperscript{19} We must also not forget that the men promulgating the statutes were those who ran the commune. As such, the political centre of the city was their domain. Keeping prostitutes and procurers out of it was a self-serving move designed to ensure the honour and decorum of the area and, by extension, of the government itself. Women in general would have been forbidden to be within the vicinities of politically important buildings.\textsuperscript{20} Prostitutes presented a special case because of the disorders and immorality of prostitution. Like the churches noted above, the curia and the Piazza Maggiore were both of great importance to the civic identity of Bologna. In order to preserve that identity prostitution had to be prohibited from their proximity.

The city’s commercial centres, however, were not off-limits to prostitutes and their trade. The Piazza del Comune, which stood two blocks north of Piazza Maggiore, was not prohibited in despite its proximity to the later.\textsuperscript{21} In the thirteenth century the Piazza del Comune was a place where Bolognese people met to trade gossip, to hear news, to argue about politics, to gamble and to listen to storytellers.\textsuperscript{22} Lined with free standing booths “similar to the wooden stalls of country fairs,” the piazza was also a place where people came to buy from various merchants, including fishmongers who had recently received the right to sell fish there from the commune.\textsuperscript{23} In fact, prostitutes and the business of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{19}{Miller, \textit{Renaissance Bologna}, p. 47.}
\footnotetext{20}{Carol Lansing has found evidence that women in Orvieto were prohibited from the Palazzo of the Popolo and the Palazzo of the commune in the early fourteenth because of their gender. See her “Gender and Civic Authority,” p. 40.}
\footnotetext{21}{The Piazza del Comune stood directly north of San Petronio, where today’s Piazza Maggiore is. The Piazza del Comune was under construction in 1250 and though it would later become the seat of political and religious power, at the time it was not. Wray, \textit{Communities and Crisis}, p. 70. Construction on the basilica of San Petronio only began in 1390 and thus it was not yet a key site in the religious or political geography of the city.}
\footnotetext{22}{Fasoli, “Bologna nell’età medievale,” p. 169.}
\footnotetext{23}{Ibid.; Miller, \textit{Renaissance Bologna}, p. 48, n. 151.}
\end{footnotes}
prostitution were not forbidden from the city’s three most important commercial and economic centres, the Piazza del Comune, the piazza of Porta Ravegnana, and the Mercato del Mezzo. The piazza of Porta Ravegnana, where Bologna’s famous ‘Two Towers’ stand, had been the centre of commercial activity since the early Middle Ages. The piazza was the only place where bankers were permitted to conduct their business. Here too fishmongers and butchers as well as cheese, poultry, linen, wool, hay, and straw vendors sold their products. The other main market of Bologna, the Mercato del Mezzo, was located in the heart of the city, where via Calzolerie, via Clavature, via Drapperie, and via Fusari are. As is clear from their names, these were the streets where the commune permitted shoemakers, drapers, and hardware makers to sell their goods. Prostitutes were also allowed access to the many loading docks of the canals which were also busy areas of commercial activity. All of these markets, squares and docks were frequented by men – traders, vendors, and customers as well as students, foreigners, craftsmen, and day labourers, and thus they were logical places for prostitutes to sell sex.

The commune ordered that for a month after the promulgation of the 1250 statutes, the ministrales contratarum (neighbourhood officials) should search out men and women who had prostitutes living in their homes and report them to the Podestà. Such a task paralleled the other work done by the ministrales, such as denouncing thieves, gamblers, and sodomites. Ministrales who neglected to report people who allowed prostitutes to live in their homes were to be fined 25 lire. The statutes further ordered that the rubric on prostitution was to be read out during the next sermon given in every chapter house in the city. Chapter houses were the meeting places for cathedral or secular clergy, men who did not take vows and did not live on the grounds of the church that they served. Civic authorities clearly wanted to ensure that the secular clergy knew the ordinances, would inform the wider community, and would obey them themselves. The authorities may have

24 Wray, Communities and Crisis, p. 68.
25 Ibid., p. 65.
29 Wray, Communities and Crisis, p. 65, n. 19.
also hoped that the secular clergy would help them enforce the regulations by confronting prostitutes, female procurers, and landlords. Indeed, the 1250 statutes did not assign regulation to a specific magistracy. Rather they called for a body of two men, both citizens of Bologna, over the age of 40, and elected by the communal curia, to deal with denunciations of prostitutes and their associates.\textsuperscript{31} The commune thus relied on the ministrales, the secular clergy, neighbours, and the wider community to enforce the regulations.

\textbf{1.3 - Sumptuary Legislation}

Because prostitutes were permitted access to the city, they not only had to be prohibited from certain areas and buildings, but they also had to be visually identifiable \textit{as} prostitutes. In this way, men would not approach ‘honourable’ women for commercial sex, and pious men and women could avoid prostitutes’ pollution in the streets. While travelling through the city prostitutes were required by the statutes to wear cloaks that touched the ground.\textsuperscript{32} The statutes also forbade them to wear certain fashions so that they would not be mistaken for ‘honourable’ women.\textsuperscript{33} In particular, prostitutes could not wear brooches affixed to the collars of their cloaks: the statutes permitted anyone who saw a prostitute wearing one to take her cloak without punishment. In this way, authorities restricted prostitutes from being seen in costly jewelry, reserving such items instead for honourable women. The statutes also restricted the appearance of ‘honourable’ women in order to solidify visual distinctions between women and avoid the chance that men could mix them up. If unmarried women who were not prostitutes were found in capes that touched the ground, they were to be fined 25 lire.\textsuperscript{34} Married women wearing such capes were to have their dowries confiscated and

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. Other information, such as where these officials were to carry out their work or how often they were attend to their business, are not specified in the statutes.  
\textsuperscript{33} Diane Owen Hughes argues that prostitutes, like Jews, had to be identified as outside of the wider community so that they could provide essential, but forbidden, services to Christians. “Like usury, [prostitution] was a despised but essential service that could only be undertaken by someone who had put herself outside the bounds of respectable society.” Diane Owen Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs: Ear-rings, Jews and Franciscan Rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance City,” \textit{Past and Present} 112, no.1 (August 1986): 36-37.  
their husbands were to be fined 50 lire.\textsuperscript{35} There is evidence that the latter law was enforced: Carol Lansing uncovered a trial from 1290 in which a noblewoman was called in front of the Podestà with her husband for wearing a train that touched the ground.\textsuperscript{36} Apparently, the woman had run from her accuser, and he had been unable to catch her while she was wearing it. Upon examining the dress in court, however, the judge found it short enough and the husband was spared the fine.

The visual identification of groups within the commune was a vital part of community construction. Clothing was a visual sign in Bologna’s crowded, loud, and socially diverse streets that identified the wearer’s status and membership – or lack of membership – within society.\textsuperscript{37} One needs only think of the Jews of Europe, who in 1215 were required by the Fourth Lateran Council to wear a specific visual marker on their clothes so that their status as non-Christians would be immediately apparent.\textsuperscript{38} Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli has argued that the visual signs transmitted by clothing were of special concern to thirteenth-century Bolognese legislators because of the city’s rapid population growth. As people went about their day-to-day lives they encountered both friends and strangers, and thus the city was a place where the threat of social, political, and gender disorder was ever present.\textsuperscript{39} Thus, civic governors implemented sumptuary laws to ensure that people could identify nobles from merchants, craftsmen from guildsmen, foreigners from locals, and the honourable from the dishonourable. They also implemented sumptuary laws to curtail the lavish spending of nobles that could bankrupt families and to avoid the civil unrest that could follow the public display of luxury items.\textsuperscript{40} Since the 1250 statutes permitted prostitutes to traverse the streets and markets of Bologna, it was necessary that they wear visual markers so that they would not be mixed up with ‘honourable’ and elite women.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Lansing, “Concubines, Lovers, Prostitutes,” p. 89.
\textsuperscript{38} The form or shape of the sign was not specified. Hughes suggests that though ordered throughout the peninsula, “the sign made little progress in Italian cities” in this period. She states that it was not until the fifteenth century that such signs for Jews were enforced by local authorities. Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs,” p. 17, n. 43 and pp. 17-18.
\textsuperscript{39} Muzzarelli, “‘Noscere ordinem et finem sui status,’” p. 106.
\textsuperscript{40} See Catherine Kovesi, Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).
It was also advantageous for prostitutes to follow the sumptuary legislation. It was, after all, a municipally approved identity, and wearing a cloak proclaimed their status to possible clients. In this sense, sumptuary laws benefitted prostitutes in their work. They also made prostitutes into a specific trade by obliging them, like the practitioners of other trades, to wear a certain outfit that signalled their work. Cobblers, butchers, guildsmen, and the clergy all had outfits that visually proclaimed their work, and thus their place, within the community. In this sense, having a ‘uniform’ may have given prostitutes a sense of inclusion in the city because it signified their status within the Bolognese economy.

Though the statutes of 1250 stated the need to “cleanse the city of all shameful things,” civic authorities clearly wanted prostitution to be available to men. In order to do so, they established legislation based on residential exclusion, geographical restriction, and sumptuary law that managed and restricted the disorders of prostitution. Regulators also offered prostitutes special legal protections, but such protections left the women open to verbal ridicule and dishonouring. This program of toleration and marginalisation continued to be endorsed in the fourteenth century, though, as we shall see, the methods used to achieve these goals would change.

2. Economic, Political, and Social Concerns: The Late Fourteenth Century
After the promulgation of the 1250 civic statutes, the Popolo continued to work to establish its authority over the city by excluding the magnates from political power. In order to increase tax revenues and destabilised the financial base of the aristocratic families, in 1256/1257 the government freed the serfs of the surrounding countryside. In 1271 and 1272 the Popolo introduced anti-magnate legislation designed to further weaken the magnates’ ability to compete for political and social power. When Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II ceded the Romagna to the papacy in 1278 the aristocratic faction was further weakened by its loss of its imperial patron. However, the exchange of power also weakened the communal government because it was forced to submit to papal authority, which minimized its control over the city and its territories.

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During the fourteenth century, Bologna struggled to keep its autonomy in the face of local and foreign signori. The guilds which formed the Popolo’s economic arm became increasingly dominated by specific families and a hereditary oligarchy arose. By 1307, the Bolognese banker Romeo Pepoli had become de facto signore, until he was expelled by the local Gozzadini and their supporters in 1321. In an attempt to quash the continuing factionalism that plagued the city, the city then invited Papal Legate Cardinal Bertrando del Poggetto to assume power. However, like the Pepoli, Poggetto worked to gain singular authority over the city by suppressing its local governing bodies and its autonomy. In 1334 the Bolognese drove Poggetto out of the city and, preferring a local lord to a foreign one, welcomed the Pepoli back. In 1337, Taddeo Pepoli was named “general and perpetual preserver and governor of the Commune, the Popolo, and the territory of Bologna.” Though power was now back in Bolognese hands, this was not to last. Thirteen years after Taddeo’s triumphant re-entry, Pepoli’s heirs sold the city to the Visconti of Milan, who ruled it until 1360 when it was conquered once again for the papacy by Cardinal Egidio Albornoz. Albornoz acted as papal legate until the winter of 1375 when the Bolognese revolted and established a second commune (1376-1401). A new Council of Elders (Anziani) was elected, though the new regime was an oligarchy: rather than being in the hands of the guilds, power was placed in the hands of the elite and representatives from the city’s quarters. As in the thirteenth century, the new government quickly rewrote the civic statutes in order to consolidate its power.

The late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries had been politically tumultuous and unstable. The reinstatement of the commune in 1376 brought increased civic pride and resulted in the reform of the government through the rewriting of the civic statutes, the guild statutes, and a building boom that swept the city in the following decades. In 1390 construction began on a new basilica dedicated to the city’s patron saint, San Petronio. The

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43 For a good overview of politics in the fourteenth century, see Braidi’s Introduction in *Gli statuti del Comune di Bologna degli anni 1352, 1357; 1376, 1389*, ed. Valeria Braidi (Bologna: Deputazione di storia patria per le provincie di Romagna, 2002).
44 Wray, *Communities and Crisis*, pp. 57-58.
basilica was meant to be a civic religious building that rivaled the bishop’s cathedral to its north. Located in the Piazza del Comune, San Petronio joined the city’s chief administrative buildings, the palazzi of the Podestà, the Commune, and the Notaries. The Piazza del Comune, now named the Piazza Maggiore, sat in the centre of the old Roman city, exactly where the four quarters of the city met.\footnote{Ibid.} Both San Petronio and the Piazza Maggiore were statements of the civic pride and autonomy of the Bolognese commune after decades of submission to local magnates, the Visconti, and the papacy. So too were the civic statutes of 1376, which were designed to establish and cement the dominance of the second popolo commune over the city and its inhabitants. It is in this light that the statutes’ provisions on prostitution must be read.

2.1 The Regulation of the Business of Prostitution in the Civic Statutes of 1376

As in the civic statutes of 1250, the rubric on prostitution in the civic statutes of 1376 began with a statement of justification for its work. It declared:

On account of the habitual presence of prostitutes, procurers, and people of bad condition and reputation, who constantly linger in the cities and in honourable and public places, and [who] do many wicked deeds and pursue dishonourable and shameful things so that honourable people and religious men do not dare to pass through those places and run into them, we decree that no public prostitute and no public male or female procurer, nor [man or woman] who is reputed to be a procurer or prostitute, dare or presume to stay, live, or remain in any way, perpetually or at any time of day or night, in the city of Bologna, within or outside of the city walls, except in the places assigned to prostitutes.\footnote{“Cum propter conversationem meretricum et lenonum ac hominum male conditionis et fame qui et que assidue in civitatibus maxime in locis honestis et publicis comorantur multa maleficia comitantur et inhonesta et turpia subsequeuntur exinde ac etiam religiosi et honesti viri per ipsa loca non audeant protransire ad obviandum predictis decernimus quod nulla meretrix publica nullusque leno vel lena publicus vel publica de quo vel qua sit publica vox et fama ipsum seu ipsam esse lenonem lenam vel meretricem audeat vel presumat stare habiitate vel morari quomodolibet perpetuo vel ad tempus de die vel de nocte in civitate Bononie scilicet intra seu infra muros civitatis nisi in locis meretricibus deputatis.” ASB, Statuto comunale di Bologna del 1376, Libro V, rubric 108, “De meretricibus et lenonibus. Rubrica,” transcr. and ed. by Maria Venticelli, electronic edition by Aldo Paolo Palareti. Derived from Venticelli’s doctoral dissertation Metodologie elettroniche per l’edizione di fonti: lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell’anno 1376, Dipartimento di Politica, Istituzioni, Storia, Università degli Studi di Bologna, 1998-1999. Accessed 10 January 2011. http://www.sma.unibo.it/statuti/Bologna1376v0/statutiBolognesi1376.html.}
As in the statutes of 1250, this statement highlighted the moral and spiritual dangers that prostitutes and procurers posed to the broader social body. As agents of shameful and scandalous actions, their pollution had to be contained so that it would not contaminate or inconvenience the honourable and the pious. Like in the statutes of 1250, the 1376 statutes followed the three pronged approach of residential confinement, geographical restriction, and sumptuary law. However, the details of these regulations had changed. Under the new statutes prostitutes and procurers were allowed to reside permanently in specified places inside the city walls rather than outside of them. Moreover, prostitutes and procurers were not prohibited from being in the vicinity of civically and religiously important buildings and areas. Instead, access to the city was limited by time and day – prostitutes were forbidden to travel through the city on any day except Saturday, and only after the noon hour. Clothing restrictions changed as well, as the statutes of 1376 ordered prostitutes and female procurers to wear a bell to visibly and audibly mark them. Finally, regulation in this period included more monetary fines for disobedience than it had in the thirteenth century, demonstrating that one of the reasons the civic authorities continued to tolerate and regulate the business of prostitution was the revenues it brought. Thus, though the regulation of prostitutes changed in detail, the conception of prostitutes as an economic group in need of regulation continued to increase.

2.2 Into the City

By the fourteenth century, prostitutes and procurers were no longer prohibited from living within the city walls. \(^{49}\) After the opening passage noted above, the communal statutes of 1376 went on to state that prostitutes and procurers could reside within the city of Bologna for as long as they wished on the condition that they did so within specifically assigned places ("in locis"). \(^{50}\) Bologna was not the only fourteenth-century southern European city to

\(^{49}\) Lodovico Frati asserts that this was true by 1310. He refers to an order which forbid prostitutes from living near Palazzo Vecchio, Palazzo Nuovo, and in most of parishes, and ordered prostitutes to remain at least 30 pertiche from Piazza Maggiore. However he does not cite his source for this information and thus I take his assertion with caution. Lodovico Frati, La vita privata di Bologna dal secolo XIII al XVII, 2nd ed. (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1928), p. 85, n. 1. Frati further asserts that there were more that six brothels in the parish of San Gemignano and that there were twelve brothels in the parishes of San Prospero and San Giacomo de’Carbonesi. But again, Frati does not cite his source. Ibid., p. 84, n. 2.

allow prostitutes to reside within its walls. Though in 1287 Florentine authorities forbade residence to such women, by 1325 they allowed them to dwell in segregated civic areas. Similarly, fourteenth-century Luccese authorities permitted prostitutes to reside within the city as long as they stayed within a single building that was reserved for them. Though prostitutes were banned from the city of Toulouse in 1201, a municipal brothel existed within its walls by 1398. Scholars agree that during the fourteenth century civic regulators began ‘institutionalising’ or ‘municipalising’ prostitution by creating municipally run brothels and brothel areas within their cities. Most cite the lure of the revenues that could be gained from licensing or fining prostitutes and procurers as a reason for this shift, as well as the civic peace that could be had from the segregation and control of prostitutes. Both of these reasons apply to Bologna in 1376.

The rubric on prostitution in the 1376 statutes does not state exactly where prostitutes and procurers were allowed to live. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli has uncovered an ordinance from 1382 that ordered prostitutes to reside in a brothel called the “castelucio,” but its exact location remains unknown. Bolognese historian Giovanni Nicolò Pasquali Alidosi (1570-ca. 1627) suggests a few other possibilities. In his Instruzione delle cose notabili della città di Bologna (1621) Alidosi asserts that between 1336 and 1443 prostitutes were repeatedly moved back and forth between two distinct areas: the via della Torre dei Castellani, located roughly three blocks south and one block west of Piazza Maggiore, and

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54 Ibid.; Trevor Dean, *Crime in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550* (New York: Longman, 2001), pp. 87-88. Leah Otis argues that the change was a “conscious innovation on the part of certain municipal authorities in [the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries] and can be seen as the logical culmination of the gradual transformation, in the public mind, of prostitution from a private concern or natural phenomenon to a social matter requiring public intervention and supervision.” Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, p. 25.
the Corte dei Bulgari, roughly three blocks south-south of Piazza Maggiore (see Map 1.2). If Alidosi is correct, then prostitutes and procurers lived right in the middle of the area that they had been prohibited from in the thirteenth century (see Map 1.1), but outside of the Piazza Maggiore, the political heart of the city. These areas were still a short walk from the seat of civic government and close to some of the oldest churches and families of Bologna. Why, then, were they assigned for prostitutes’ and procurers’ residence? In the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries the university’s arts and law students heard lectures in the area. In her study on the architecture of premodern Bologna, Naomi Miller states that law classes were given in buildings in the quarter of Porta Procolo, south of the via Farini and east of via d’Azeglio, while arts classes were held in the quarter of Porta Nova, north of the via Farini and west of the via d’Azeglio (see Map 1.2). She notes further that students usually lived in the areas where their subjects were taught. Thus, if prostitutes were ordered to live in the Corte dei Bulgari and the via della Torre dei Castellani, as Alidosi asserts, this put them not only in the centre of the city, but also in the centre of where the students resided. Moreover, the late-fourteenth century saw the rise of the ‘colleges,’ residential complexes that catered to specific groups of students. In 1365, just eleven years before the communal statutes analysed here, the Collegio di Spagna was founded by Cardinal Egidio Albornoz, Bologna’s papal legate.

57 Alidosi states that in 1336 the prostitutes were ordered to live on the via della Torre dei Castellani. He then reports that in 1354 the Anziani ordered that they move to the Corte dei Bulgari. The postribolo was then ordered to move again in 1360, this time to an unnamed street in the parish of San Gemignano. Alidosi then claims that they were moved back to the Corte dei Bulgari in 1419, back to the Torre dei Castellani in 1438 and then back again to the Corte dei Bulgari in 1443. In 1462 the Ufficio delle Bollette took control of the regulation of the business of prostitution and ordered that an enclosed brothel area be built in the via della Torre dei Castellani. Giovanni Nicolò Pasquali Alidosi, *Instruzione delle cose notabili della città di Bologna* (1621), intro. by Mario Fanti (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1999), pp. 50-51. The Torre dei Castellani now forms the north-west corner of today’s Archivio di Stato di Bologna. Indeed, Alidosi refers to it as “where the capella maggiore of the church of S. Giovanni Battista de Celistini is.” Ibid., p. 51. The Corte dei Bulgari gets its name from the church of S. Maria dei Bulgari, which used to be where the Archiginnasio now sits. Because Alidosi was not a contemporary of the events that he reports, caution must be taken when using his work. However, an examination of his statements in parallel with archival records suggests the likelihood of his assertions. Mario Fanti has uncovered a reference to an order that the prostitutes live in the Corte dei Bulgari in 1438 in a Papal Bull of Callixtus III found in the Archivio della Fabbriceria di S. Petronio (c. 112, libro XI, no. 70.) Cited in Mario Fanti, “Sei secoli di storia ai ‘Celestini.’ 1369-1970,” in *San Giovanni Battista dei Celestini in Bologna*, ed. Mario Fanti et al. (Bologna: Tamari 1970), p. 25.

58 Miller, *Renaissance Bologna*, p. 120.
while the Collegio Reggente was founded in 1368 (see Map 1.2, numbers 9 and 10). Both colleges were in the quarters identified by Naomi Miller and both were separated from the Corte dei Bulgari and the via della Torre dei Castellani by a few blocks. Given this information, it is highly likely that these areas were chosen for prostitution because they

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59 Guidicini, Miscellanea storico, pp. 49 nad 54. Collegio Reggente was suppressed in 1408. A third college, the Collegio dei Fieschi (ca. 1364), was established in Bologna in 1364.
gave the students easy access to the trade and its practitioners. Moreover, the fact that these sites were within the centre of the city mattered less since the prostitutes and procurers were to be enclosed in these areas and were allowed to leave their residences only on Saturday afternoons. Civic authorities may have thought this would alleviate the chance that prostitutes and procurers would harass their neighbours or spread their shame to the honourable people living in the vicinity.

Some neighbours had more political and religious power than others. Alidosi reports that when the prostitutes were removed from the Corte dei Bulgari in 1360, it was at the insistence of the friars of San Domenico and the rectors of Santa Maria dei Bulgari and Santa Maria della Chiavica.\(^{60}\) Map 1.2 shows how close the churches were to the Corte. Via della Torre dei Castellani was in close proximity to another recently completed church and monastery, San Giovanni Battista dei Celestini.\(^{61}\) When the prostitutes were ordered to leave the via della Torre dei Castellani in October 1419, Alidosi reports that it was because of the complaints of the Celestini.\(^{62}\) Noise and distraction were cited when the workshop of the Basilica of San Petronio and the administrators of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Morte petitioned the governor of Bologna to prohibit prostitutes from living in proximity to them in 1455.\(^{63}\) These neighbours may have been upset by the fact that they had to live in close proximity to prostitutes, whose work was not only morally troubling but also generated noise, violence, and crime. The work of prostitution could be very loud, especially the general din that accompanied their drinking and carousing with clients.\(^{64}\) For these reasons prostitutes were sometimes unwanted neighbours, and this may have led to the movement of the residential area. Whatever the case, the Corte dei Bulgari and the via della Torre dei Castellani were themselves just two blocks away from each other. Even if, as Alidosi asserts, the residential area for prostitutes was moved from one of these locations to the other, the city was intent that it never leave the immediate area.

The 1376 civic statutes assigned tougher penalties for recusant prostitutes and procurers than had the 1250 statutes. For instance, any prostitute found residing outside of

\(^{60}\) Alidosi, *Instructione delle cose notabili*, p. 50. What the exact complaints that they made were are unknown.


\(^{63}\) Fanti, “Sei secoli,” p. 25.

\(^{64}\) Of course, not all prostitution was conducted this way – some of it was probably very quiet, happening quickly in back alleys or rooms.
the prescribed area – whether in the city or outside of its walls – was to be ritually shamed by being whipped through the streets, by having her head completely shaved in order to make her shame clearly visible, and finally by being bound in chains at the crossroads of two streets where she was to stay for an entire day. This penalty was much harsher than the one that appeared in the statutes of 1250 that prescribed a fine of 25 lire to prostitutes found living within the city. Similarly, the 1376 statutes ordered that male procurers discovered living outside of the prescribed area were to be fined 100 lire and were to be banned from procuring if they neglected to pay their fine. Female procurers were to be whipped if they were found living outside of the assigned area, have their noses cut off if they were discovered doing so a second time, and finally be burnt alive on the third occasion. The statutes also stipulated that anyone who allowed prostitutes or procurers to live with them outside of the prescribed area was to be fined 100 lire and have her or his house confiscated. In comparison, the 1250 statutes had called for a fine of only 25 lire for such offenders, and threatened to demolish the house only if the landlord did not pay the fine.

Thus being allowed to live within the city came at a price; if prostitutes and procurers were to be allowed in, they had to be carefully contained, and when that failed, they had to be made examples of through fines and public rituals designed to shame them. The extent to which the communal government stood to benefit from these increased fines is clear. Higher fines meant more money for the government; prostitutes and procurers who were forced into the designated residential area made the collection of such fines easier. Thus regulators were motivated not only by the need to confine prostitutes and procurers because they were allowed to reside in the city, but also because the city stood to profit from those who disobeyed its orders.

65 ASB, Statuto comunale di Bologna del 1376, Libro V, rubric 108, transcribed and edited by Venticelli, electronic edition by Palareti. The statutes does not specify the route of the procession, where the woman was to have her head shaved, nor the crossroads at which she was to be enchained.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
2.3 Geographic and Temporal Limitations

The statutes of 1250 had allowed prostitutes and procurers to move throughout the city with a few exceptions. In contrast, the 1376 statutes forbade prostitutes access to the city except on Saturdays after the noon hour.\(^{71}\) Clearly, if prostitutes were going to be tolerated within the city, then their presence had to be controlled and minimized. Indeed, it had to seem as if they were not really there, and this was to be accomplished by restricting their access to the city and its inhabitants. The fine for prostitutes and procurers who left their residential area at a time and day other than Saturday afternoon was 40 soldi.\(^{72}\) In comparison to the other fines, this is almost an insignificant amount. We must thus consider what regulators were trying to accomplish when they set this fine. It appears that the officials knew that this rule would be disobeyed and thus they set a price on it which they could conceivably collect and thus profit from. Though the statutes of 1376 cited the need to contain the pollution that prostitutes left in their wake, it was also willing to allow prostitutes to spread it – for a price. How often this rule was enforced and the fine was paid is unknown. However the statutes were clearly opening up an avenue by which the city could profit from the business of prostitution and its regulation.

2.4 Changes in Sumptuary Law

The third element in the city’s fourteenth-century regulations was sumptuary law. These laws, however, were different from the earlier ones. In order to ensure that prostitutes would not be mistaken for honest women, the statutes of 1376 prohibited prostitutes and female procurers from wearing dresses or capes that touched the ground.\(^{73}\) Prostitutes and female procurers were also ordered to wear bells on their heads. The inclusion of the bell is significant as it married both sight and sound to clearly distinguish these women from other,

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\(^{71}\) ASB, *Statuto comunale di Bologna del 1376*, Libro V, rubric 108, transcribed and edited by Venticelli, electronic edition by Palareti. A similar law existed in Florence: a 1355 statutes of the Podestà forbid prostitutes from entering the city except on Mondays or Saturdays. Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 277. This was also the case in Ferrara, where a law of 1471 forbid prostitutes from leaving their residences except on Saturdays and only to go to the market near the city’s cathedral. Dianne Yvonne Ghirardo, “The Topography of Prostitution in Renaissance Ferrara,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no.4 (2001): 402. Muzzarelli has pointed out that Saturdays were significant because they were the days when fairs were held in Bologna. Muzzarelli, “La disciplina delle apparenze,” pp. 767-768.


\(^{73}\) Ibid.
honourable ones. Historian Diane Owen Hughes has asserted that the use of bells in sumptuary law was particularly degrading because they were traditionally associated with lepers who wore them to alert healthy people of their approach.\footnote{Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs,” p. 25.} The 1376 statutes ordered that anyone who discovered a prostitute or female procurer without a bell or in a dress or cape that touched the ground was permitted to strike her as long as there was no “effusion of blood” (“sine sanguinis efusione”) and it did not kill her.\footnote{ASB, *Statuto comunale di Bologna del 1376*, Libro V, rubric 108, transcribed and edited by Venticelli, electronic edition by Palareti.}

The use of visual and auditory signifiers to mark out members of the population spread across the Italian peninsula in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By 1384 prostitutes in Florence also had to wear bells and were ordered to wear high-heeled shoes and gloves, while prostitutes in Pisa had to wear a bright yellow band around their heads.\footnote{On Florence see Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 277. On Pisa see Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs,” p. 25.}

It was not just prostitutes who were ordered to wear such markers in the period. Jewish people were ordered to do so also. For instance, in 1322 Jews who lived in Pisa were ordered to wear a badge made out of red cloth in the shape of an ‘O’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 18.} In 1360 Jewish men (with the exception of trained doctors) in Rome were required to wear a red tabard and Jewish women were required to wear a red overskirt.\footnote{Ibid.} In 1432 Perugian Jewish men were ordered sew a yellow ‘O’ onto their clothing, and Jewish women were ordered to wear earrings.\footnote{Ibid., p. 23.} Like prostitutes, Jews were a group who could never be fully integrated into Christian society even though they provided it with an essential service, in their case in the form of loans and other financial business transactions. As a result, civic authorities marginalized Jews and ordered them to be marked as such. Thus, the meaning behind the sumptuary laws imposed on prostitutes had changed slightly by the fourteenth century. The use of the bell was a statement of the difference between prostitutes and female procurers and the rest of society, and marked their status more strongly than it had in the thirteenth century. The concern now was not just that prostitutes and procurers not be mistaken for honest women, but that they be identified as categorically different from the rest of the city’s

\footnote{Hughes argues that earrings were linked to prostitution in the eyes of Christian preachers and legislators, and thus making Jewish women wear them was meant to associate them with this dishonourable group. Ibid., pp. 24-25.}
inhabitants. However, the intent of the thirteenth-century sumptuary provisions – to make it visually clear that prostitutes were a distinct group – had not changed.

An analysis of the 1376 statutes of Bologna demonstrates a shift in the regulation of prostitution. Although authorities still ordered residential confinement, geographical restriction, and sumptuary laws, these elements were to be accomplished through different means than in the thirteenth century. Now, regulations allowed prostitutes and procurers to live within the city walls instead of forcing them to live outside of them. This meant, however, that prostitutes and procurers had to live in segregated areas and pay heavier fines if they disobeyed residential regulations. Similarly, in the 1376 statutes prostitutes and procurers were no longer prohibited from being near to specific areas or buildings, but rather from traversing the city at specific times and on specific days: only on Saturdays and only during the afternoon. Though sumptuary laws were expanded to include the requirement of the bell, their goal was still to distinguish prostitutes from other women. Finally, an analysis of the 1376 statutes demonstrates that civic regulation was motivated by the possibility of profit. These approaches continued to dominate fifteenth-century regulation even as the methods used to enforce regulation changed yet again.

3. The Regulation of the Business of Prostitution in the Mid-Fifteenth Century

The desire for local political autonomy that led to the establishment of Bologna’s second commune in 1376 continued throughout the fifteenth century. It also merged with the religious climate of the city, as shown by the expansion of the civic religious cult. Already begun at the time of the building of San Petronio in 1390, Bologna experienced a flowering of new lay confraternities, membership in which rose continually throughout the century.80 The work of the confraternities was further encouraged by Bishop Niccolò Albergati (1417-1443), who created four new groups and reformed six others during his episcopate.81 Albergati was a strong supporter of the civic religious cult of Bologna, establishing shrines, public plays, and regular processions that centred on the city’s religious traditions.82

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80 On confraternities in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Bologna, see Terpstra, Lay Confraternities.
81 Terpstra, Lay Confraternities, p. 19.
82 Ibid., p. 20.
mid-fifteenth century both the political and religious climates of Bologna were intensely devoted to the local over the external and the desire to ensure local autonomy.

Yet, civic pride could not quell the internal factionalism that plagued Bologna, nor the external threat from the Visconti and the papacy. During the early fifteenth century the city was alternately subjected to local signories led by the Zambeccari, the Bentivoglio, and the Canetoli, and to rule by either the Visconti or the papacy. It was not until Sante I Bentivoglio became signore of Bologna in the mid-1440s that the city finally experienced some peace. In 1447 Sante used his relationship with the recently elected Pope Nicholas V to negotiate a concordat under which Bologna secured its local powers and privileges in exchange for submission to the papacy. Under the agreement, the city’s main executive, the Sedici Riformatori dello stato di libertà, and a papal legate would work together on all issues, and no decisions would be made without the consent of the other. For example, the agreement of the two was needed in order to elect government officials and to decide how communal revenues should be spent. The concordat turned Bologna into what scholars have since referred to as a “republic by contract” or a system of “negotiated absolutism”: the city’s oligarchy continued to negotiate and gain greater privileges from the papacy throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Sante used his marriage to Ginevra Sforza in 1454 to secure peace with Milan and he used his relationship with Cosimo II de’Medici to cement an alliance with Florence. This period also saw internal peace in the city after the patriarchs of two of the Bentivoglio’s rival families, the Canetoli and Ghisilieri, were beheaded and hanged in 1448 and 1451. The Peace of Lodi, signed between Milan, Naples, and Florence in 1454, removed the external support of the Bentivoglio’s

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83 For an account of Bologna’s politics between 1420 and 1450, see Terpstra, Lay Confraternities, pp. 31-34.
other rival families, the Pepoli, Fantuzzi, Zambeccari, and Vizzani. This period of gradually increasing political stability and peace would, as we shall see, affect the city’s regulation of the business of prostitution.

3.1 The Ufficio delle Bollette

During this period the regulation of prostitution was revisited and revised. The most notable of these changes was the assumption of regulation by a specific civic office, the Ufficio delle Bollette (the Office of Receipts). In operation from at least the late-fourteenth century, the *Buletus presentationum forensium*, as the Ufficio delle Bollette was then known, was responsible for the regulation of those who could pose a threat to the city: foreigners and spies. Under the 1376 civic statutes, no foreigner was to enter or leave the city without the approval of the Bollette. Upon their arrival all foreigners were to be directed to the office by the captains of the city’s gates and once at the office they were to be interviewed in order to judge their characters and their reasons for seeking entrance. With the exception of officials from other cities, men who came to study at the university, mendicants, pilgrims, and hermits, all foreigners were to be processed by the Bollette. The 1376 statutes further ordered the Bollette to monitor all letters coming into and going out of the city and to keep records of all of the inns and taverns in the city so that they could track foreigners and collect financial ‘guarantees’ from owners every trimester. The office was to be staffed by one official and two notaries, all of whom had to be honourable citizens of Bologna and over the age of 30. Positions were limited to a term of six months and the official was forbidden from holding another civic office.

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87 Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, p. 34.
88 ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri*, Scritture Diverse b. 1, “Statuti.” As the document is undated except for an authentication dated 1 March 1462 (which is written in a different hand than the rest of the statutes) it is possible that the statutes were written before 1462.
The Bollette’s mandate was to protect the city from outside threats by denying certain people access to it and to monitor all foreigners while they were in the city. Given this latter work, it is not surprising that the regulation of prostitutes fell to the magistracy. No statement of why the Bollette assumed the regulation of prostitution appears in its 1462 statutes. Instead, they merge the two rubrics on the Bollette and on prostitution that appeared in the 1376 civic statutes.\(^92\) Split into two main sections, the first part of the 1462 statutes repeats the rubric on the Bollette almost word-for-word, making a few additions that clarify and extend its original statements.\(^93\) The second part restates the orders given in the rubric on prostitution contained in the 1376 civic statute and, though the discussion is significantly expanded, follows the framework of the rubric contained in the 1376 statutes. It begins by justifying the regulation of prostitutes, then states its orders for the residential containment and the geographical limitation of prostitutes and procurers, followed by a discussion of sumptuary laws and instructions on how to judge whether a man or a woman is a prostitute or a procurer.\(^94\) The similarity of the 1376 civic statutes and the Bollette’s 1462 statutes demonstrates the civic government’s continuing approach to regulation. Yet its approach was now to treat them as fee-paying workers within the city.

Bologna was not the only northern-Italian city to assign the regulation of prostitution to a specific civic magistracy in the fifteenth century. Sixty years earlier Florence had established the *Ufficiali dell’Onestà* (the Office of Decency) and assigned to it the regulation of prostitution.\(^95\) By 1450 Ferrarese civic authorities had set up an Ufficio delle Bollette of

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\(^{92}\) Though the statutes of 1376 contains a lengthy rubric on the Bollette’s work, no reference is made to prostitution. The rubric on prostitution contained in the same statutes similarly does not refer to the Bollette.

\(^{93}\) The first rubric contained in the statutes is entitled “De electione officialium presentatium et bulectarum civitatis Bononie et eorum officio exercendo” and appears on fols. 1r-5r. It includes orders that the first and last names of all foreigners entering the city and the locations in which they were going to stay while visiting had to be recorded for the benefit of the “governors” of the city. ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri*, Scritture Diverse busta 1, “Statuti,” fol. 1r. The 1462 statutes also assigned penalties for captains of the city gates who lied to the Bollette’s officials. See Ibid., fol. 3r. Neither of these orders appear in the 1376 discussion of the Bollette.

\(^{94}\) The second rubric of the statutes of 1462, entitled “De lupenarii meretricibus et lenonibus,” appears on fols. 5r-10v.

their own and, like the institution in Bologna, this one was responsible for regulating prostitution. Historians agree that in the fifteenth century there was a renewed effort to control – or at least to appear to control – prostitutes. Some argue that the need to limit civic violence motivated such efforts, while others contend that the desire to encourage procreation and to discourage sodomy did, while still others highlight the influence of Franciscan preaching, especially that of San Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444). None of these specific concerns are identified in the Bolognese Bollette’s 1462 statutes. Rather, the discussion is almost the same as the one that appears in the rubric on prostitution in the civic statutes of 1376. The 1462 passage reads:

On account of the habitual presence of prostitutes and procurers and people of bad condition and reputation who constantly stay or try to stay in the city of Bologna, both in honourable places and in public, for the shameful reproach and the disgrace and abuse of honest people, and who commit many wicked deeds and pursue dishonest and shameful things so that honourable and pious people do not dare to pass through those places in case they run into them, we decree that no public prostitute who wears the cloak or any other mark of the public prostitute, or who lives in the confines of the brothel, or about whom it is publically known that she makes profit from her body in the said confines, nor any male or female procurer about whom it is publically reputed that he or she is such, should dare or presume to stay, live, or remain in perpetuity anywhere or at any time of day or night in the city of Bologna as her continuous lodging, either inside or outside the walls of the city of Bologna, except within the said brothel area assigned to the prostitutes.


On Ferrara’s Ufficio delle Bollette see Ghirardo, “The Topography of Prostitution.”


“Cum propter conversationem meretricum et lenonum ac hominum male conditionis et fame qui et que assidue in civitate Bononie et maxime in locis honestis et publicis comorantur seu comorari conantur in opprobrium dedecore et verrorum et vptuperationem honestarum personarum multa maleficia comitantur et inhonesta et turpia subsequantur exinde ac etiam honesti et religiosi viri et honeste et religiose persone per ipsa loca non audeant pertransire ad obviam et predictis decernimus quod nulla meretrix publica qualibet consuevit facere mantellum aut aliud insigne meretricis publica vel quae inter circumstantias lupanaris habitare et de ea sit publica vox et fama quod in dictis circumstantiis faciat questum sui corporis nullusque leno seu lena publicus de quo vel qua sit publica vox et fama ipsum seu ipsum eas tale lenonem vel lenam vel meretricem audeat vel presumat stare habitare vel morari quomodo libet perpetuo vel ad tempus de die vel de nocte in civitate Bononie per suam continuam habitationem intra seu infra infra muros civitatis Bononie nisi in lupanari dicti meretricibus deputatis.” ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri*, Scrutture Diverse, busta 1, “Statuti,” [np] fol. 5r. Though the original Latin uses the word *lupanari*, I have translated this as ‘brothel area’ rather than brothel because of the confines outlined in the statutes itself. For the 1376 statutes:
Like the 1376 communal statutes, the Bollette’s statutes stated that prostitutes and procurers were a threat to the honourable people of the city because they inconvenienced them with their shameful and wicked acts. Prostitutes and prostitution were a civic issue of public disorder and thus had to be contained. As with earlier regulations, the Bollette’s statutes followed the three pronged approach of residential confinement, geographic limitation, and sumptuary law. However, unlike in previous centuries, these statutes called for the construction of a walled-in brothel area and the creation of a bureaucratic system, both of which were designed to give the Bollette complete control over the business of prostitution by identifying, containing, and monitoring everyone who worked in it.  

3.2 Identification and Residential Confinement

The first step in the Ufficio delle Bollette’s system of regulation was to identify all existing prostitutes, including those who lived outside of brothels and thus wore the mark of the public prostitute, as well as those who lived within the existing brothels and thus were not obliged to wear it. Once identified, the women were to be enclosed in a brothel area that the statutes ordered to be built in the area of the via della Torre dei Castellani. The extreme borders of the brothel area were via San Mamolo (today’s via Val d’Aposa) to the east, via de Fusari to the west, vicolo Spirito Santo and the piazza of the Celestini to the south, and via Marescalchi to the north (see Map 1.3). A free-standing wall was to be built on the south side, between the brothel area and the homes of the frati of the Celestini, and any window or door built into the wall would bring a fine of 40 lire. The statutes further ordered that all of the existing windows and doors that looked onto the surrounding streets had to be filled in, leaving only one exit that opened onto the street between the brothel area and the church of the Celestini (today’s vicolo Spirito Santo). None of the buildings that made up the exterior of the brothel area could touch the inns on the via San Mamolo or the

99 The statutes does not order the officials to keep track of the men who entered the brothel area to hire the prostitutes and procurers inside, nor the men and women who came to visit the prostitutes and procurers.

100 ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri. Scritture Diverse busta 1, “Statuti,” [np] fol. 5r.

101 Ibid., fol. 5r-v.

102 Ibid., fol. 6r-v.
church of the Celestini – a space of ten feet had to separate them. All fines for disobeying these orders were to be halved between the Ufficio delle Bollette and the workshop of the civic basilica, San Petronio.

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103 Ibid., fol. 5v.
104 Ibid., fol. 6r.
Necessary to the success of this system was the identification and confinement of all prostitutes and procurers. Some may have already lived at the location of the proposed brothel area; the 1462 statutes refer to a bathhouse that was already located on the spot. Other women may have been content to be enclosed in the brothel, while others surely were not. This was particularly true because the Ufficio’s statutes attempted to make all prostitutes into “brothel prostitutes,” thereby limiting women’s ability to engage in the trade in various ways and to varying extents. No longer could there be occasional or temporary prostitution; no longer could women choose where they would practice.\textsuperscript{105} Indeed, the statutes of 1462 required \textit{all} prostitutes be enclosed in this new district. In order to accomplish this, a system of accusation and judgement to deal with women who had been accused of prostitution but did not live within the brothel area was to be established. Once an accusation was made by a member of the public, to prove herself innocent a woman had to provide five character witnesses (raised from the four required by the 1376 statutes) from neighbours who were of good repute and conduct.\textsuperscript{106} If the accused was found guilty, the statutes instructed that she be held in Bologna’s prison for ten days, fined 50 lire, and enclosed in the brothel area.\textsuperscript{107} The statutes assigned a monetary fine, as opposed to the ritual shaming of hair shaving and procession through the city ordered in the 1376 statutes, because it could be easily collected. There was, after all, only one door to the brothel area and it was to be guarded by a scribe of the Bollette. Prostitutes who were found outside of the brothel area a second time, however, were to undergo the ritual shaming of being led through the city while being whipped and then forced into the brothel area.\textsuperscript{108} Married women who were caught prostituting themselves were to be ritually shamed for their first offence, since they could not be put into the brothel area. If caught a second time they were to be permanently banished from the city.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{105} For instance, the statutes used the term ‘cassarenghe’ to refer to women who were reputed to be prostitutes but who do not wear the sign of the prostitute \textit{(signum meretricis)}. See ibid., fol. 6v. It is possible that these were prostitutes who brought clients home rather than engage in work in streets, inns, or brothels. Ferrara’s Ufficio delle Bollette used a variant of the word cassarenghe – “cassalenga” – which Dianne Ghirardo translates it as “house prostitute.” See her “The Topography of Prostitution,” p. 407.


\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
In order to gain complete control over the business of prostitution, the Bollette’s statutes also ordered that all female and male procurers be identified and enclosed within the brothel area. Like prostitutes, procurers were subject to the system of public accusation and judgement based on the testimonies of five character witnesses. The fines ordered for procurers living and working outside of the brothel area were less than for prostitutes who lived and practiced outside of it – men were to be fined 25 lire and spend ten days in prison, and women were to be fined ten lire.\footnote{Ibid., fol. 7r.} For their second offence, female procurers were to be fined 25 lire, and if they were caught a third time, they were to have their noses amputated and be expelled from the city.\footnote{Ibid.}

According to the statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette no deals, sales, or business was to go on outside of the brothel area. This was true with one exception: the Bollette was prepared to allow men to entertain prostitutes on their own properties as long as they had permission to do so. Permission could be had from either the officials of the Bollette or the Podestà himself, and could only be granted for three days. As the 1462 statutes states:

> And we decree that no one else, whether a citizen or a foreigner, dare to entertain, keep, or permit prostitutes or male or female procurers wearing the visible sign or who are publically known in the city of Bologna as such to remain outside of the aforesaid boundaries except within the aforesaid district of said brothel, especially in those places and neighbourhoods where it is customary for pious persons to live, unless he is permitted to do so on his own properties (which are either owned, rented, or occupied by himself, or on properties which he himself lives) outside of the aforesaid brothel and after he has obtained a statement, in writing, that he may do so on the authority of the aforesaid officials or the Lord Podestà of Bologna, for the duration of three days at most. If someone should act against this, he shall incur the punishment of 25 Bolognese lire which must be paid both to the aforesaid officials and the aforesaid Lord Podestà of Bologna.\footnote{“Et quod nullus alius tam civis quam forensis extra terminos supra dictos et nisi in locis supradictis dicti lupanaris audeat receptare, retinere seu morari permettere nisi modo quo in permissum est in suis domibus vel a se possessis seu conductis vel detemptis vel in quibus ipse habitaret existentibus extra dictum lupanar tales meretrices, lenones vel lenas portantes insignia vel de quibus esset publica vox et fama in Civitate Bononiae maxime in locis et in contrata ubi consuevit pius habitate et post restationem in scriptis sibi fiendum per praeviditos officiales aut per Dominum Podestatem Bononiae per tres dies ad plus. Et si quis contra fecerit penam incidat ipso juris vigintiquinquem librae Bononiae et auferenda tam per dictos officiales quam per dictum Dominum Podestatem Bononiae.” Ibid.}

Thus, as long as they had a written statement of approval from the officials of the Bollette or the Podestà and followed the sumptuary laws outlined in the statutes, prostitutes could leave
the brothel area for a maximum of three days. Though the cost of acquiring such approval is not mentioned, it is clear that this clause was meant to benefit the wealthy and powerful men of Bologna. Who else could approach the Podestà for such a licence or gain the approval of the officials? Yet the Bollette made provisions for other prostitutes to leave the brothel area. As the statutes state:

It is permitted for the said public prostitutes to go [out] for the purpose of eating drinking and lodging with a client, in whatever place in the city of Bologna at day or night, provided that she not linger in prohibited places, except insofar as is necessary to her for food or drink or for sleeping, with the one client. Such that in that place or any other public place she does not prostitute [herself]. And so that the foresaid prostitution will be controlled, we wish that they go with license in the writings of the said officials.  

A further allowance was made for prostitutes who wished to leave the brothel area in order to engage in work:

And if they want to prostitute themselves in a private place, one soldi will be paid to the writing notary for a licence, under punishment of 20 soldi on whatever occasion this is violated by either the prostitute or the notary.

Since there was to be only one entrance and exit to the brothel, prostitutes who wished to leave had to gain approval from the notary at the door. Though the cost of leaving the brothel area was very low, it would bring revenue to the Bollette and the city. The issuing of written statements for prostitutes and procurers who wished to leave the brothel area also set up a system that enabled the Ufficio even further power over the business of prostitution for by doing so it was able to keep track of their movements. Such an approach echoes the traditional work that the Bollette had done with foreigners in the fourteenth century and clearly informed the way the Bollette handled the regulation of prostitutes. The statutes of 1462 sought to give the officials of the Ufficio delle Bollette complete control over the business of prostitution by ensuring that they knew where all prostitutes and procurers lived,

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113 “Liceat tamquam dictis meretricibus publica ire ad comedendum, bibendum et hospitandum cum quocumque eas conducere volentes in quocumque loco Civitatis Bononiae de nocte et de die dummodo moram non trahant in locis prohibitis nisi quatenus esset sibi necessae pro cibo et potu et pro dormiendo cum persona sola eam conducive. Ita quod ibidem se allis publicis non prostituat. Et ut praeda prostitutioni fiat moderate volumus quod cum licentia vacat in scriptis dictorum officialium.” Ibid.

114 “Et hoc si voluerint in loco secreto se prostitui per qua licentia solvatur solidus unus notario scribenti sub pena solidorum viginti per qualibet vice qua contrafactum fuerit tam per ipsam meretricem quam per ipsum notarium.” Ibid.

115 The Ufficio delle Bollette retained the regulation and surveillance of foreigners in the statutes of 1462.
that they had the ability to either allow or deny them access to the city, and that they had the power to define who was and was not a prostitute or procurer.

3.3 Sumptuary Law

The second element in the Ufficio delle Bollette’s regulation of prostitution was, as in earlier centuries, the use of sumptuary law. The 1462 statutes ordered prostitutes and female procurers to wear two white linen sashes over their clothing with black roses on them, one rose at the left shoulder and one over the breast. Also present was the bell that had been introduced in the fourteenth century, now made of either gold, silver, or bronze.\(^{116}\) If a prostitute was seen walking or riding in a carriage outside of the brothel area without these identifiers, she was to be fined twenty soldi, a penalty that was much less harsh than the physical violence recommended in the 1376 statutes.\(^{117}\) Fines for being caught without the prescribed bell or sash were to be split equally between the Ufficio delle Bollette and the Treasury of Bologna.

Unlike in earlier centuries, the government now stood to profit from prostitutes and procurers who disobeyed the sumptuary laws. Fines for women caught without the prescribed bell or sash were to be split equally between the Ufficio delle Bollette and the Treasury of Bologna.\(^{118}\) In fact, the 1462 statutes ordered more monetary fines than either of the earlier statutes. Prostitutes and procurers were to be fined if they were found living outside of the brothel area as well as if they disobeyed the sumptuary laws. As mentioned earlier, the Bollette also gained revenue by charging prostitutes and procurers to leave the brothel area. Part of the reason for this was the cost of running the brothel area, paying officials and notaries, and buying notarial supplies. The city itself also stood to benefit from these payments. Fines collected from women caught living outside of the brothel area were to be divided between the Bollette and the civic treasury, as were those from women caught without the prescribed bell or sash.\(^ {119}\) Though the statutes do not specify where the money gained from selling licences to women and men who wanted to leave the brothel area should go, it is highly likely that part of it went to the city treasury as well. Thus, in the fifteenth

\(^{116}\) Ibid., fols. 8v-9r.
\(^{117}\) Ibid., fol. 9r. Officials who failed to fine prostitutes for this were to be charged 25 lire themselves.
\(^{118}\) Ibid.
\(^ {119}\) Ibid., fols. 7v and 9r, respectively.
century the city began to profit from the regulation of the business of prostitution in a way that it had not before, and this encouraged the continuation of regulation.

3.4 Geographical Restrictions

Prostitutes and procurers were restricted from leaving the brothel area except with the permission of the Bollette’s officials and only if they wore the distinguishing sign of the sash and bell. A further restriction stopped them from leaving the brothel area on important feast days. The 1462 statutes commanded that no resident of the brothel area was to be given access to the city during Easter, the feasts of the Apostles, nor on any religiously significant day after the Mass of Saint Peter (29 June). \[120\] Nor were they allowed to go near the main religious buildings of Bologna on their feast days: the churches of San Pietro Maggiore, San Petronio, San Domenico, San Francesco, San Giacomo, and the monasteries and convents of Sant’Agostino, San Martino dell’Aposa, Santo Stefano, San Giovanni in Monte, and Santa Maria in Monte (see Map 1.3). The churches that had been forbidden to prostitutes and procurers in the 1250 communal statutes were prohibited because of their connections to the patrician families of the thirteenth-century. \[121\] The churches, convents, and monasteries prohibited in the Bollette’s 1462 statutes, on the other hand, were those that were the most powerful and the most important to Bologna’s civic identity. Included were San Petronio, the civic basilica, San Pietro Maggiore, the cathedral, San Francesco, and San Domenico, the resting place of Saint Dominic. Santo Stefano had ancient roots in the city, dating back to the fifth century, and it housed the Veil of the Blessed Virgin. \[122\] Santa Maria in Monte was the city’s main Marian shrine. \[123\] Sant’Agostino (also known as Santa Maria Maddalena delle Repentite) was a charitable institution for repentant prostitutes. \[124\] It was claimed that San Petronio had himself founded San Martino dell’Aposa and San Giovanni in Monte in the fifth century. \[125\] Concerns over religious pollution were key: prostitutes and procurers were not to pollute these special religious sites on their most spiritually significant days, nor

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\[120\] All of the following restrictions appear in ibid., fol. 9r.
\[121\] The statutes of 1376 did not include a list of prohibited buildings.
\[122\] Terpstra, Lay Confraternities, p. 23.
\[123\] Ibid., p. 24.
\[124\] Marcello Fini states that Sant’Agostino was called Santa Maria delle Repentite because it was often confused with Sant’Agostino delle Converte (located on Strada Maggiore). Marcello Fini, Bologna sacra. Tutte le chiese in due millenni di storia (Bologna: Pendragon, 2007), p. 15.
\[125\] Ibid., pp. 159 and 88 respectively.
take away from the spiritual experiences of those worshipping on solemn days. So too was the integrity of Bologna’s civic religious cult, which prostitutes could taint and jeopardise through their presence.

As opposed to the restrictions of the thirteenth-century statutes, which forbade prostitutes and procurers from being near these churches at *any* time of the year, the fifteenth-century statutes restricted these women and men only from visiting them on their feast days. While in church, prostitutes and procurers were prohibited from mixing with honest women so that they would neither scandalize them nor be mistaken for them. If they did, they were to be fined twenty soldi. ¹²⁶ This allowance suggests that it was not just the sight or the possibility of interaction with prostitutes and procurers by honest people that worried officials, but also that they might infect the solemnity of significant religious days. Edward Muir has pointed out that governments felt at this time, “obliged to regulate behaviour by setting aside the rules of normal life for feast days and prohibiting certain sinful activities permitted on other occasions.”¹²⁷ Thus, Muir notes that across Europe prostitutes were forbidden from appearing publically and usurers were forced to close their shops on solemn feast days.¹²⁸ The Bollette’s 1462 statutes ordered the same prohibitions for Bologna.

4. Conclusion

A critical analysis of the 1250 and 1376 civic statutes and the 1462 statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette demonstrates that the changes in regulation that occurred over this period coincided with changes in the Bolognese social, economic, and political climate. Mid-thirteenth-century legislation was included in civic statutes created by the Popolo in an effort to establish its dominance over both its patrician enemies and the greater inhabitants of the city. The 1376 communal statutes were similarly redacted by the Popolo as it established its rule after the ousting of its papal overlord, Bishop Giovanni Visconti of Milan. Finally, the assignment of the regulation of prostitution to the Ufficio delle Bollette in the mid-fifteenth century was a move that reflected the intensely local civic and religious politics of the

¹²⁸ Ibid.
government as a result of their sustained submission to the papacy. This localism remained even after 1447, when the papacy and the Bolognese agreed to rule the city together, and was the reason why the Ufficio delle Bollette was invested with the regulation of prostitution.

An examination of these documents also demonstrates that throughout these centuries civic authorities struggled with how best to approach the business of prostitution. While in the thirteenth century prostitutes and procurers were forbidden to live within the city, in the fourteenth century they were brought into the heart of it, and by the fifteenth century they were enclosed in a municipal brothel area. Who was to police the regulation of the business of prostitution also changed throughout the centuries, moving from the purview of two officials in the thirteenth century, to one official and two notaries in the fourteenth century to an entire civic office in the fifteenth century. Likewise, the sumptuary laws that officials applied to prostitutes and procurers changed across the centuries. In the thirteenth century prostitutes were ordered to wear dresses and capes that touched the ground, only to be replaced by bells in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century white sashes with black roses were added to the bells. The financial benefits of the regulation of the business of prostitution also increasingly became a motivation for civic control, and this motivation changed the methods of regulation, causing officials to bring prostitutes and procurers into the city and to eventually enclose them into a monitored brothel area. Finally, the spatial restrictions that were applied to prostitutes and their associates changed as the face of the city itself changed. In the thirteenth century, the social, religious and political centre was completely off limits to prostitutes and procurers. In the fourteenth century prostitutes were restricted from accessing the city except on Saturday afternoons. In the fifteenth century this had changed again and prostitutes had to avoid the religious sites that were most important to the Bolognese civic cult on spiritual significant days, such as those of Easter and Saint’s days.

Changes in the civic government’s approach to prostitution also reflected shifts in attitudes towards prostitutes and their place within the civic economy and society. In the thirteenth century authorities took an exclusionary approach: while the trade could operate within the city, its immoral, polluting, and indecorous practitioners could not be members of Bolognese society. By the fourteenth century, however, the authorities took a more inclusive
approach: prostitutes and procurers could now permanently reside within Bologna, though they had to be easily distinguishable from honest women in order to protect the latter, and had to be residentially segregated in order to contain the public disorder and immorality of their trade. Finally, by the mid-fifteenth century, the civic government approached prostitutes as fee-paying workers in the civic economy regulated by their own civic magistracy. Though restrictions tightened considerably in the period, prostitutes with available wealth could purchase exemptions from them. This approach would continue to inform regulation, as the next chapter demonstrates, from the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth century.
Chapter Two
The Regulation of Prostitution in the Sixteenth Century

This chapter examines the changes and continuities in the way in which the Bolognese civic government, which issued legislation on prostitution, and the men of the Ufficio delle Bollette, who enforced that legislation, approached prostitution in the sixteenth century. As such, it considers not only the legislation issued on prostitution throughout the century, but also the bureaucratic documentation produced by the Bollette as it applied that legislation. It also considers the effects of the Catholic reform movement of the mid-sixteenth century on the regulation of prostitution in Bologna.

In 1566, Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597), a committed Tridentine reformer, became bishop of Bologna. Paleotti strove to apply the reforms of the Council of Trent throughout his entire episcopate. He founded a seminary to ensure that his clergy were properly educated, held nearly annual synods in order to judge and, if necessary, correct their knowledge, and engaged in systematic pastoral visitation. Paleotti also directed his efforts towards the laity, setting up schools that taught the catechism and supporting religious activities and charitable works that encouraged the closer involvement of the laity. In 1582 the papacy rewarded Paleotti for his hard work by elevating the city to an archbishopric. Not surprisingly, Paleotti’s reform program for Bologna also included the reform of the regulation of prostitution. In April 1567, just a year after his appointment, Paleotti issued his first proclamation on the trade.

After just two more proclamations, one issued in May 1567 and the other in January 1568, Paleotti ended his reform project. By 1571 the civic government, composed of the papal representative and the Bolognese executive, reclaimed sole authority over the regulation of prostitution, under whose control it would remain for the next two centuries. The disagreement over how prostitution should be regulated illustrates not only sixteenth-century official Bolognese attitudes towards prostitution, but also the political realities of sixteenth-century Bologna and the complexities involved in the application of Tridentine Catholic reform. An examination of the proclamations on prostitution issued by the Bolognese civic government both before and after Paleotti’s attempts at reform demonstrates that the overarching theory that informed regulation did not radically change either in form or in intensity in the post-Trent period. The civic government continued to demand that
prostitutes be marginalised on the grounds that prostitution threatened civic peace and civic morality, though, as this comparison will also show, the methods by which that marginalisation was accomplished would change throughout the century. An examination of the operations of the Ufficio delle Bollette, the regulations it enforced, and how it did so further illustrate the continuity of the official Bolognese approach towards prostitution and its regulation.

Paleotti’s loss of authority over the regulation of prostitution in Bologna also reveals much about the political situation of Bologna at the time. The bishop ultimately suffered at the hands of an intensely local ruling oligarchy and papal representative who resented his encroachment on their jurisdiction. As discussed in the previous chapter, the regulation of prostitution had been under the jurisdiction of the civic government since at least the mid-thirteenth century. As power over Bologna changed hands over the centuries, the Bolognese struggled to keep control over local, civic governance, which included the regulation of prostitution. When Bologna was absorbed into the Papal States in 1447, the Bolognese assigned issues of local governance to local civic magistracies in an effort to retain their power. It was for this reason that in 1462 the Ufficio delle Bollette, which had formerly regulated only foreigners and spies, was given the added responsibility of enforcing the regulation of prostitution. This history formed the approach of sixteenth-century Bolognese civic governors and set the stage for its efforts and its success in stopping Paleotti’s attempts to exercise authority over the regulation of prostitution.

More broadly, this chapter reveals the uneven reception of Tridentine reforms generally, and the complexities faced by those who attempted to apply them specifically. What Paleotti faced in Bologna was not only an aggressively local oligarchy intent on maintaining its power over local affairs, but the complexities inherent in applying the prescriptions of the Council of Trent. As Wietse de Boer has shown for the Milan of Bishop Carlo Borromeo, attempts to translate the ideals of Catholic reform so that they could be implemented were often frustrated by local religious and political circumstances and traditions. As de Boer wrote, programs of reform and discipline “elicit various gradations of approval, rejection, or neglect.”1 Paleotti’s fight with the Bolognese over the regulation of prostitution...

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prostitution was just one of many arguments that arose because of the oligarchy’s rejection of or disregard for his reforms.

This chapter begins with a consideration of the political changes that occurred in Bologna during the first half of the sixteenth century in order to illustrate the motivations of Bolognese governors and magistrates in the period. The aggressive localism of the Bolognese characterised their approach to politics and was part-and-parcel of their city’s status as a subject city within the Papal States. Bologna’s ruling oligarchy jealously guarded its power over local civic governance and this impacted its reception of Paleotti’s reforms. It also affected the system of regulation that it used to regulate prostitution. The Ufficio delle Bollette, established ca. 1376, and the methods it used to regulate prostitution became symbols of pre-papal Bologna. Thus the continuation of its methods was also jealously guarded.

The second part of this chapter analyses the changes and continuities in the theories and application of regulation throughout the early sixteenth century. As will be shown, the theoretical basis that underpinned the Bolognese civic government’s system of regulation did not change, but continued to be based on a view of prostitution as a civic, economic issue and as threatening to social peace. As this section will also demonstrate, the civic government abandoned the principal method it had used to contain prostitution: the residential restriction of prostitutes and female procurers to segregation zones. This section analyses these changes and argues that they reflected pragmatic decisions based on the successes and failures of imposing regulation in Bologna.

The third part of this chapter examines the reforms to the regulation of prostitution by Bishop Gabriele Paleotti. It begins by introducing his larger project of reform in order to set the context for the specific reforms he made to the regulation of prostitution during the first years of his episcopate. An analysis of the language he used in his proclamations on prostitution shows that while Paleotti was tolerant of its presence in the city, he viewed prostitution as a very serious moral issue. This understanding shaped his system of reform, which was actually quite similar to that which had been operating in the first half of the sixteenth century. It differed, however, from the reforms made to the regulation of prostitution by the civic government in the last decades.
The fourth part of this chapter explains the reasons for Paleotti’s failure to retain control over the regulation of prostitution in the city. Like Paleotti’s wider program of reform, his program for the regulation of prostitution was ambitious, and even though it was not particularly extreme, it was nevertheless short lived. This section argues that in the end Paleotti’s attempt to take over the regulation of prostitution in Bologna failed because he came up against a local political reality that was characterised by aggressive localism. When Paleotti became bishop, he stepped into a political system that had a long history of working to keep power in local hands. The Bolognese resented Paleotti’s interference in what they saw as their own jurisdiction. Paleotti and the civic government continuously fought over the reforms the bishop tried to establish in the city. The regulation of prostitution was another of these contested reforms.

This discussion leads to an examination of the successes and failures of religious reform in general. The case of Bologna shows that though the men and women of Bologna (both clerical and lay) sought some religious and social reform in the Counter-Reformation period, they opposed some of Paleotti’s attempts to enforce Tridentine reforms. As historians have found in their studies of Bologna and of other Italian cities this was due to the difficulty of enforcing religious reforms that were substantially different from common practice or local tradition. Indeed, while some people accepted religious reform, some also resisted it or simply neglected and ignored it.2

In the end, the civic government successfully reclaimed from Paleotti jurisdiction over the regulation of prostitution. When they did so, civic governors reverted back to the system of regulation that had operated throughout the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, a system that was based on the view of prostitution as an economic issue and prostitutes as a source of social and moral disorder rather than primarily as a threat to morality. After the civic government took the regulation of prostitution back from Paleotti, they returned to the reformed system instituted in the 1540s. A comparative analysis of the proclamations issued by the civic government both before and after Paleotti’s attempted reform demonstrates the similarities in their approaches as well as changes that occurred in the actual application of regulation.

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2 A thorough case study of the difficulties one Counter-Reformation bishop met when trying to implement the reforms of the Council of Trent is Wietse de Boer’s study of Carlo Borromeo and Milan, The Conquest of the Soul.
1. The political context of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries

As described in the last chapter, throughout the last half of the fifteenth century Bologna was jointly ruled by a papal representative and the Bolognese oligarchy as established by the 1447 capitoli. The agreement between Bologna and the papacy continued to be renegotiated throughout the rest of the century. The oligarchy, headed by the Bentivoglio family, continued to reign supreme in the city. The family’s dominance came to an end, however, in the first decade of the sixteenth century when Julius II (r. 1503-1513) became pope. Intent on expanding the territory of the Papal States and on bringing those cities already within the States more directly under papal rule, Julius turned his attentions to Bologna. At the time, Bologna was not only the richest and most powerful city in the States, but also even larger than Rome itself. When Julius announced his decision to visit Bologna in 1506, Giovanni II Bentivoglio realised the pope’s intentions and ordered the immediate arming of the city. In response, Julius placed Bologna under an interdict, proclaimed Giovanni and the Bentivoglieschi faction to be rebels, and prepared to march on Bologna. By the time the papal troops, aided by the French army, were at the city gates the Bentivoglio had fled to Milan. Julius marched triumphantly into the city.

Once in the city, the pope met with what was left of the Bolognese oligarchy and quickly set about altering the political system to meet his own ends. A politically astute man, Julius realised that if he wanted to ensure the continuation of his authority over the city he would have to make concessions to the oligarchy. Key to this was ensuring the continuation of the system that had been set up under the 1447 capitoli. Under that system the Bolognese oligarchy had authority over local civic governance, finance, and defence. As Paolo Colliva has indicated, Julius II ensured that the oligarchy retained its authority over civic governance.

To protect his authority, however, Julius had to ensure that the Bentivoglio would not re-establish their place in Bologna and that another family could not rise to replace them.

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3 For Julius II’s wider project see Christine Shaw, Julius II: The Warrior Pope (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).
In order to accomplish these goals, Julius abolished the old executive body, the *Sedici*, and replaced it with a new one, the *Quaranta Consiglieri* (the 40 Advisors or Senate). This new body doubled the number of members in the executive, effectively diluting local power and authority by spreading it amongst a greater number of Bolognese families. Julius also filled the Senate with members of the anti-Bentivoglieschi factions in order to ensure that it would be loyal to the papacy. Finally, Julius reserved the appointment of replacements to the Senate to himself, ordering that the Senators could make only recommendations to the pope who would then make the appointments himself.

Though Julius II aimed to increase the papacy’s authority over Bologna and its ruling oligarchy, such authority was never absolute. Julius knew that negotiation was needed in order to make the post-1506 political system work. His successors did as well. This was especially true in the first half of the sixteenth century as the Bentivoglio tried repeatedly to re-establish their authority in the city. In order to reduce the threat that the Bolognese would rebel, Julius and the popes who followed him continued to operate the system of mixed government that had been agreed upon in the 1447 capitolii, under which the papal legate or governor ruled cooperatively with the local executive, and in which neither could make important political decisions without the other’s approval. Moreover, as the century

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7 The Senate had 40 members, while the Sixteen had 21. In 1589 the Senate was enlarged to 50 seats. ANDREA GARDI, *Lo stato in provincia. L’amministrazione della Legazione di Bologna durante il regno di Sisto V (1585-1590)* (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1994), especially pp. 42-43 and 105.

8 The extent of the subservience of the Bolognese to the papacy has been a sustained subject of historical debate. In his 1977 article Paolo Colliva argued that the senatorial oligarchy dominated Bolognese politics throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Paolo Prodi and Andrea Gardi have argued the opposite, that the papacy progressively expanded its power over Bologna and the oligarchy as it constructed an absolutist state. Angela De Benedictis, on the other hand, has argued that while sixteenth-century popes increasingly took control of Bologna they also continued to grant new rights and privileges to the oligarchy. In his 1982 article *La monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino) [published in English as *The Papal Prince: One Body and Two Souls. The Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe*], trans. Susan Haskins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Gardi, *Lo stato in provincia*; Angela De Benedictis, *Repubblica per contratto. Bologna: una città europea nello stato della Chiesa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995). Following De Benedictis’s approach, Nicholas Terpstra has analysed the political sociology of the Bolognese See his “‘Repères by Contract’ Civil Society in the Papal State,” in *Sociability and its Discontents: Civil Society, Social Capital, and their Alternatives in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas A. Eckstein and Nicholas Terpstra (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

9 Between May 1511 and June 1512 the Bentivoglio briefly returned to the city, the Sixteen was reinstated, and the Senate was dismantled. After they were ousted in 1512, no Bolognese executive operated in the city until Pope Leo X (1513-1521) restored the Senate in 1513. Gardi, *Lo stato in provincia*, p. 106. In 1522 and 1527 the Bentivoglio tried to enter the city again, though both times they were repelled. Even as late as 1555 Julius III (1550-1555) feared their return. For more on this period, see ADY, *The Bentivoglio of Bologna*. 59
continued new popes formally granted extra rights and privileges to the Bolognese. In 1524, for instance, Pope Clement VII de’ Medici (r. 1523-1534) granted the fiscal subordination of the contado to the city of Bologna and granted the Senate the right to administer the city’s public debt and to assess taxes for its defence. In 1534 Pope Paul III Farnese (r. 1534-1549) entrusted the exercise of civil justice to the Senate by setting up a Tribunale della Rota composed only of Bolognese judges and declared that such cases were no longer to be tried in Rome. In 1551 the Bolognese Senate negotiated with Julius III del Monte (r. 1550-1555) and gained the right to decide on the use of money received from fines, to authorise the export of foodstuffs, and to regulate the activity of the notaries of the criminal courts and their records. Though some popes were less willing than others to grant new privileges to the Bolognese, most did. Thus, not only was the system of co-operative government created under the 1447 capitoli retained throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the rights and privileges of the Bolognese to self-governance increased steadily.

For their part, the Bolognese oligarchy also knew that they had to negotiate with the papacy in order to ensure their rights and privileges over civic governance, finances, and defence. These rights and privileges were, after all, delegated to them and had to be renewed every time a new pontiff was elected. Having a good relationship with the papacy was thus essential. The key to good relations was based on negotiations of power both with the pope and the papal representative who governed with them. The Bolognese oligarchy also had to ensure such relationships because their supremacy over the rest of the Bolognese was based on their role as the city’s representative to the pope as well as co-governors with the papal representative. The oligarchy also drew their supremacy in the city from their self-fashioned identity as protectors of Bologna’s libertas and its communal traditions, a role they had assumed after 1447, and which, after 1506, only increased in importance. Indeed, the oligarchy walked a narrow tightrope during this time – they had to ensure the papacy of their obedience and loyalty while at the same time work to protect and increase their autonomy. The key was a relationship based on negotiation. The oligarchy thus accepted their enlargement by Julius II with the assurance that Bologna would keep the rights and privileges that it claimed under its last negotiation with the papacy, which, in fact, it did.

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11 Gardi, pp. 108-112.
12 Gardi has identified Pope Paul III (1534-1549) and Sixtus V (1585-1590) as two exceptions to this rule, demonstrating how they worked to reduce the authority of the oligarchy. Ibid., pp. 110-111 and pp. 49-93.
The newly enlarged senatorial oligarchy turned to consolidating and ensuring their primacy over local governance and amongst the Bolognese.\textsuperscript{13} As Nicholas Terpstra has demonstrated, the oligarchy did so by keeping,

as many of the informal forms, institutions, and networks of civil society functioning as possible, and by ensuring that what benefits there were to their own governance were (1) kept within the community \textit{but} (2) shared broadly within that community \textit{and} (3) associated directly with the oligarchs.\textsuperscript{14}

Though this statement applies these actions to the “informal” forms, institutions, and networks of civil society, it can also be applied to the formal ones, such as civic offices. Indeed, the Bolognese oligarchy fought to control not only local governance but also \textit{access} to governing positions. Elections and appointments to civic offices and magistracies created webs of patronage and debts of obligation between the senatorial oligarchy and the rest of the city; holders of civic offices gained social and political prestige through their favourable association with the group, and in return, civic office holders were indebted to them.

Throughout the sixteenth century the oligarchy spread their network of patronage and obligation across all of the city’s civic offices. Only members of the senatorial oligarchy populated the eight \textit{assunterie} (congregations) of the city, which presided over the most important administrative and political activities of the city and the countryside (\textit{contado}), including economic, judicial, and military administration.\textsuperscript{15} They alone could hold the offices of honour (\textit{ufficii da honore}), while other Bolognese were included in local governing through the offices of profit (\textit{ufficii da utile}). Positions in the offices of honour

\textsuperscript{13} As outlined in Chapter One, the oligarchy had begun to develop in the final half of the fifteenth century under the Bentivoglio regime. Ian Robertson has demonstrated how the Sixteen used their control over the city’s financial institutions (such as the \textit{Monte delle Elette}, also known as the \textit{Consiglio dei Quattromila}, the group which managed the city’s public debt) to gain authority over the financial and fiscal administration of the city, a move which created a restricted oligarchy. As he put it, the oligarchy had “virtually total ‘privatized’ control over the financial and economic resources of the Bolognese commune.” Robertson also demonstrated how the oligarchy, headed by the Sixteen, ensured that political offices went to members of their families, friends, and supporters. Ian Robertson, \textit{Tyranny under the Mantle of St. Peter: Pope Paul II and Bologna} (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 54-75.

\textsuperscript{14} Author’s emphasis. Terpstra, “‘Republics by Contract,’” p. 297.

\textsuperscript{15} These were the \textit{Assunteria della Camera} (the treasury), the \textit{Assunteria del Governo del Contado} (which handled disputes between the commune and individuals), the \textit{Assunteria dell’ Imposta} (assigned and levied taxes), the \textit{Assunteria del’ Ornato} (responsible for the maintenance and the appearance of the city), the \textit{Assunteria del Pavaglione} (regulated trade fairs and silk and wool commerce), the \textit{Assunteria della Monitione} (the defence of the city), the \textit{Assunteria della Zecca} (the mint) and the \textit{Assunteria della Militia} (the city militia). Positions on the assunterie rotated annually ensuring that the all of the senatorial families held these important political offices. Ciro Spontone, “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati di Bologna,” (BCB, ms. B1114). Published as Sandra Verardi Ventura, “L’ordinamento bolognese del secoli XVI-XVII,” \textit{L’Archiginnasio} 75 (1981): 271-286.
rotated either bi-annually or annually in order to ensure that as many different men in the oligarchy participated in them. The offices of profit, on the other hand, were granted either to members of the oligarchy who were determined ineligible for senatorial commissions, or to particularly important Bolognese merchants and artisans. There were 72 offices of profit in total: 43 of these were positions responsible for overseeing the administration of justice in the countryside while the rest were the officials of the Arte della lana (the wool guild) and the otto imposte comunali (the body that handled the taxing of the commune), and the personnel of the Banca dei soldati and of the Difensori dell’ave (the standing army), and, most important to this study, the officials of the Ufficio delle Bollette. All of these positions had their roots in the pre-1506 political structure of Bologna and thus were important to the Bolognese claim to self-government. To put it simply: these were traditional Bolognese offices, established before Julius II’s rearrangement of the local political structure and his expansion of the Bolognese ruling oligarchy. The continuing operation of such offices recalled Bologna’s independent past and thus bolstered civic pride. Their continued operation also contributed to the reputation of the oligarchy as the protectors of Bolognese independence, both past and present. Indeed, only Bolognese citizens could hold offices of profit and offices of honour.

The granting of offices allowed the oligarchy not only to keep local power in local hands but also to draw citizens who were not a part of the senatorial oligarchy into their system of patronage. Elections to the offices of profit were held every six months or every year by a body of twelve senators who placed candidate’s names into bags and blindly drew out the requisite number of appointees. Once drawn, the senators appointed candidates to the offices based on their suitability. In this way the oligarchy ultimately decided what position each man received, honouring some men and their families with rich and important positions and slighting others with lesser ones. An examination of the men elected between the mid-sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century as the Ufficio delle Bollette’s

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16 For instance, in 1599 the celebrated artist Agostino Carracci (1557-1602) was elected as one of the Bollette’s officials. Archivio di Stato di Bologna (henceforth ASB), Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri, Statuti, sec. XV, codici miniati, ms. 64, fol. 30v.
17 Gardi, Lo stato in provincia, pp. 125-126.
19 This was not a new tactic. Ian Robertson has shown that in the late fifteenth century the Sixteen manipulated elections to the uffici da utile in the same way by ensuring that positions were granted to their family, friends, and supporters. Robertson, Tyranny under the Mantle, pp. 58-60.
officials, its two most important offices, reveals they were from elite and politically important Bolognese families (see Appendix 1). These included both the oldest Bolognese noble families (the *patrizi*), such as the Malvezzi and the Bolognini, as well as the newer *nobili cittadini* families, those who could prove that they had lived the noble life for at least 30 years. Included among the officials were the patricians Count Angelo Bentivoglio (1538), Giovanni Battista Angelelli (1555), Ippolito Malvezzi (1569), Giuseppe Bolognini (1586), and Ottavio, son of Felice Castelli (1609). Officials who belonged to the newer noble families included Bonifaccio Piatesi (1539), Giulio Leoni (1563), Vincenzo Seccadenari (1587), Antonio, son of Francesco Luna (1605), and Filippo Alle (1622). The operation of the Bollette was thus firmly in the hands of the Bolognese.

Throughout the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century, the Bollette continued to operate as a civic office and was, like other civic offices, a part of the network of patronage and obligation that characterised and stabilised the power of the senatorial oligarchy. The Bollette was also a locally significant institution for other reasons. First, since it was established in the late fourteenth century, many years before the city was brought into the Papal States, the Bollette linked sixteenth and seventeenth century Bologna to its communal – and independent – past. Second, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Bollette continued to be responsible not just for regulating prostitutes in the city but also for policing the access of foreigners to the city. As in the fifteenth century, the Bollette had officials who interviewed each and every man or woman who attempted to enter or exit the city, and had the power to either accept or deny foreigners.

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20 As stated in the Bollette’s 1462 statutes, two officials and two notaries were elected annually. This was still the case in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, though occasionally a third official or notary replaced them as needed. ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri*, Scritture Diverse, busta 1, “Statuti,” [np] fol. 1r. The Bollette’s notaries were elected by the Assunteria della imborsazione degli ufficii (the Office for the Elections to the Magistracies) which was also overseen by the Senate. Spontone “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati,” pp. 283-286.

21 For the distinction between the *patrizi* and the *cittadini nobili* see Mauro Carboni, *Il debito della città: mercato del credito, fisco e società a Bologna fra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995), p. 55. Associations between the names of the officials and their place within Bolognese society was based on the organization of last names listed in Carboni’s appendices, pp. 207-261.

22 Many of the Bollette’s officials from 1524-1630 were listed retroactively in supplemental pages which were bound with the fifteenth-century illuminated statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette. See ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri*, Statuti, sec. XV, codici miniati, ms. 64. The *campioni* and *filze* which survive for the years 1583-1630 provide the names of many official which were not included in these statutes.

23 For proclamations assigning the Bollette this responsibility, see (amongst many others), ASB, *Legato*, Bandi speciali, vol. 8, fol. 52r, “Bando sopra l’ufficio delle Bollette et presentationi de Forastieri,”
was also responsible for keeping surveillance on any suspicious foreigners while they were in the city. Like self-governance, this policing was both literally and symbolically important to the Bolognese for it gave the appearance that they alone controlled access to the city, even though they were ultimately subject to the pope.

The political context in which Bishop Gabriele Paleotti found himself in 1566 was characterised by the constant push-and-pull of negotiation between an aggressively local, but newly expanded, oligarchy and a succession of popes who were both willing to make concessions to the Bolognese, but still wanted to retain their authority over the city. As will be discussed later, this situation would lead to the bishop’s failure to reform the regulation of prostitution. In order to understand this failure more clearly, an examination of the system of regulation that was in place before Paleotti’s appointment needs first to be discussed and analysed.

2. The regulation of prostitution in the first half of the sixteenth century

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the civic government, which was composed of the papal representative and the Senate, continued to issue proclamations on prostitution. Public order and the administration of justice fell under the purview of the civic government, and so the signatures of both the papal representative and the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia (the standard-bearer of justice), as representative of the Senate, appeared on these proclamations.24 The enforcement of regulation, however, remained the responsibility of the Ufficio delle Bollette.

An examination of the sumptuary legislation and proclamations on prostitution issued in the first half of the sixteenth century demonstrates that the civic government

(11 July 1575); ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 16, fol. 249r, “Bando et Provisione dell’Uffitio delle Bollette, sopra li Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e stabularii, & sopra li Forastieri, Hebrei, Meretrici, & persone inhoneste,” (24 January 1605); Biblioteca Communale di Bologna (henceforth BCB), Bandi Merlani, XII, fol. 56r, “Bando sopra l’Uffitio delle Bollette, e presentazioni de’ Forestieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Taverni, e Meretrici,” (9 January 1624). Two of the Bollette’s registers of foreigners from this period survive today. They note the name and profession of the person entering as well as their payment to enter and the inn or hostel in which they were staying. For the registers for the gates of Santo Stefano and stra Maggiore, see ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Libretti di Riscossioni, 1604.

continued to view prostitution as an economic and social issue. As this section will also show, the civic government also ordered changes in the methods used in this regulation. Most significantly it abandoned the use of segregated residential zones, thus allowing prostitutes to live throughout the city. Though the exact reasons for these changes are unknown, this section will suggest plausible reasons for these changes by considering the development of the application of regulation in Bologna and by comparing Bolognese reforms with those of other cities on the peninsula.

2.1 The sumptuary proclamation of 1514

In 1514 Bologna’s papal governor, Altobello Averoldi, and the Senate issued a sumptuary proclamation that regulated the dowries and clothing of all Bolognese women, including prostitutes. An analysis of the rubrics on prostitutes contained in the proclamation reveals much about the civic government’s policy on prostitution at the time. First and foremost, the sumptuary proclamation included two separate rubrics addressed to two distinct groups of prostitutes. The first group consisted of the prostitutes who lived in the two officially recognised residential segregation zones, the ‘loco publico’ and the androna delle Oche (see Map 2.1). Though the proclamation does not cite the exact location of the ‘loco publico’ it is likely that this was the brothel area in via San Mamolo established under the Bollette’s

25 Averoldi was vice legate of Bologna in 1512, governor in 1513, 1514, and 1515, and then vice legate and governor (at the same time) in 1515, 1522, 1523, and 1524. See Spontone, “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati,” pp. 242 and 359, n. 5. For a detailed discussion of sumptuary law in Emilia-Romagna, see Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli’s introduction to La legislazione suntuaria, secoli XIII-XVI. Emilia-Romagna, ed. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli (Roma: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Direzione generale per gli archivi, 2002), pp. xi-xxvii. For a detailed discussion of sumptuary law in Emilia-Romagna, see ibid., pp. 3-17. For a discussion of sumptuary law in late medieval and early modern Italy, see Catherine Killerby Kovesi, Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).

26 “le meretrice del loco publico et quelle che se reducano in l’androna dalle oche.” ASB, Senato, Diversorum, 7 (1473-1584), “Ordine et provisione de la limitatone de le dote et dello ornato delle donne,” (6 April 1514), as transcribed in La legislazione suntuaria, secoli XIII-XVI. Emilia-Romagna, ed. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli (Roma: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Direzione generale per gli archivi, 2002), p. 170. Because the variations in spelling and capitalization used in the proclamations analysed here are vast I have transcribed all citations following their original orthography. The word ‘androna’ denoted a passageway between buildings that led to a sewer or an outside latrine. Mario Fanti has stated that the word was used interchangeably with that for ‘street’ in Bologna’s fourteenth-century statutes. Thus it is difficult to be certain whether the sixteenth-century androna delle Oche was a narrow passageway or a wider street. On ‘androne,’ see Mario Fantì, Le vie di Bologna. Saggio di toponomastica storica. 2nd ed. 2 volumes (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 2000), vol. I, p. 61. On the location of the androna delle Oche, see Giuseppe Guidicini, Cose notabili della città di Bologna, ossia, storia cronologica de suoi stabili sacri, pubblici e privati (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1982), vol. III, pp. 179-180 and volume IV, pp. 5-7; Fantì, Le vie di Bologna, vol. II, p. 569.
66 statutes. In 1519, just five years after Averoldi’s proclamation, the Senate ordered that
the walls of the brothel area be refortified because of the complaints of the Celestini monks
who lived to the south.\footnote{27}{The Celestini, an order of monks that followed the Benedictine rule, claimed that the noise from the
brothel area was disrupting their work and prayers, especially when they celebrated Mass. ASB, Senato,
Partitorum, 1514-1520, pp. 170-171 (25 April 1519). In the following year the Celestini purchased a parcel of
land just east of the brothel area. According to the notarial record of the sale kept by the Celestini, an inn sat on

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1) San Giovanni Battista dei Celestini
2) San Pietro Maggiore
3) San Petronio
4) San Domenico
5) San Francesco
6) San Giacomo Maggiore
7) San Agostino
8) San Martino d’Aposa
9) Santa Stefano
10) San Giovanni in Monte
11) Santa Maria in Monte (Santa Maria del Miramonte)
The second zone of residential segregation was the androna delle Oche. The sumptuary proclamation does not state when prostitutes were first permitted to live there, nor why. One possible reason is that the Bollette had been catching and identifying more prostitutes than civic authorities had anticipated, and thus the brothel area was overflowing to the point that another area of segregation had to be opened to house them. Another possibility is that civic governors were reacting to the desires of clients who did not want to travel to the southern part of the city to visit the brothel area. The choice of the androna delle Oche certainly indicates the desire of regulators to provide easy access to its brothel prostitutes to customers. The street was located centrally in the northern section of the city, just steps away from the Reno canal, Bologna’s main waterway. Thus, prostitutes living there were easily accessible not only to the men who inhabited the area but also to the merchants, boatmen, and traders who worked on the Reno. Moreover, the northern part of the city was dominated by Bologna’s rapidly expanding silk trade, and thus business could be had from the men who worked in that industry.\textsuperscript{28} Regulators thus placed brothel prostitutes in the heart of this industrial centre in order to ensure their availability to clients. Profiting prostitutes were prostitutes who could afford to pay the fees and fines extracted by the Bollette, which ensured the latter’s ability to continue its regulation and policing of prostitution.

Androna delle Oche was also situated where the social disorder stemming from prostitutes and their clients could be contained. Located in the northern part of the city, it was far away from Bologna’s political, social, and religious heart that centred on Piazza Maggiore. Moreover, there were no churches, nunneries, monasteries, or government buildings on the street. These facts suggest that androna delle Oche was chosen because placing prostitutes there would limit the moral and social disorder such women posed to the religious and social elite of the city. Thus, like the segregation of prostitutes to the brothel

area, the segregation of prostitutes in androna delle Oche demonstrates the civic government’s continuing interest in protecting the moral and social order of the city while at the same time ensuring the viability of prostitution.

The second group of prostitutes addressed in the sumptuary proclamation of 1514 were the *casarenghe.* In the 1462 statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette the word *casarenghe* was used to denote women who were reputed to be prostitutes but who had not identified themselves as such to the Bollette and thus did not wear the distinguishing sign (*signum meretricis*). By 1485, however, the meaning of the name had changed. Under these later statutes it was used to refer to prostitutes who paid the Bollette for the right to live outside of the brothel area and not wear the distinguishing sign. As indicated in the previous chapter, the civic government granted these freedoms in response to wealthy prostitutes who did not wish to live within the brothel area or be associated with poor prostitutes. It also granted these freedoms in response to wealthy and elite men who did not want to visit prostitutes in the brothel area, but who preferred instead to meet them in more luxurious and refined settings such as the homes of wealthy prostitutes. The civic government required that such prostitutes register themselves with the Bollette, an order meant to ensure that the magistracy would be able to police them and, if necessary, fine them for disobedience. In this way the civic magistracy created a solution that allowed it to limit the moral and social threat posed by these prostitutes while making them available to clients throughout the city.

The sumptuary regulations ordered in the proclamation of 1514 also demonstrate the continuing conception of prostitutes as both a threat to the moral and social order and as an economic resource. First and foremost, they ordered that prostitutes living in the brothel area and androna delle Oche had to wear the distinguishing sign of the bell, the same sign required under the 1376 Bolognese civic statutes and the 1462 statutes of the Bollette. The message proclaimed by this audible and visible sign was complex: not only did it announce

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the approach of the woman to those who might wish to avoid her, but it simultaneously proclaimed the availability of the woman to those who might wish to hire her. It also identified the woman as a prostitute so that she would not be mistaken for an honourable woman. Indeed, a separate rubric in the proclamation prohibited other women from wearing sleeves and stomachers (decorative panels worn over the stomach) over certain lengths and widths and weapons such as daggers so that they would not be mistaken for prostitutes.\textsuperscript{33} As in previous centuries, the distinguishing sign marked prostitutes as both morally and socially dangerous.

The sumptuary proclamation of 1514 ordered that prostitutes who were found without a clearly visible and audible bell were to be fined three soldi. This amount was much lower than the twenty soldi ordered for the same offence in the 1462 statutes.\textsuperscript{34} The lowering of the fine is explained by the fact that only the prostitutes in the segregation zones were required to wear the distinguishing sign. These prostitutes spent the majority of their time segregated in the brothel area or androna delle Oche and thus did not present a great threat to the wider populace. Indeed, the proclamation permitted the prostitutes of the segregation zones to wear clothes of any design they wished and made of any fabric they wished, including silk and those coloured gold and silver, as long as they wore the bell. These permissions point further to the conception of prostitutes by Bolognese regulators as an economic group, since it allowed them attire that brought attention to them and thus helped to increase their business.

The prostitutes who paid to live outside of the brothel, on the other hand, were not ordered to wear the bell since paying to live outside of the segregation zones also bought them freedom from wearing the distinguishing sign.\textsuperscript{35} However, these prostitutes came under their own sumptuary restrictions. Their constant and comparatively free access to the city increased the chances that they might be confused for honest women. As prostitutes

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 169. Stomachers (guardacori) were decorative triangular panels which were stitched or pinned to the front of women’s gowns and which covered the breasts and stomach.

\textsuperscript{34} The penalty for disobedience under the 1376 civic statutes was not a monetary fine. Rather the statutes stated that anyone who found a prostitute or female procurer without the bell could strike her as long as there was no effusion of blood and it did not kill her. ASB, Statuto comunale di Bologna del 1376, Libro V, rubric 108, “De meretricibus et lenonibus. Rubrica,” transcribed and edited by Maria Venticelli, electronic edition by Aldopalo Palareti. Derived from Venticelli’s doctoral dissertation Metodologie elettroniche per l’edizione di fonti: lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell’anno 1376, Dipartimento di Politica, Istituzioni, Storia, Università degli Studi di Bologna, 1998-1999.

\textsuperscript{35} Ferrante, “‘Pro mercede carnale,’” p. 44.
who catered to a wealthier and elite clientele, they were also more likely to want to attire themselves in rich and luxurious clothing and accessories, or to receive such items from clients as gifts or payments. Prostitutes who did not live in the segregation zones were thus forbidden in the proclamation of 1514 from wearing mantles (vestimenti), stomachers, or draped sleeves, as well as anything made of silk, heavy silk (zambellotto), or red fabric (grana) under penalty of a three lire fine.\textsuperscript{36} They were also forbidden to have gold, silver, or silk thread embroidered onto their clothing.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, unlike the prostitutes of the segregation zones, those who paid to live outside were not permitted to wear costly clothing with luxurious embellishments that could distinguish them from their neighbours. They were also forbidden to travel through the city with servants, another sign of wealth, under penalty of six soldi, 25 lashes of the whip given publically beneath the balcony of the palazzo del Podestà, and ten days’ imprisonment.

These restrictions and fines reflect a problem of increasing concern to urban legislators throughout the peninsula during the sixteenth century: the wearing of sumptuous clothing and expensive gems by prostitutes. Diane Owen Hughes has argued that in the sixteenth century expensive attire no longer identified concupiscence, as it had in the Middle Ages, but “virtue and hierarchical distinction.”\textsuperscript{38} If a prostitute who lived outside of the segregation zones appeared to be wealthy, she might be accorded the privileges due to wealthy women by those who did not know her. The danger that such prostitutes could be mistaken for wealthy women and vice versa was much higher than it was for prostitutes of the segregation zone because of the former’s constant and unregulated access to the city.

Sixteenth-century Venetian and Florentine civic regulators were motivated by this fear of the muddying of socio-economic distinctions to forbid prostitutes from wearing such clothing.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} For these definitions see M. G. Muzzarelli, \textit{La legislazione}, pp. 702, 708, and 704.
\textsuperscript{37} ASB, \textit{Senato}, Diversorum, 7, p. 170.
The authorities ordered these restrictions also because they wanted to stop prostitutes from proclaiming the success and wealth that they had earned through their work. In her study of Roman prostitution in the sixteenth century, Tessa Storey has pointed to the rising fear and anxiety in the city’s culture over what was seen as the greed of wealthy courtesans and prostitutes. She demonstrates how broadsheets and sonnets depicted courtesans and prostitutes as greedy, arrogant, cunning, and ambitious, often turning down poorer clients for wealthier ones. Such works attempted to shame and ridicule prostitutes in the public eye by warning them that they would get their just desserts by being robbed or murdered by a client, by living out their old age begging in the streets, and by ending their lives suffering with disease in a hospital for syphilitics. This cultural discourse proclaimed that the wealth of courtesans and prostitutes was dangerous not only to the wider social body, but to the body of the prostitute herself.

Given their physical and residential access to the wider city, the prostitutes who paid to live outside of the segregation zones posed a double threat to society: their ability to wear costly clothing might lead others to mistake non-prostitutes for prostitutes, bringing shame to honourable women, and might turn the social hierarchy upside down by allowing prostitutes to pass as wealthy women. These women’s work was, however, important to the gender hierarchy of the city and helped to ensure the continuation of the government’s control over the business of prostitution. The sumptuary proclamation issued in 1514 demonstrates that civic regulation attempted to diminish the threat posed by these prostitutes to the city through sumptuary legislation but continued to allow them the freedom to work throughout the city.

2.2 The Sumptuary Proclamation of 1525

Eleven years after Averoldi’s proclamation, new sumptuary legislation was issued by Goro Ghiero, vice legate of Bologna. Like Averoldi, Ghiero presented prostitutes as an

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41 Ghiero was vice legate of Bologna in 1523, 1524, and 1525, and governor in 1527. Spontone, “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati,” pp. 243 and 359, n. 9.
economic group and prostitution as an issue of economic, moral, and social order. An analysis of his proclamation demonstrates the civic government’s continuing desire to retain control over prostitution in the city.

Like Averoldi’s proclamation in 1514, Ghiero’s proclamation distinguished between prostitutes who lived in the segregation zones and those who did not. Thus, the city was still operating the segregation zones and allowing prostitutes to purchase the right to live outside of them. However, instead of androna delle Oche, via Ca’Selvatica was now the secondary street where prostitutes could reside (see Map 2.1). Though the reasons for this change are not stated in the proclamation, the fact that this street, like androna delle Oche, had no major churches or monasteries on it and that it was distant from the political, religious, and social centres of the city may have been part of the rationale for selecting it. Ca’Selvatica was located just inside the city walls in the south-west corner of the city that housed the working poor of Bologna. Again, civic regulators may have chosen this location in order to limit the affect of the social disorder caused by prostitution on the religious and elite of the city.

Ghiero’s proclamation also ordered that the prostitutes who lived in the segregation zones should wear a distinguishing sign. Rather than the bell, however, they were now required to wear visible yellow sashes, hung from their shoulders. Why this change was made is unclear from the document, but perhaps it was done in order to bring the practices of Bologna in line with those of the rest of Italy. Since the fourteenth century yellow accessories had been used to mark prostitutes in other cities on the peninsula. Pisan prostitutes had been ordered to wear a yellow band on their heads in the fourteenth century, their Venetian counterparts had been required to wear a yellow scarf around their necks in

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43 As will be discussed in Chapter Three, this area of the city continued to be favoured by prostitutes into the seventeenth century.

44 “Item che le meretrici del luogo publico e quelle che si riducono in la via dalla Caselvatica e sul fossato siano obbligate e debbiano portar in su la spalla una benda gialla longa due braccia e larga un quarto in luogo del sonaglio che altre volte portavano, e si che tal benda si possa ben vedere da ciascuno.” BCB, 17, *Storia civile e politica*, P2, n. 3, p. 181. Diane Owen Hughes has cited a proclamation issued by Governor Bernardo di Rossi in 1521 which ordered that prostitutes wear a yellow band on their head instead of the bell, so this may have occurred earlier than 1525. Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs,” p. 30.
and Brescian prostitutes were ordered to wear a yellow sash on their shoulders in 1421. Whatever the reason for the change in the Bolognese regulations, the fine for prostitutes found without the distinguishing sign was neither raised nor lowered in Ghiero’s proclamation, but continued to be three soldi as it had been in 1514.

Ghiero’s proclamation also permitted prostitutes of the segregation zones to wear gems and jewellery as well as dresses made of luxurious material. Women who did not live in the segregation zones were prohibited from wearing luxurious clothes and accessories, such as clothes made of gold or silver fabric, silk, damask, and satin, and belts of gold, as they had been in 1514. They were, however, permitted under Ghiero’s 1525 proclamation to wear clothing made of heavy silk (zambellotto), as well as “waste-silk” (bavelle), and wool as long as the fabrics were not red, a colour that was expensive and thus the mark of the nobility. They were also prohibited, as they had been in 1514, from travelling through the city with a servant, though they were now permitted to do so in the company of another prostitute who had paid to live outside of the segregation zones. The fine for being caught with a servant remained six soldi, 25 lashes of the whip given publically under the balcony of the palazzo del Podestà, and ten days imprisonment. Ghiero’s proclamation demonstrates that regulators were still concerned that prostitutes who did not live in the segregation zones would be mistaken for ‘honest’ or wealthy women (or vice versa) and that they desired to limit the risk of this as much as possible.

A third and final difference appears from the comparison of Ghiero’s proclamation with Averoldi’s earlier one. A clause in Ghiero’s proclamation stated that the prostitutes who lived in the brothel area and the via Ca’Selvatica could wear clothes that left their necks uncovered and revealed the tops of their breasts. It is unclear from the document whether

45 For Pisa, see ibid., p. 25. Hughes does not give an exact date for the order. For Venice, see Romano Canosa and Isabella Colonello, Storia della prostituzione in Italia: dal Quattrocento alla fine del Settecento (Rome: Sapere, 2000), pp. 34-35.
46 Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs,” p. 29.
48 “né sia lor licito anchora menare con seco per la terra massara, sì bene possano andare con una compagna sola di simile conditione.” BCB, 17, Storia civile e politica, P2, n. 3, p. 181.
49 “Concedendosi alle dette meretrici del luogo publico e de gli altri due luoghi predetti piena licentia che [...] possano andare spettorate e sgolate come a loro piace e a voler suo senza pena alcuna. Ma con la benda predetta.” Ibid. I thank Elizabeth S. Cohen, Thomas V. Cohen, and Konrad Eisenbichler for their help with the terms ‘spettorate’ and ‘sgolate’.
Prostitutes could wear such fashions while on temporary leaves from the segregation zones. However, the permission for prostitutes to leave their necks and chests bare clearly points to the desire of regulators to allow prostitutes in permissible areas to attract clients. As in 1514, the civic regulators of 1525 sought to encourage the success of prostitution with in the officially approved confines of the segregation zones.

An analysis of Goro Ghiero’s 1525 sumptuary proclamation demonstrates that civic regulators viewed prostitution as an issue of moral and social order and a civic economic issue. The Ufficio delle Bollette continued to operate the segregation zones that not only limited the effects of prostitution on the wider population but also allowed prostitutes to practice their profession under approved regulations. The civic government encouraged prostitution by allowing the prostitutes of the segregation zones to wear revealing fashions and by locating one of the segregation zones in an area inhabited by the working poor. Ghiero’s proclamation also demonstrates that regulators continued to allow prostitutes to live outside of the segregation zones, ensuring that prostitutes who had registered with the Bollette would be available throughout the city. Special sumptuary restrictions were ordered in an attempt to diminish the social disorder that could come from the residence of prostitutes outside of the segregation zones. All of these regulations point to the continuing interest of regulators in policing prostitution as a measure of moral and social control while at the same time being aware of its financial benefits. Though some of the measures used to meet these goals had changed – the via Ca’Selvatica had replaced the androna delle Oche as a second segregation zone and the yellow sash had replaced the bell as a distinguishing sign – the theoretical basis that informed the civic government’s regulation of prostitution remained the same.

2.3 Regulation and Reform

By 1545 a significant change had occurred in Bologna’s system of regulation. By this date, the civic government and the Ufficio delle Bollette had abandoned the use of the segregated residential zones. In a sumptuary proclamation of that year, the Papal Legate Giovanni Morone\(^{50}\) and the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia, Antonio Bentivoglio, ordered that all prostitutes

\[^{50}\text{Morone was the legate of Bologna from 1544-1548. Spontone, “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati,” p. 244.}\]
and courtesans (*le publiche meretrici* and *le cortegiane*) wear a hat with a yellow cloth on it so that they would be distinguishable from honourable women. Unlike the sumptuary proclamations published in 1514 and 1525, this one did not distinguish between prostitutes who lived in the segregation zones and those who lived outside of them. Instead, it differentiated only between prostitutes and courtesans. Additionally, the proclamation ordered that all prostitutes and courtesans wear the distinguishing sign, not just those who lived in the segregation zones as the proclamations of 1514 and 1525 had ordered. The fine for those caught without the distinguishing sign was raised to 25 soldi, more than an eight-fold increase from three soldi assigned in the 1525.

The proclamation of 1545 also prohibited prostitutes and courtesans from wearing clothing made of luxurious fabrics such as gold, silver, or silk. Under the 1514 and 1525 sumptuary proclamations the prostitutes of the segregation zones were permitted to wear clothing of gold, silver, and silk and expensive accessories as long as they also wore the distinguishing sign. Under the 1545 proclamation, however, these fashions were now prohibited to them, as were perfumes and musks, and accessories made of gold or silver or decorated with pearls and gems. The one exception that prostitutes were permitted was one gold necklace that could not be valued at over ten *scudi*. The fine for prostitutes and courtesans caught disobeying these restrictions was 25 soldi, the same amount assigned to those caught without the distinguishing sign. This amount was much higher than the six soldi fine ordered under the proclamations of 1514 and 1525 for prostitutes who had paid to live outside of the segregation zones caught wearing such finery.

Thus, though Morone and Bentivoglio’s 1545 sumptuary proclamation does not clearly state it, these new sumptuary regulations and the increase of fines demonstrate that the civic government and the Bollette were no longer operating the segregation zones and that prostitutes were now permitted to reside anywhere in the city. When they had been confined to the segregated zones, prostitutes were allowed to flaunt what wealth they had (or wanted to appear to have) in the segregation zones or outside of them when they received official approval to leave. Moreover, their ability to appear like other women had been limited by the requirement that they wear the distinguishing sign. Now that all prostitutes

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and courtesans were allowed to live throughout the city, however, their constant and unregulated access to the city and the general populace increased the chance that they might be confused for honourable or wealthy women and vice versa. The threat that prostitutes posed to social order was thus heightened and so it became crucial that they all be marked by the distinguishing sign, be prohibited from wearing expensive clothing and accessories, and be subject to higher fines for disobedience.  

From the late fifteenth century into the early sixteenth century, the Ufficio delle Bollette’s ability to regulate and police the business of prostitution had been based on the operation of the segregation zones. Why, then, would the civic government abandon them? The most likely reason is the problem of getting prostitutes to live, and remain living, within them. As Ruggiero, Canosa, and Colonnello have shown in their studies of prostitution in Venice, getting prostitutes to reside in that city’s municipal brothel and keeping them there was a continuing struggle. Canosa and Colonnello cite a proclamation of 1421 in which the city’s executive body (the Council of Ten) ordered the heads of the Venetian sestieri (the neighbourhoods) to seek out prostitutes and bring them to the brothel. Ruggiero cites another Venetian proclamation, issued in 1502, that ordered the return of prostitutes to the public brothel under penalty of six months in jail, 25 lashes, and a fine of 100 lire. A note on the proclamation itself ordered that it was to be read by a civic herald in the main areas where prostitutes were practicing, what amounted to 30 different locations across the city. By the mid-sixteenth century Venetian authorities had closed their municipal brothel, the Castelletto (f. 1360), and permitted prostitutes to reside throughout the city. In 1547, Florence’s Ufficiali dell’Onestà (the Office of Decency) gave up on trying to confine

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52 Further archival research into the minutes of the Senate during this period or into the proclamations issued by the papal representatives of the period [such as Francesco Guicciardini (vice legate in 1531, governor 1531-1534), Giovanni Maria del Monte (vice legate in 1534, and vice legate and governor, 1534-1535, and governor in 1536), or Bonifaccio Ferrero (legate, 1539-1541)], held at the Archivio di Stato di Bologna, may confirm the exact date that the residential segregation zones were abandoned.

53 Though the brothel area and the secondary street were not single, enclosed buildings like the brothels of Venice were, the two are still comparable. Prostitutes were ordered by the civic government to reside within them, and they were not permitted to leave without the permission of the Bollette’s officials or notaries. As such, the segregation zones were enclosed areas like the brothel of Venice.

54 Canosa and Colonnello, Storia della prostituzione, p. 34.

55 Ruggiero, Binding Passions, pp. 48-49.

56 The Castelletto was near the commercial centre of the city, the Rialto. Ibid., p. 48. Ruggiero does not give an exact date for the closing of the Castelletto.
prostitutes in its downtown brothel area. In Milan, the public brothel was also closed in the mid-sixteenth century, and prostitutes spread throughout the city, residing especially in the area surrounding the castle where the Spanish garrison was stationed. Similarly, by the 1580s prostitutes in Cremona were no longer required to reside in the municipally licensed brothel and took up residence throughout the city.

The Bolognese most likely encountered the same difficulties as these other cities did and ultimately gave up trying to enforce residence in the segregation zones. More importantly, another method that allowed for the identification and surveillance of prostitutes had already been developed by the magistracy. As discussed earlier, in 1485, just thirteen years after the Bollette’s 1462 statutes forbade prostitutes from living outside of the brothel area, a new set of statutes permitted them to purchase licences to do so. In order to ensure that the Bollette’s officials could survey and police the activities of these prostitutes, the new statutes ordered that those who paid to live outside of the brothel area had to register with the magistracy on a regular basis. Florence’s Ufficiali dell’Onestà also turned to this method, though by 1558 its registered prostitutes were also prohibited from residing outside of 22 streets. What developed in Bologna was the use of annual registers (the campione delle meretrici) to record prostitutes’ names, residences, and other personal information as


59 Canosa and Colonnello, *Storia della prostituzione*, p. 132. John Brackett asserts that centrality of the municipal brothel to the Florence’s program of regulation dissipated even earlier, in the period between 1415 and 1463, and Romano Canosa and Isabella Colonnello argue that this also occurred in Lucca in the 1440s. The closure of the brothels in Tuscany may have occurred much earlier than across the rest of the peninsula due to the fact that Tuscan’s regulated prostitution not only in order to control prostitutes but also in order to combat sodomy by making prostitutes available to men. Canosa and Colonnello argue, therefore, that the closure of the brothels was a result of the diminishing concern of the authorities on sodomy. See Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 287; Canosa and Colonnello, *Storia della Prostituzione*, pp. 57-61. For an excellent study of male homosexuality in Florence see Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

well as their registration payments.\textsuperscript{61} Because payments were to be made on a monthly basis the books were constantly being used by the Bollette’s notaries and thus were well organized and archived in a manageable arrangement. They also had to be clear and contain as much pertinent information as possible so that they could be cross-referenced with denunciations of women who were suspected of practicing prostitution unregistered. Indeed, by 1583 if not earlier, the Bollette employed at least one low-level arresting officer and messenger (esecutore), a man whose job it was to search out unregistered prostitutes throughout the city.\textsuperscript{62} Thus, though in the sixteenth century the Ufficio delle Bollette relied on the use of segregation zones it also relied on a registry system that it had been perfecting throughout the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century.

The information that was needed to make this system operate – the names of prostitutes and their address – was the same kind of information that was needed to enforce the wider regulation of prostitution. Residence in the segregation zones was therefore not necessary to the Bollette’s application of regulation; the magistracy could identify prostitutes through registration and the archiving of personal information. Thus, the abandonment of the segregation zones did not pose a serious problem in the in day-to-day regulation of prostitution. Certainly, it would have taken time for prostitutes, officials, and notaries to adapt themselves to the reform. The reform was not a complete overhaul of the system, but rather the shift to and expansion of a process that was already being practiced.

The abandonment of the residential segregation zones created new problems that the civic government and the Ufficio delle Bollette had to deal with. The enclosure of prostitutes in these zones had gone some way to limiting prostitution from being practiced near religious houses and churches and thus disturbing their inhabitants and lay visitors. However, when the zones were abandoned prostitution spread throughout the city. To judge by the resulting legislation, as a consequence prostitutes began practicing in the vicinity of churches and religious houses. Civic regulators were thus forced to adapt their methods in order to deal with this problem.

\textsuperscript{61} The registers from the period 1583-1796 exist today in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna. See ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796}, Campione delle meretrice.

\textsuperscript{62} Sometimes the esecutore conducted searches based on denunciations, while at other times he did a ‘cold’ search, visiting locations where known prostitutes worked and checking for licences. In all cases, however, he could not cite a prostitute for being unregistered unless he found her in a sexual act with a man. This subject will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. For the denunciations of prostitutes by both the public and the esecutore see ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796}, Filze.
One strategy used was the establishment of exclusionary zones around nunneries and churches. For instance, in 1565, in order to “attend to the disorders, troubles, and harms” caused by prostitution, Francesco Grassi, papal governor of Bologna, forbade prostitutes, female procurers, and other “people of shameful life” (persone inhoneste vita) from living within 30 pertiche (approximately 114 meters) of the city’s nunneries. In 1566, the Bando generale of Francesco Bossi, then governor of Bologna, both extended the exclusionary zones around nunneries to 50 pertiche (approximately 190 meters) and forbade prostitutes and courtesans from living in houses in front of or next to churches. Both the 1565 and the 1566 legislation ordered all prostitutes, female procurers, and other ‘shameful people’ to remove themselves and all of their belongings from the exclusionary zones by the feast day of San Michele di Maggio (8 May), the day when property leases began in Bologna. The 1565 legislation ordered a penalty of public whipping and the extremely high fine of 100 scudi for those who disobeyed. In 1566 the hefty fine was lowered to 25 scudi, still a significant sum but one that was more appropriate to some prostitutes’ and female procurers’ incomes. Landlords who rented to such women after San Michele di Maggio were also to be fined 100 scudi according to the 1565 legislation, and were to receive three lashes of the whip. An unspecified part of both of these fines was to be given to the treasury of Bologna and the remainder was to go to the nunnery near where the woman had been living.

The hefty fine assigned for disobedience demonstrates that the civic government was serious about protecting nuns from the immoral sights and sounds of prostitutes and prostitution. Similar legislation was issued in Venice, though proclamations there forbade

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63 Grassi was Bologna’s papal governor in 1565 and 1566. Spontone, “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati,” p. 245.
64 “Provedere alli disordini, inconvenienti & danni ch’apportano le Meretrici, Ruffiane, & altre persone inhoneste c’habbitano presso li Monasteri di Monache della Città di Bologna.” ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, fol. 16r, “Bando sopra le meretrice, ruffiane, et gente disoneste circa il pigionare dalle case, overo vendere, & quanto debbano star lontane da i Monasteri di Monache,” (1 February 1565). One perticha was equivalent to ten piedi, or 3.80 meters. Thus, 30 pertiche was a distance of approximately 114 meters. See Angelo Martini, Manuale di metrologia, ossia misure, pesi e monete in uso attualmente e anticamente presso tutti i popoli (Turin: Loescher, 1883), p. 92.
65 Francesco Bossi was vice legate of Bologna from 1565-1566, and governor twice, once in 1566 and then again in 1567. Spontone, “Lo stato, il governo e i magistrati,” p. 245.
67 ASB, Boschi, b. 541, “Bando Generale del Reverendissimo Monsignor’ il Signor Prothonotario Bossio Governatore di Bologna” (1 and 8 February 1566), fol. 115r.
prostitutes from residing near the city’s main public spaces, churches, and nunneries. In the 1560s, Florence similarly ordered exclusionary zones around nunneries, but there they were about half the size of the Bolognese ones at a distance of 100 braccia (about 60 meters). As Nicholas Terpstra has shown, the Florentine concern that nuns neither hear nor see prostitutes and prostitution in the 1560s dovetailed with the post-Tridentine insistence on the complete enclosure of nunneries. While the boarding up of windows and the raising of wall heights helped to keep nuns from seeing prostitutes, they did not keep them from hearing them. The exclusionary zones around nunneries were thus employed to meet this goal.

In the 1560s Bolognese regulators were also concerned that prostitutes and prostitution not degrade the integrity of religious acts or disrupt their performance or the experience of them by attendees. In his Bando generale of 1566, Francesco Bossi ordered that any one who walked with a prostitute, spoke to a prostitute, or performed scandalous acts with a prostitute in a church when Mass or another divine office was being celebrated was to be fined ten scudi and receive two lashes of the whip. The prostitute who accompanied this person incurred the same fine and was also to be whipped. It was not the actual attendance of prostitutes that threatened the integrity of these sacred offices; prostitutes were permitted to attend church services, though as Bossi’s Bando generale ordered, they had to separate themselves from honourable men and women by standing at the back of the church. Rather, it was the disrespectful misbehaviour of prostitutes and those that they accompanied as well as the bad influence that prostitutes posed that regulators wanted to curb.

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68 Ruggiero, Binding Passions, p. 48.
69 Nicholas Terpstra, “Sex and the Sacred: Negotiating Boundaries in Renaissance Florence.” Paper given at the Friday Workshop Series held by the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto. 3 December 2010.
70 Ibid.
71 “fa intendere a ciascuna persona di qual grado si sia, che da qui avanti ardira in dette Chiese accompagnarsi, ò parlare, ò fare alcun’atto dishonesto, ò di scandalo con Cortigiane, ò Meretrice, ò altre Donne d’inhonestà via, ò che pet [sic] dette Chiese mentre si celebrano le Messe, ò altri divini Officii, passeggiarà, e non stara inginocchione mentre si leva ò si porta dal Sacerdote il Santissimo corpo di Christo Redentor nostro: Incorrera la pena di dieci scudi d’oro, e doi tratti di corda per ciascuna volta, d’aplicarsi la detta pena pecuniaria per un terzo all’Accusatore, e gl’altri doi terzi a luoghi pii. Et alle dette Corteggiane, & Meretrici che contraveranno oltre la pena predetta pecuniaria della frusta.” ASB, Boschi, b. 541, fol. 114r.
72 ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 6, “Provisione sopra le meretrici” (19 October 1566), fol. 150r. This order was also appeared in a proclamation on prostitution issued earlier that year by Bossi. See ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, “Provisione sopra le meretrici” (28 August 1566), fol. 59r
Finally, the abandonment of the residential segregation zones meant that the violence and social disorder that attended prostitutes spread more widely across the city, and thus affected a larger number of inhabitants. In order to deal with this problem Governor Bossi specifically noted that crimes against the homes, properties, and bodies of prostitutes would be punished as were those of non-prostitutes. As his 1566 *Bando generale* stated:

> It is prohibited and commanded that no one [of any type] should dare or presume to strike another [and cause] a disfigurement on their face or anywhere on their person, or to burn their door or draw the sign of the horn or another disfiguring mark [on their door], or [to commit another act of] cowardice, even one who is a public prostitute, under pain of time on a galley ship on top of a fine of double the statutory penalty for one who [disfigures someone’s] face or person, according to the quality of the offender and the offended, and for those who commit the other above mentioned crimes and excesses a punishment of three lashes of the whip on top of a fine of double the statutory penalty, as above, for each person and each time [it occurs].

The most serious penalties, time on galley ships and a fine worth double the statutory penalty, were applied to what were considered the most serious assaults, those that disfigured a person’s face or body. As well as injuring the offended, crimes of bodily violence could lead to personal vendettas that could lead to further violence that disrupted neighbourhood life and thus social and civic order. Bossi sought to curb such disorder through the imposition of penalties for these crimes.

Bossi also threatened to punish violence against the homes of prostitutes, both the breaking of windows and chairs, as mentioned in another rubric of the *Bandi generale*, and the destruction of doors by burning or defacing them with graffiti. Violence against doors was a highly visible assault meant to defile the house and thereby contest the honour of the inhabitant. As Elizabeth Cohen has shown, such ‘house scорnings’ were typical revenge

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73 “Probisce, & comanda S.S. Reverendiss. che non sia persona alcuna come di sopra, che ardisca, ò presuma percuotere alcuno con bruttura in faccia, o nel resto della persona, o brugiàr porte, nè mettervi corna scritte, o altra bruttura, o poltroneria, etiam che fosse meretrice publica, sotto pena à chi darà in faccia, o nella persona, oltra le pene statutarie duplicate, della galea temporale, secondo la qualità dell’offendente, & offeso, & quelli che commetteranno gli altri sopradetti delitti, & eccessi, caschino in pena di tre tratti di corda, oltra la pena statutaria duplicata, come disopra per ciascuno, & ciascuna volta.” ASB, *Boschi*, b. 541, fol. 117v. The sign of the horns was a particularly shameful insult that suggested that a male inhabitant in the house on which it was drawn was being cuckolded by his wife and thus that he did not have control over her sexuality.

74 “Comanda, & proibisce S. S. Reverendissimi che non sia persona alcuna come di sopra, che ardisca si di giorno, come di notte romper gelosie, porte, o finestre, guastar sedili di legno, o di pietra di qal si voglia persona, ancor che fosse meretrice publica, sotto pena corporale, o pecuniaria ad arbitrio di S. S. Reverendissimi considerata come è detto la qualità delle persone, del luogo, & del caso.” Ibid.
rituals practiced by a variety of men and women in sixteenth-century Rome, but the burning of a door was inflicted especially on the homes of prostitutes and courtesans. Evidence for the use of house scornings against prostitutes has also been found in sixteenth-century Lucca. Like assaults on bodies, these assaults not only hurt the honour of the offended but could also lead to the escalation of rivalries and further violence, in short, to social disorder. They also posed a serious danger to the neighbourhood. The burning of doors was particularly dangerous since fire could easily spread to nearby buildings, causing bodily injury and loss of residence and property. Since Bossi’s rubric stated that the assignment of penalties was to be based on the “quality of the offender and the offended,” the severity of the punishments clearly varied. Through an analysis of extant court records Elizabeth S. Cohen found that Roman prostitutes did indeed call on authorities to help them receive justice for such crimes. Bolognese prostitutes most likely did as well.

An examination of proclamations issued throughout the early to mid-sixteenth century demonstrates that the Bolognese approach to prostitution continued to be based on the view of prostitution as an economic issue and prostitutes as causes of moral and social disorder. However, in this period civic regulators also abandoned what had been since the mid-fifteenth century the cornerstone of their system: the residential segregation of prostitutes within specific civic areas. As has been shown, this reform was not as radical as one might expect. Since 1485 prostitutes had been permitted to live outside of the segregation zones as long as they registered with the Ufficio delle Bollette and paid a small fee. Thus, when the use of the segregation zones was abandoned the Bollette already had a well-developed system of registration, surveillance, and policing that it could apply to the newly released prostitutes practicing throughout the city. However, allowing prostitutes to live and work throughout the city raised problems of its own. Civic regulators attempted to curb the social and moral disorder of prostitutes by creating exclusionary zones around nunneries and churches, and by issuing legislation that set fines for violence against prostitutes, their homes, and their property.

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75 Elizabeth S. Cohen has argued that prostitutes did have honour, which she defined as the “construction of self as socially worthy which early modern Romans protected through the manipulation of a code of rhetoric and behavior.” Elizabeth S. Cohen, “Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 4 (1992): 600.
76 Canosa and Colonnello, *Storia della prostituzione*, pp. 61-64.
77 Cohen, “Honor and Gender.”
The next section of this chapter will analyse the regulation of prostitutes and prostitution in Bologna in the late 1560s, during the first years of the reforming bishop Gabriele Paleotti’s episcopate. As it will demonstrate, Paleotti viewed prostitution as a serious moral issue and immediately assumed authority over its regulation in Bologna in order to reform it. Though the system he established was not radically different from the one that had been set in place in the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth centuries, it was different from the reformed system that the Bolognese civic government employed after the 1540s. For this and other reasons, Paleotti’s reforms ultimately failed and so in the 1570s the civic government took back authority over the regulation of prostitution.

3. The Mid-Sixteenth Century: Bishop Gabriele Paleotti and the Reform of Regulation

Gabriele Paleotti was an active participant in the final phase of the Council of Trent (1562-1563). As bishop of Bologna (1566-1582), and later archbishop (1582-1597), Paleotti was a dedicated reformer who strove to apply the Council’s decrees in his diocese. Key to his understanding of his role was the Council’s 1563 decision that bishops were entrusted with the care of their parishioner’s souls (the cura animarum or the cura dell’anime) not just by church law but by divine right (ius divinum). Like his contemporary and friend, the great Tridentine bishop of Milan Carlo Borromeo, Paleotti took this responsibility very seriously. His efforts to reorganise his diocese and ensure the education of the clergy, his promotion of secular spiritual action, and his efforts to curb immoral behaviour in the city were all motivated by his care of the souls. Unlike Borromeo, however, Paleotti’s program of reform was based on education, experience, and encouragement rather than on disciplinary intervention that focused on stopping “occasions to sin” before they occurred. Rather than enforcing top-down intervention and penalties, Paleotti believed that the key to Catholic reform amongst the laity – and thus their ultimate salvation – was to make them more receptive to faith through education and involvement in religious activities.

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78 The most thorough study of Gabriele Paleotti remains Paolo Prodi’s Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti, 1522-1597, 2 volumes (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1967).
79 Christopher F. Black, Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 28-29
80 Prodi, Il Cardinale, pp. 17-18, de Boer; The Conquest of the Soul, especially p. 73.
From his first years as bishop Paleotti set out to reform the Bolognese church and its faithful. Important to this project, as it was for other bishops of the time, was the reform of the clergy, who had been targets of both Protestant and Catholic criticism. As the actual enactors of the reforms of the Council of Trent within Christian communities, it was paramount that the clergy knew the Council’s directives, both to end abuses and to ensure that they communicated the correct teachings to the laity. In order to ensure this, in 1567 Paleotti founded a diocesan seminary at Santa Lucia where literacy, doctrine, and the celebration of the sacraments and the liturgy were taught. He also held provincial synods to survey and, if necessary, correct the knowledge of the clergy, holding 28 over a 31 year period.\textsuperscript{81} Paleotti also engaged in systematic pastoral visitations and worked to ensure the complete enclosure of nuns as decreed by the Council of Trent.\textsuperscript{82} Finally, Paleotti rationalised and streamlined the diocesan administration of Bologna in an effort to increase communication between all levels of the church hierarchy and he maintained continuous residence in the city in order to ensure his accessibility.\textsuperscript{83}

In addition to his focus on the clergy, Paleotti’s program of reform also encouraged the religious education of the laity and their participation in religious acts and events. The bishop had a catechism written, printed, and distributed to the laity, instituted the Congregation for Teaching Christian Doctrine to teach the catechism to the laity in the city, and gave the Corpus Christi confraternities the responsibility of teaching it to those in rural areas.\textsuperscript{84} In order to encourage the activity of laymen in the supervision of their parishes, Paleotti ordered that two laymen were to work as prefects alongside the prior and the sub-prior in each quarter of the city. Elected every six months, one prefect was appointed by


\textsuperscript{84} Prodi, Il Cardinale, pp. 182-185.
Paleotti himself and the other one was elected by the residents of the quarter.\textsuperscript{85} These prefects had the specific task of organising and presiding over the congregations that were called for the purpose of discussing cases of conscience and other pastoral problems.\textsuperscript{86} In order to encourage lay participation in religious events, Paleotti supported and encouraged Bologna’s lay confraternities, which held religious processions on Corpus Domini and on Saints’ days, as well as 40 Hour Devotions (\textit{quarantore}). By teaching the catechism to the laity and by supporting administrative roles and rituals that encouraged the laity’s participation, Paleotti hoped that they would be motivated to reform their lives and be better Christians, thus ensuring their own salvation and serving as good role models for their kin and neighbours.

Paleotti’s care for the souls of Bologna’s faithful led him to issue proclamations in his first years as bishop that dealt with Lent, concubinage, blasphemy, and, most important to this study, prostitution.\textsuperscript{87} Never before had Bologna’s bishop’s name been included on a civic proclamation dealing with prostitution. However, Paleotti saw it as his place to reform the city’s regulation of the trade. As the earlier part of this chapter has demonstrated, the regulation of prostitution in early sixteenth-century Bologna approached prostitution as a civic issue that posed a threat to moral and social order. An analysis of the proclamations issued by Paleotti in the first years of his episcopate, on the other hand, demonstrates his view of prostitutes and procurers as a much more serious moral threat to the religious and secular men and women of Bologna.\textsuperscript{88} Paleotti’s first proclamation, issued 30 April 1567, underlined the sinfulness of the business of prostitution and thus ordered the residential

\begin{footnotes}
\item Ibid., p. 234.
\item Prodi, \textit{Il Cardinale}, p. 207.
\item Paleotti addressed prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers (\textit{ruffiane}) in his first two proclamations on prostitution. In his final proclamation, issued in 1568, he expanded this list of addresses to include male procurers and other ‘dishonest people’ (“Meretrice, Cortegiana, Ruffiana, Ruffiano, o persona simile inhonestă”). ASB, \textit{Legato}, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, “Bando sopra le meretrice che debbano habitare nelle contrade assignatelli,” (30 April and 2 May 1567), fol. 117r. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna (henceforth BUB), ms. 373, n. 3C, fols. 149v-150r, “Bando sopra le meretrice che debbano habitare nelle contrade assignatelli” (9 May 1567). I am grateful to Nicholas Terpstra for sharing his notes on this document with me. A undated handwritten copy of this document also exists in ASB, \textit{Notarili}, Ludovico Ostesani, 6, 2, [np], “Meretricum,” (undated). ASB, \textit{Boschi}, b. 541, “Bando sopra le meretrici et rifroma de gli altri bandi sopra a cioe fatti,” (31 January and 1 February 1568), fol. 170v. All three of these proclamations were reprinted in Paleotti’s \textit{Episcopale bononiensis civitatis et diocesis. Raccolta di varie cose, che in diversi tempi sono state ordinate da Monsignor Illustriissimo & Reverendissimo Cardinale Paleotti Vescovo di Bologna} (Bologna: Alessandro Benacci, 1586), pp. 210v-212r. Only these three proclamations on prostitution appear in the \textit{Episcopale}, confirming that they were the only three Paleotti ever published.
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segregation of prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers so that they would “no longer be scattered throughout the city, where by their example and with false persuasions they could too easily encourage some of their poor female neighbours to take up the art of prostitution.”

Paleotti’s view of prostitution as a serious moral issue can also been seen in the rhetoric used in his other proclamations, which emphasised the connection between the business of prostitution and the sinfulfulness of the prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers. As his third proclamation, issued on 31 January 1568, stated:

Having at other times in past years attended to the inconveniences and disorders that arise from the wicked lives of prostitutes, the most illustrious and most reverend Cardinal Paleotti, Bishop of Bologna, and the most reverend Monsignor Doria, Governor of Bologna, with the consent and desire of the illustrious Magistrates of the said city, delegate and appoint a few neighbourhoods in which prostitutes must be restricted to live in order to constrain their evil natures and uncontrolled freedoms of life, so that they can not seek out or give the opportunity to other people to contaminate themselves with similar filth, since by being dispersed before they were staining the city.

In this proclamation Paleotti constructed prostitutes as morally polluted people who led wicked lives, a very different identity than the civic government’s presentation of them. Moreover, prostitutes were not just wicked in themselves, they were dangerous to others because they spread contamination, polluted honest people, and stained the wider city. Over twenty years after the civic government abandoned the residential segregation of prostitutes and procurers, Paleotti ordered that they again be residentially restricted in approved neighbourhoods, though not in the area of the fifteenth-century brothel area. These men and women were not offered the opportunity to purchase exemptions, since the Bolognese had to

89 “accioche non stiano più sparse per tutta la Città, dove & con l’esempio, & con le false persuasioni possono troppo commodamente indurre qualche povere loro vicine a seguitare l’arte Meretricia.” ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, fol. 117r. In 1566 Pope Pius V similarly had attempted to confine and segregate Roman prostitutes in to a single residential area in order to stop them from mixing with and living amongst ‘honest women.’ See Storey, Carnal Commerce, p. 70.

90 “Havendo altre volte nelli anni passati l’Ill.mo et R.mo Car.le Paleotti Vescovo et Mons.or R.mo Doria Governatore di bologna con consenso et voluntade de gli illustri magistrati di detta citade per provvedere a gli inconvenienti e disordini che da la mala vita de le meretrici provengono con fermo e stabile proponimento di frenare la loro malvagia e sfrenata licenza di vivere deputate et nominate alcune contrade nelle quali si dovessero ridure ad habitare a effetto che standing disperse per la citade come prima facevano con la machia loro non cercassero o desse caggione ad altre persone di contaminarsi di simile lordezza.” ASB, Boschi, b. 541, fol. 170v.
be protected from their wicked influence. A penalty of 25 scudi was assigned to neighbours who tolerated the residence of such people and to landlords who rented rooms or apartments to them outside of the approved neighbourhoods.91

Paleotti did not want to protect only innocent bystanders from prostitutes, but also men who used the women’s services. The rhetoric he used in his proclamations was meant to encourage the laity to think about the fact that prostitution, the selling of sex for money, and sex between unmarried people for pleasure, was a sin. In short, he wanted the clients themselves to think about the state of their souls and the damage that they might do to it by using prostitutes. In this way Paleotti’s regulation of prostitution was also a campaign that sought to change public opinion on the business of prostitution by emphasising the sinfulness not only of the prostitute but also of the client. Paleotti’s work with the regulation of prostitution thus mirrored his larger approach to reform in the diocese, which was based on the encouragement of each individual to lead a Christian life, rather than simply demanding that they do so and then punishing them if they failed to do so.

On 30 April 1567, just over a year after his appointment to the see, Paleotti issued his first proclamation on prostitution, co-signed by the Papal Governor Giovanni Battista Doria and the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia Emilio Zambeccari.92 The proclamation assigned five specific city streets for the residence of prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers: via Remorsella in strada Santo Stefano (today’s via Remorsella), the.bràina degli Asinara (also known as the.bràina di San Donato, today’s via Irnerio), via Borgo Novo di San Felice (later called via Borgo Novo del Pratello, today’s via San Rocco), via Frassinago, and the Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza (today’s via Santa Caterina) (see Map 2.2).93 Those found living outside of these streets by the feast day of San Michele di Maggio (8 May) were to receive publicly 50 lashes and fined ten scudi, one-third of which was to go to the investigator of the Bollette who caught them and the remaining two-thirds to go to Bologna’s Convertite. Ibid.

91 One-third of all fines were to go to the investigator of the Bollette who caught them and the remaining two-thirds to go to Bologna’s Convertite. Ibid.
92 ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, fol. 117r. Doria was legate of Bologna in 1566 and governor between 1567 and 1570.
93 Only prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers who lived on Borgo di Santa Caterina at the time of the proclamation were allowed to live there after 8 May. The term ‘bràina’ was used to denote streets in areas which had once been suburban fields that had been enclosed within the final set of city walls erected in the early fourteenth century. Fanti, Le vie di Bologna, vol. 1, pp. 62-63. On the bràina degli Asinara (also known as the bràina San Donato), see ibid., vol. 2, pp. 444-446. The term ‘borgo’ was also used to denote streets which had been outside of the city walls until the final set was erected in the early fourteenth century. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 62. On the Borgo Novo di S. Felice see ibid., vol. 2, p. 613.
assigned streets:
1) Via Remorsella in strada Santo Stefano
2) Bràina degli Asinara
3) Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza
4) Via Frassinago
5) Borgo Novo di San Felice

Churches near assigned streets:
A) Santa Cristina
B) Santa Cristina di Pietralata
C) Santa Caterina di Saragozza
D) Santa Maddalena
E) Santa Maria Mascarella

investigator of the Bollette who handled the charge. The other two-thirds of the fine were to go to Bologna’s Casa delle Convertite (literally the home for converted prostitutes).

Paleotti and Doria were, however, dissatisfied with this proclamation. A few days later, between 2 and 9 May, the men of the Ufficio delle Bollette undertook two surveys, one
of all of the prostitutes living in Bologna and another of all of the rooms deemed appropriate for their residence. In all, 100 prostitutes were identified living outside the five streets permitted in the 1567 proclamation. The Ufficio delle Bollette approved 115 rooms for the residence of prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers in four specific streets: bràina degli Asinara, Borgo Novo di San Felice, Frassinago, and Santa Croce.

Paleotti and Doria then issued a new proclamation on 9 May that reflected the results of the Bollette’s survey. They ordered that prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers could live only in bràina degli Asinara, Borgo Novo di San Felice, and Santa Croce. They permitted those who currently lived on Frassinago, Santa Caterina di Saragozza, and

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94 These censuses exist in loose sheets, many of which are untitled and all of which are undated. I have concluded that the censuses were taken between the proclamations issued on 31 April 1567 and 9 May 1567 rather than after 9 May because while many streets were surveyed, a single list exists which tallies the censuses of only four streets—Asinara, Borgo Novo di San Felice, Santa Croce, and Baroncella. Though three of these streets were permitted under all three of Paleotti and Doria’s proclamations, Baroncella was permitted only under the proclamation of 9 May 1567 and did not appear in the proclamation of 31 January 1568. This points to the dating of the censuses between 21 April and 9 May (see Table 1.1). Via Pratello, which was only permitted under the proclamation of 31 January 1568, does not appear on the list. Via Frassinago and Santa Caterina di Saragozza were probably not included in the four-street list because the proclamation of 9 May permitted prostitutes to reside in them for only one more year. For the list of the four streets see ASB, Notarili, Ludovico Ostesani, 6, 2, [np], untitled, begins “Borgo Novo. Nella casa di borgo novo sono allogiamenti” (undated). For the census of rooms available on Asinara [also known as the bràina di San Donato] see ibid., [np], untitled, begins “In la Braina di S. Donato” (undated). For via Frassinago see ibid., [np] “Case che sono nel frasinago dalla via” (undated). For via Santa Croce see ibid., [np], untitled, begins “S. Croce al man drieta nel entrare,” (undated). For the contrada of Santa Croce see ibid., [np], untitled, begins “M.s Jacomo Monte cenere doi case 2,” (undated). For via Borgo Novo di San Felice, via Pratello, and the contrada of Santa Croce see ibid., [np], untitled, begins “1 La prima casa di borgo novo a p.enti” (undated). For the other streets surveyed see ibid., [np], untitled, begins “Alta Seda Donne n.o 8” (undated).

95 For the total of 100 prostitutes see ibid., [np], untitled, begins “Borgo Novo. Nella casa di borgo novo sono allogiamenti” (undated). See also ibid., [np], untitled, begins “Lista putane ch’ stano nel Borgho d. S.a Caterina,” (undated). The streets where prostitutes were found living included via Altaseta, borgo del’Apostoli (today’s via Azzo Gardino), Baroncella, Borgo di San Piero, Borgo di San Giacomo (today’s via San Giacomo), via Broccaindosso, Campo de Bovi (now via San Leonardo), via Ca’Selvatica, via Castel Tialto, via Gattamarza (today’s via Sant’Apollonia), Mirasole di sopra (now vicolo del Falcone), via Pietralata, via del Pratello, stra Castiglione, via Senzanome, and “other diverse places” (“in diversi lochi”). Ibid., [np], untitled, begins “Alta Seda Donne n.o 8” (undated). For the modern names of these streets, see Fanti, Le vie di Bologna.

96 For the total of 115 rooms, see ASB, Notarili, Ludovico Ostesani, 6, 2, [np], untitled, begins “Borgo Novo. Nella casa di borgo novo sono allogiamenti” (undated).

97 BUB, ms. 373, n. 3C, fols. 149v-150r.
Map 2.3: Streets assigned for the residence of prostitutes, 9 May 1567

Sources: BUB, ms. 373, no. 3C, fols. 149r-150r (9 May 1567) and ASB, Notarili, Ludovico Ostesani, 6.2, [np] "Meretricum" (undated).

Assigned streets:
1) Bràina degli Asinara
2) Borgo Novo di San Felice
3) Contrada di Santa Croce
4) Contrada di Baroncella
5) Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza
6) Via Frassinago

Churches and monasteries:
A) Santo Stefano
B) San Giovanni Battista dei Celestini
C) San Pietro
D) Santa Caterina di Saragozza
E) Santa Cristina di Pietralata

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Baroncella to remain for one year but required that they move by the following year (see Map 2.3). In addition to the ten scudi fine and 50 publically given lashes, prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers found living in prohibited streets were also to be paraded to the inns (hosterie) on Borgo Novo di San Felice in shame (vergognosamente) and accompanied by a drummer so as to ensure that they were seen by the public.

### Table 1.1: Streets assigned for the residence of prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers in the proclamations issued by Paleotti and Doria, 1567-1568

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>31 April 1567 / 2 May 1567</th>
<th>9 May 1567</th>
<th>31 January 1568</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Via Remorsella in strada Santo Stefano</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bràina degli Asinara</td>
<td>Bràina degli Asinara</td>
<td>Bràina degli Asinara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Borgo Novo di San Felice</td>
<td>Via Borgo Novo di San Felice</td>
<td>Borgo Novo di San Felice (now called Borgo Novo del Pratello)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Frassinago</td>
<td>Via Frassinago (for one year)</td>
<td>Via Frassinago (indefinitely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgo di Santa Caterina da Saragozza (only for those already living there)</td>
<td>Borgo di Santa Caterina da Saragozza (for one year)</td>
<td>Borgo di Santa Caterina da Saragozza (indefinitely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Contrada di Baroncella (for one year)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Via di Santa Croce</td>
<td>Via di Santa Croce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Via Pratello between Borgo Novo di San Felice and the city wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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98 In his 1583 Bolognese toponomy, *Nomi, et cognomi di tutte le strade, contrade, et borghi di Bologna. Dicchiarando la origine de principii loro* (Bologna: Pellegrino Bonardo, 1583) Giovanni de Zanti lists two ‘Baroncellas’: Baroncella di Saragozza and Baroncella di San Martino dalle Bollette (pp. 17-18). The former ran north/south between Saragozza and Ca’Selvatica while the latter ran north/south between Fusari and the ponticello di Sant’Archangelo, by the fifteenth-century brothel area. The 9 May 1567 proclamation permitted prostitutes to live in three streets for one year – the contrada di Baroncella, via Frassinago, and Borgo di Santa Caterina. Since Baroncella di Saragozza is directly to the east of the last two streets, I have assumed that this was the street they referred to as the “contrada di Baroncella.” However, it is possible that they meant Baroncella di San Martino dalle Bollette, since it was near the site of the old brothel area and near the Bollette’s office.

99 The lexicographer John Florio defined a ‘hostaria’ as “an inne or hosterie, a victualing house, an ale-house, a taverne; but properly a house where meate and drinke and lodging for men and horse is to be had.” John Florio, *A Worlde of Words, or most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English* (London: Edward Blount, 1598), p. 163. Borgo Novo di San Felice was one of the streets assigned by Paleotti and Doria for the residence prostitutes.

100 The term ‘contrada’ could mean either a street or an area around a specific building. Fanti, *Le vie di Bologna*, vol. 1, pp. 66-67.
By the turn of 1568 Paleotti and Doria were still not satisfied with their street assignments; on 31 January they issued yet another proclamation listing the streets on which prostitutes, courtesans, and male and female procurers could reside. This proclamation removed Baroncella from the list out of respect for the convent that had recently been established on the street, Santa Maria degli Angeli.  

Paleotti and Doria kept Asinara, Borgo Novo di San Felice (now known as the Borgo Novo del Pratello), and Santa Croce, and added the section of via Pratello stretching from Borgo Novo di San Felice to the city wall (see Map 2.4). Though the May 1567 proclamation ordered prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers to leave their residences on Frassinago and Santa Caterina di Saragozza by the feast day of San Michele di Maggio 1568, the proclamation of 31 January 1568 permitted them to reside in those streets indefinitely. It also ordered that any prostitute, courtesan, or male or female procurer found living outside of these six streets was to be fined ten scudi, publically whipped, and led to the inns located on Borgo Novo del Pratello.

An analysis of the locations of these streets in relation to the rest of the city reflects Paleotti’s concern that prostitution not pollute the religious and civic heart of Bologna. Not one was located near the city’s most important religious sites, such as the civic basilica of San Petronio, the bishop’s cathedral of San Pietro, or the churches of San Francesco, San Domenico, or Santo Stefano (see Map 2.4). Nor were they near the city’s political and cultural centre, Piazza Maggiore, on which sat San Petronio, and which was surrounded by the Palazzo Pubblico, the Palazzo dei Notai, the Palazzo del Podestà, and the newly built Archiginnasio. They were also distant from the streets that the civic government traditionally used for political and religious ceremonial processions, strada Maggiore and via Santo Stefano. For instance, when Cardinal Ranuccio Farnese, son of Pope Paul III and brother of Duke Pier Luigi of Parma, entered Bologna on 12 April 1565, he did so through the porta Santo Stefano and then followed via Santo Stefano into the centre of the city.

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101 ASB, Boschi, b. 541, fols. 170r-171v.
102 Ibid.
Map 2.4: Streets assigned for the residence of prostitutes, 31 January and 1 February 1568

Source: ASB, Boschi, b. 541, fols. 170r-171v

Assigned streets:
1) Bráina degli Asinara
2) Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza
3) Via Frassinago
4) Borgo Novo del Pratello (Borgo Novo di San Felice)
5) Contrada di Santa Croce
6) Via Pratello, from the top of Borgo Novo del Pratello to the city wall

Key religious and political sites:
A) San Petronio
B) San Pietro
C) San Francesco
D) San Domenico
E) Santo Stefano
F) Piazza Maggiore, Palazzo Pubblico, Palazzo dei Notai, Palazzo del Podestà, Archiginnasio
G) Via Santo Stefano
H) Strada Maggiore

Locations of the Conventite:
i) Before 1568 (convent of Sant'Orsola)  ii) After 1568 (monastery of Santi Giacomo e Filippo)
When Pope Leo X came to Bologna in 1515, Pope Clement VII came in 1529, and Pope Paul III came in 1541 they all entered through Porta Maggiore and followed Strada Maggiore into the centre of the city.\textsuperscript{104} Paleotti sought to keep prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers away from these major streets in order to contain their pollution and limit their ability to infect Bologna’s key civic and religious sites and her major processional routes.

Even though the locations of the streets assigned by Paleotti were distant from Bologna’s politically and religiously important sites, they were still within the city walls. Indeed, Paleotti did not attempt to eradicate prostitution by expelling prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers from the city. Instead, he marginalised them geographically. Maps 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 demonstrate that his approved streets lay at the outer margins of the city, just one or two blocks inside the walls. Pope Pius V took a similar approach in his reform of Roman prostitution. In July 1566 he ordered that all prostitutes take up residence in an area of Rome called Trastevere. While Trastevere was technically within the city, it was spatially divided from Rome’s social and economic heart by the Tiber river and was down river from the Vatican. Even when, in August 1566, Pius changed the permitted location in reaction to the protest of the Roman populace, he chose the Campo Marzio, an area on the same bank as the city’s heart but mainly residential and newly developed.\textsuperscript{105} Paleotti chose similar locations for the prostitutes of Bologna; the area that surrounded via Frassinago and Santa Caterina da Saragozza was populated mainly by the working poor, as were the other streets where he allowed prostitutes to reside. By choosing streets that were on the outskirts of the city and in areas populated by the working poor, Paleotti sought to further protect the city’s elite inhabitants and its religious and virtuous inhabitants and spaces from the evils of prostitutes and prostitution.

Yet Paleotti placed them on streets located in the vicinity of many of the existing residential student colleges of the university (see Map 2.5). For instance, Borgo Novo del Pratello, which was assigned in all three proclamations, was just a block away from the Collegio Fieschi (f. ca. 1364) and three blocks from the Collegio Vives (f. 1528). Bràina


degli Asinara, also assigned in all three proclamations, was a block away from the Collegio d’Ancarano (f. 1414), and two blocks away from the Collegio Ferrero (or Viola) (f. 1540) and the Collegio Ungaro-Illirico (f. 1553). Finally, Frassinago and Santa Caterina di Saragozza were just a short walk from the Collegio di San Clemente (f. 1364). Even via Remorsella, which was assigned only in the first of Paleotti’s and Doria’s proclamations, was just a block away from the recently founded Collegio dei Poeti (f. 1552).

The proximity of the streets assigned for the residence of prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers to the colleges raises important questions about Paleotti’s attitude towards prostitution. If, as previously indicated, Paleotti was attempting to change public opinion on prostitution by highlighting its sinfulness and if he wanted men to consider the threat that prostitution posed to their souls, why would he order prostitutes and procurers to live in the vicinity of university students? Tessa Storey has noted that the Campo Marzio, where in August 1566 Pope Pius V ordered Roman prostitutes to live, was near the Porta del Popolo, the principal entry point for travellers coming into Rome from the north and an area with many taverns, hotels, and hostelries frequented by visitors to the city. She has also pointed out that the Campo Marzio was in close proximity to the Piazza Trinità where the palaces of several cardinals and ambassadors were located. Storey suggested that the pope’s choice of the Campo Marzio may not have been completely incidental; she pointed out that travelers, cardinals, ambassadors, and their retinues were “assiduous clients” of prostitutes. It was simply practical to have prostitutes and prostitution located near their client base.

Paleotti was motivated by the same practicality when he placed prostitutes near Bologna’s colleges. There were an estimated two thousand students residing in Bologna in the mid-sixteenth century, most of whom were non-Bolognese and thus were living far from their natal communities and families. Perhaps Paleotti hoped that placing prostitutes in close proximity to the students would provide the latter with commercial sex, and thus they would be less inclined to commit the greater sins of adultery or sodomy. Like prostitutes,

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106 I thank Christopher Carlsmith for sharing his unpublished mapping of Bologna’s sixteenth-century colleges with me.
107 Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, p. 73.
moreover, students were known for the noise and violence – in short the social and moral disorder – that attended them. Paleotti thus ordered prostitutes to reside in streets near to the students in an attempt to confine the moral pollution of both of these groups to the same place. As argued previously, these areas were all distant from the most religiously important sites of the city.

Paleotti also attempted to reform prostitutes themselves. Though they lived wicked lives and drew others into sin, Paleotti wanted prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers to
consider the damage that they were doing to their own souls through their involvement in prostitution and to reform their lives accordingly. No longer was prostitution to be dismissed as merely an economic strategy or social transgression, now it was to be a matter of conscience. In his first proclamation, published 30 April 1567, Paleotti ordered that churches be assigned specifically for the use of prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers so that “they be able to hear Masses, other holy offices, and sacred preachings, through which they might be freed, by divine grace, from such extreme weakness and return to the most honest and holy Christian life.”

Paleotti did not specify which churches, but given his aim to contain prostitutes and procurers, it was most likely in the vicinity of the permitted streets. Via Remorsella in strada Santo Stefano was just west of the parish church of Santa Cristina and Borgo Novo di San Felice was close to the parish church of Santa Cristina di Pietralata (see Map 2.2). Frassinago and Santa Caterina di Saragozza were near the parish church of Santa Caterina di Saragozza. The bràina degli Asinara was just steps from the parish churches of Santa Maddalena and Santa Maria Mascarella. These are the most likely candidates given their proximity to the streets that Paleotti permitted prostitutes and procurers to live.

To further encourage prostitutes to repent, Paleotti also supported Bologna’s Convertite house, a place where prostitutes could retire from prostitution by adopting quasi-monastic lives based on enclosure and vows of poverty, obedience, and prayer. In 1568 Bologna’s Convertite moved from the convent of Sant’Orsola, which was outside the eastern city walls, to the oratory and monastery of Santi Giacomo e Filippo, which were inside the

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109 “Accioche unite che li sieno insieme d'habitatione, si possa deputarli qualche Chiese, dove habbino da udire le Messe, & altre santi Officiij, & le sacre Predicationi, mediand le quali con la gratia divina possano liberarsi da si pessima infermità, & ridursi all'honestissima, & santa vita Christiana.” ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, fol. 117r.

110 Bologna’s convertite lived under the Carmelite rule. Although the majority of women in Bologna’s Convertite were ex-prostitutes, it is important to note that other women lived there as well, including malmaritato (abandoned or mistreated wives) and girls and young women who were put there to be educated or to protect their honour (a educazione or in deposito). Lucia Ferrante, “Honor Regained: Women in the Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo in Sixteenth-Century Bologna,” in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective: Selections from Quaderni Storici*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 47; Gabriella Zarri, “I monasteri femminili a Bologna tra il XIII e il XVII secolo,” *Atti e Memorie della Deputazione di storia patria per le province di Romagna n.s.*, 24 (1973): 180-181. For an excellent study of the Convertite in Florence, see Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women’s Asylums since 1500. From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). On the Convertite of Ferrara, see Diane Yvonne Ghirardo, “The Topography of Prostitution in Renaissance Ferrara,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no. 4 (2001): 421-424. For that of Rome, see Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, pp. 64-65.
city (see Map 2.4). The chronicler and contemporary Giovanni Battista Marescalchi recorded that the nuns of the Convertite made their way in solemn procession from their old home to their new one, where they met Paleotti and “all of the other magistrates of Bologna.”

By moving the house to a location inside the city walls and by welcoming them at the new convent Paleotti made a notable public display of the existence of the Convertite within the city and of the possibilities that the institution offered to prostitutes who might be persuaded to repent and leave the trade.

Bringing the actual building of the Convertite inside the city walls also placed it geographically within the city’s orbit of charitable institutions, a move that may have helped to ensure its financial viability through gifts and bequests. Paleotti also tried to augment the Convertite’s finances by ordering that two-thirds of the fines levied on prostitutes who failed to comply with his regulations go to the house. The Convertite was awarded further financial support from prostitution in 1569 when Pope Pius V granted it the right to inherit the goods of deceased prostitutes. By attempting to funnel the monies levied on prostitutes through fines as well as all of their inheritable goods to the Convertite, Paleotti sought to make good on the sins of prostitutes and to ensure the Convertite’s financial stability, which would in turn give it the ability to accept – and reform – as many ex-prostitutes as possible.

4. Regulation after Reform

Gabriele Paleotti’s proclamations were altered and reissued five times between the years 1567 and 1568. By 1571, however, Paleotti’s name disappeared from legislation on prostitution and his system of regulation ceased to be ordered in subsequent proclamations.

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111 Santi Giacomo e Filippo had been donated to the Convertite by the sisters of the Compagnia del Ponte delle Lame at the request of Gabriele Paleotti. Lucia Ferrante, “‘Malmaritate’ tra assistenza e punizione (Bologna, secc. XVI-XVII),” in Forme e soggetti dell’intervento assistenziale in una città di antico regime, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Istituto per la Storia di Bologna, 1986), pp. 73-74. For papal recognition of the relocation of Bologna’s Convertite in 1569, see BCB, Gozzadini, 406, 6, “Breve S. D. N. Pri Papae V Super confirmatione translationis monasterii monialium convertitarum de suburbio intra civitatem Bononia,” (14 May 1570).

112 “tutti gli altri magistrati di Bologna.” Marescalchi, Cronaca, p. 67.

113 ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, fol. 117r (30 April and 2 May 1567); BUB, ms. 373, n. 3C, fol. 150r (9 May 1567); ASB, Boschi, b. 541, fol. 171v (31 January and 1 February 1568).


115 30 April 1567 and reissued 2 May 1567, then on 9 May 1567, and then on 31 January 1568 and reissued 2 February 1568.
In place of his proclamations came new ones that were authored by either the papal representative and the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia or the Ufficio delle Bollette. These returned to the system of regulation that had operated in Bologna before Paleotti’s assumption of regulation and was not based primarily on the immorality of prostitutes, their clients, and prostitution as a whole. As this subsection will reveal, this system would continue to operate in Bologna well into the early seventeenth century.\footnote{Chapter Three of this dissertation will analyse the regulation of prostitution in the period between 1583 and 1630 in more detail than is given here. Reference is made here to this regulation in order to illustrate the differences between it and the regulations issued by Paleotti, as well as the similarities between it and the regulations issued in the early and mid-sixteenth century.}

First and foremost, the proclamations on prostitution issued in Bologna between 1571 and 1630 no longer ordered the residential confinement of prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers in selected streets. Instead, the civic authorities permitted them to live throughout the city as long as they registered with the Bollette as they had under the system that operated between 1545 and 1566.\footnote{BUB, ms. 373, n. 3C, fol. 133r-v “Statuta de Meretricibus et Lenonis, &c,” (13 January 1571). I am grateful to Nicholas Terpstra for sharing his notes on these documents with me.} The civic government and the Bollette did not share Paleotti’s view that prostitutes were polluted and infectious and thus had to be physically marginalised from the rest of the population. They did, however, still conceive of prostitution as a threat to morality and social peace, and so prostitutes were forbidden from living near specific nunneries and churches. These restrictions were not, however, presented in a single proclamation, but through various proclamations about specific religious houses that were issued sporadically on an ad-hoc basis over the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For instance, a proclamation issued in 1571 prohibited prostitutes from living in Fiaccacollo (today’s via della Bràina) which was located near the nunnery of San Lorenzo.\footnote{BUB, Raro, c. 88/59, “Bando che meretrice e donne disoneste non possino habitar, ne che se gli possa a pigiaronare case in Fiacalco, drieto il monasterio delle suore di San Lorenzo,” (20 February 1571) as cited in Bononia Manifesta. Catalogo di bandi, editi, constituzioni e provvedimenti diversi, stampati nel XVI secolo per Bologna e il suo territorio, ed. Zita Zanardi (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1996), p. 109. On Fiaccacollo see Fanti, Le vie di Bologna, vol. 1, p. 215.} In 1585, prostitutes were prohibited from living in the parish of Sant’Orsola (also called via San Leonardo in the document and called via San Lorenzo today) where the nunnery of the same name was located.\footnote{ASB, Boschi, b. 542, fol. 168r, “Bando che Meretrice & Donne dishoneste non possino habitar, ne che se gli possa a pigiaronare case in la parocchia delle Suore di Santa Orsola, altramente San Leonardo,” (8 February 1585). On via San Lorenzo see Fanti, Le vie di Bologna, vol. 2, pp. 469-470.} Another proclamation issued in 1621 forbade prostitutes and other ‘dishonest people’ from living in via Senzanome because of its
proximity to the church of Madonna dalla Neve.\textsuperscript{120} The 54 proclamations issued between 1571 and 1630 prohibited prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers from living in the vicinity of only 23 distinct nunneries and churches. They were thus not prohibited from living near all nunneries and monasteries, but only near the few that appear in the proclamations.

These proclamations were issued in reaction to the complaints of particular religious and secular groups at particular times, making them the exception rather than the rule. For instance, Vice Legate Orazio Spinola issued a proclamation in 1602 that forbade prostitutes and courtesans from living in the contrada of Santa Maria della Neve. He stated that he had done so at the insistence of the confraternity that met at the church of the same name.\textsuperscript{121} Nineteen years later, in 1621, Papal Legate Giulio Savelli issued a proclamation that forbade prostitutes and courtesans from living in the same contrada and he, too, noted the insistence of the confraternity brothers as well as of the other inhabitants that this order be issued.\textsuperscript{122} In 1612 prostitutes and other ‘dishonest people’ were forbidden from living in via San Giorgio at the insistence of the nobles and citizens who lived in the neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{123} Prostitutes were thus prohibited from living in the proximity of specific nunneries and monasteries in this period only when socially and religiously powerful groups insisted upon it.

Records compiled by the Ufficio delle Bollette show that after 1571 prostitutes returned to living throughout the city. For instance, in 1583 292 prostitutes were recorded by the Bollette as living in at least 64 different streets spread across the city.\textsuperscript{124} Some of these prostitutes lived on the streets that had been assigned by Paleotti in the late 1560s: 55 lived on Borgo Novo del Pratello, 42 lived on via Frassinago, five lived on Borgo Novo di Santa Caterina da Saragozza, and one lived on Asinara.\textsuperscript{125} However, the majority of registered

\textsuperscript{120} BCB, \textit{Bandi Merlani}, X, fol. 128r, “Bando contra le meretrici, & persone inhoneste,” (20 August 1621).

\textsuperscript{121} “questo tanto ad instanza de gli huomini d’essa Confraternità, & habitanti in detta Contrada, quanto ex officio.” BCB, \textit{Bandi Merlani}, IV, fol. 207r, untitled, begins “Essendo la Contrada di Santa Maria dalla Neve sempre stata Contrada quieta” (31 January 1602).

\textsuperscript{122} “et le presente cose tanto ad instanza de gl’homini della Madonna dalla Neve, confraternità di essa, e persone honeste di detta strada quanto ex officio.” Ibid.


\textsuperscript{124} I say ‘prostitutes’ here because while the proclamations ordered the registration of prostitutes, courtesans, and male and female procurers, notaries did not identify whether the women they had entered into the registers were prostitutes, courtesans, or procurers and no men were registered at all.

\textsuperscript{125} ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796}, Campione delle Meretrici 1583.
prostitutes lived outside of these streets, and while some clustered on specific areas such via Torleone, on which 28 prostitutes lived in 1583, most lived in streets where only one or two other registered prostitutes also lived.

As in the two decades leading up to Paleotti’s elevation as bishop of Bologna, after 1571 all prostitutes, courtesans, and male and female procurers were required to register with the Bollette. This was repeatedly ordered through bi-annual, normalised proclamations issued by the magistracy. Registration required giving first and last names, place of origin, and current address to the Bollette’s notaries, who recorded this information into annual registers (the campioni delle meretrici). Once they had been registered, women were sold a printed licence (a bolletta) that they could show as proof of registration should the esecutore or another official of the Bollette demand to see one. The price of registration was three lire a year, or five soldi a month. Those found practicing prostitution without this licence were to be fined ten lire and forced to register.

The normalised proclamations of the Ufficio delle Bollette lacked the harsh moralising rhetoric that characterised Paleotti’s proclamations. Instead of emphasising the sinfulness of prostitutes and the pollution that they spread, the normalised proclamations simply stated that their regulations were necessary “for the observance and execution of the statutes of the Ufficio delle Bollette of the city of Bologna.” Moreover, the regulations for

126 By “normalised” I mean that they were printed on a regular basis (bi-annually in January and June of each year) and were almost exactly the same as each other. For the 1571 proclamations, see BUB, ms. 373, n. 3C, fol. 132r-v and BUB, ms. 373, n. 3C, fol. 133r-v. [untitled], (18 January 1571). I am grateful to Nicholas Terpstra for sharing his notes on these documents with me. For later proclamations which state the necessity of registration, see (amongst others) ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 8, fol. 52r, “Bando sopra l’officio delle Bollette et presentationi de Forastieri,” (11 July 1575); ASB, Boschi, b. 542, fol. 162r, “Bando et provisione dell’Offitio delle bollette, & presentazione de forestieri,” (8 January 1585); ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 14, fol. 187r, “Bando et Provisione dell’Ufficio delle Bollette, e presentazione de forestieri,” (14 January 1593); ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 16, fol. 249r, “Bando et Provisone dell’Ufficio delle Bollette, sopra li Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e stabularii, & sopra li Forastieri, Hebrei, Meretrici, & persone inhoneste,” (24 January 1605); ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1612, [np] “Bando sopra l’Ufficio delle Bollette, e presentationi de’ Forestieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Taverni, e Meretrici,” (8 March 1613); BCB, Bandi Merlani, IX 2, fol. 88r, “Bando sopra l’Ufficio delle Bollette, e presentationi de’ Forestieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e Meretrici,” (1 January 1618); BCB, Bandi Merlani, XII, fol. 56r, “Bando sopra l’Ufficio delle Bollette, e presentationi de’ Forestieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Taverni, e Meretrici,” (9 January 1624).

127 This amount was much lower than the fifteen lire charged in the late sixteenth century for three months registration as a prostitute in Florence. In Florence, moreover, prostitutes had to buy a special licence to practice at night, which cost and extra two lire and lasted only fifteen days. Terpstra, “Sex and the Sacred.”

prostitutes contained in these proclamations were limited to a short passage. For example, one issued in 1602 stated that:

We also order that within eight days all prostitutes, courtesans, casarenghe, other shameful people who live shamelessly, and male and female procurers living in the said city must present themselves in person (and not use a third party unless they receive a legal mandate [to do so]) before the Lord officials [of the Ufficio delle Bollette] or their notaries and give them in writing their true name, last name, place of origin, place where they stay, and whom they live with, and we order that they do not move within the city or leave Bologna without a written licence from the Lord officials or their notaries, under penalty of ten soldi for each person and every time they disobey.  

These proclamations did not assert, as Paleotti’s had, that prostitutes and procurers were dangerous to the Bolognese civic body or to the Christian community. Nor did they order prostitutes, courtesans, and procurers to live in specific areas of the city or require them to wear a distinguishing sign. Instead, the people identified in the proclamation were ordered to register regularly with the Bollette and inform its notaries of any changes to their personal situations, such as their place of residence. These proclamations aimed to increase the Bollette’s ability to control and police prostitution by providing it with the information necessary to identify women who sold sex and thereby increase the collection of fees and fines. Moreover, these orders were not unique to prostitutes and procurers— as in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Bollette continued to require that all foreigners who wished to visit or reside in the city register with the magistracy upon arrival and notify its officials if they changed lodgings. In 1569-1586, at the time of the first group expulsion of Jews from Bologna, the Bollette also required those Jews who passed through the city to do the same, and then again after 1592 (in the wake of their second and final group expulsion). Finally, the Bollette required innkeepers and those who rented out rooms to register their businesses with the magistracy and pay a regular fee.

129 “Ancora si comanda a tutte le meretrici, cortegiane, casarenghe, & altre persone inhoneste, che inhonestamente vivono, ruffiani, & ruffiane habitanti in detta città, che fra termine di otto giorni debbano presentarsi personalmente, & non per interposta persona, se non havrà legitimo mandato dinanzi a detti SS. officiali, ò suoi notari dandogli in nota li loro nomi veri, & cognomi, patrie, & luoghi dove stanno, & habitano col non partirsi di un loco per andar ad un’altro, & fuori della terra, senza licenza in scritto di detti SS. officiali, ò suoi notari, sotto pena di lire dieci de bolognini per ciascuno, & ciascuna volta sarà contrafatto.” Ibid. I use the term ‘casarenghe’ here because I am as yet unsure of what it mean in the late sixteenth century.  

130 Ibid.  

131 Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, “Ebrei a Bologna nel XVI secolo,” in Bologna nell’età moderna (secoli XVI-XVIII), v. 3, n. 1: Istituzioni, forme del potere, economia e società, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Bologna:
The fact that the proclamations ordered foreigners, Jews, prostitutes, and procurers to register with the Bollette is suggestive of the way in which the authorities viewed prostitutes and procurers in this period – not as a particularly dangerous group, but one that, nevertheless, was seen as ‘other’ and had, therefore, traditionally been marginalised. Moreover, the civic government could profit from regulating and registering all of these groups. Indeed, cases brought before the Bollette’s tribunal between 1601 and 1630 show that the Bollette took registration seriously, as attested by the many investigations of suspected prostitutes, procurers, and foreigners and their subsequent fining.\footnote{The marginalisation of prostitutes and prostitution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was thus not based on a conception of prostitutes as \textit{dangerously} immoral, but rather as sources of moral and social disorder that could be controlled through registration and regulation, rather than confinement.}

Further evidence that the civic government and the men of the Ufficio delle Bollette viewed prostitutes as a less serious moral threat than Paleotti had is demonstrated by the fact the Ufficio delle Bollette offered them legal recourse against clients who owed them money but refused to pay. Registered prostitutes could bring such accusations to the Bollette, who after an investigation would bring cases in front of the tribunal of the Bollette that was presided over by the magistracy’s officials and the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia.\footnote{Lucia Ferrante has estimated that between 1600 and 1630 over 300 such cases were handled by the Bollette, and many of the prostitutes won their cases.\footnote{The offer of legal recourse to} Bononia University Press, 2008), pp. 862-870. Jews were charged a specific rate for registration while Christians were charged based on where they were travelling from. For instance, in 1618 all Jews who arrived on foot had to pay one \textit{soldo} to register while Christians who travelled on foot from Piacenza had to pay two soldi, six \textit{denari}, and Christians who travelled on foot from Treviso paid one soldo. BCB, \textit{Bandi Merlani}, IX/2, fol. 88r, “Bando sopra l’Ufficio delle Bollette, e presentationi de’Forastieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e Meretrici” (4 January 1618).} For the registers of inns and rented rooms see ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette}, 1549-1769, Osti e cameranti vacchetta 1598, 1601, 1603-1608, 1612-1613, 1615-1616, and 1621-1630.\footnote{For the registers of inns and rented rooms see ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette}, 1549-1769, Osti e cameranti vacchetta 1598, 1601, 1603-1608, 1612-1613, 1615-1616, and 1621-1630.} For the registers of inns and rented rooms see ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette}, 1549-1769, Osti e cameranti vacchetta 1598, 1601, 1603-1608, 1612-1613, 1615-1616, and 1621-1630.\footnote{For example, 89 women registered in 1601, 146 in 1602, 125 in 1603, 150 in 1604, 104 in 1605, 112 in 1606, 110 in 1607, 169 in 1608, 163 in 1609, 166 in 1610, 167 in 1611, and 251 in 1612.} The denunciations, investigations, and judicial decisions of these cases are collected in ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette}, 1549-1769, Actorum et debitorum 1583; Actorum 1601-1607, 1611-1615, 1618, 1621-1625, 1627-1630; Debitorum 1608, and Filze 1601-1607, 1611-1615, 1618, 1621-1630.\footnote{The denunciations, investigations, and judicial decisions of these cases are collected in ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette}, 1549-1769, Actorum et debitorum 1583; Actorum 1601-1607, 1611-1615, 1618, 1621-1625, 1627-1630; Debitorum 1608, and Filze 1601-1607, 1611-1615, 1618, 1621-1630.} Ferrante, “‘Pro mercede carnale,’” p. 48. However, Ferrante herself points out that such cases were far from common. The most denunciations brought by prostitutes against clients in a single year which she found was 57 in 1611. In 1609 542 women had registered with the Ufficio delle Bollette, while 350 women did so just five years later. This drop in registration continued throughout the early seventeenth century: in 1619 232 women registered, while in 1624 257 did. This pattern of decline suggests that less than 542 but more than...
registered prostitutes was thus not an empty promise; the Bollette actually helped some prostitutes collect fees that were owed to them.

The regulation of prostitutes and prostitution in Bologna after 1571 was thus very different from the system of regulation established by Gabriele Paleotti in the late 1560s. What changed in Bologna that had led to the replacement of Paleotti’s system of regulation with one controlled by the civic government and that was identical to the system used before 1566?

The answer lies in the difficulties Paleotti faced as he attempted to assert his authority in Bologna. Historians have demonstrated the radical nature of Paleotti’s wider program for the reform of Bologna’s church and faithful and the subsequent resistance to it of Bologna’s clergy and laity. Gabriella Zarri has examined the struggle between Paleotti and the Bolognese oligarchy over the enclosure of nuns. Paleotti was especially adamant that the strict enclosure of nuns decreed by the Council of Trent be observed in Bologna. 136

The oligarchy, on the other hand, resented and resisted this because complete enclosure meant that they could no longer board their daughters and female family members in religious houses nor visit them freely once the women had entered. The situation became so tense that the civic rulers asked the Bolognese ambassador in Rome to speak directly to the pope about the issue, bypassing Paleotti altogether. In the end the pope forced a compromise between them, but the enmity remained. 137

Similarly, Craig A. Monson has pointed to Paleotti’s failure to restrict the music performed by nuns in church in an attempt to ensure their full enclosure. The bishop allowed only one organ per convent, with no other instruments, and ordered the nuns sing only monophonic music. He further ordered that their musical performances take place behind a grate that hid the nuns from attendees. As Monson shows, the nuns found a way around Paleotti’s restrictions either by appealing to other religious authorities or by smuggling extra organs into their convents. 138

Though both the

350 women registered in 1611. If only 57 registered prostitutes brought cases against clients in that year then the number of women who used this avenue of legal recourse was very small. This issue will be discussed more completely in the Chapter Four.

137 This led to the eventual creation of the assonti per le monache, a permanent commission populated by representatives of both the bishop and the secular men of the city, which was responsible for bring issues concerning enclosure in Bologna to the papacy. Zarri, “Chiesa, religione, società,” pp. 962-964. For more on the tension between the oligarchy and Paleotti see Prodi, Il Cardinale, especially vol. 2.
138 Monson, “Disembodied Voices.”
secular governors and the religious men and women of Bologna wanted some religious reform, they often found Paleotti’s approaches to be too radical and thus resisted them.

Paleotti’s commitment to the decrees of the Council of Trent and his efforts to reform the Bolognese Church more broadly also brought him into jurisdictional conflict with Bologna’s civic government. As explained previously in this chapter, the ruling oligarchy of Bologna had a long history of working to gain and retain power over local governance. They thus jealously guarded their control over civic matters such as the regulation of prostitution. Historians agree that Bolognese bishops held little authority in the diocese in the years before Paleotti’s appointment. Most of the previous bishops had obtained their positions through nepotism, and only a few had maintained residence in the city. Because of the absence of the bishop, throughout the early sixteenth century the papal representatives and the senatorial oligarchy of Bologna had increasingly legislated on both civic and spiritual matters. Though the papal legates had been granted authority over both of these realms by the papacy, the governors had never received such permission. Nevertheless, governors had increasingly assumed such power for themselves. For instance, in his *Bando generale* of 8 February 1566 that was analysed previously in this chapter, Governor Francesco Bossi included legislation on spiritual matters, such as blasphemy, begging during the celebration of Mass, and the enclosure of nuns.

Like his predecessors, Giovanni Battista Doria, legate when Paleotti became bishop and then papal governor during the first years of Paleotti’s episcopacy, issued a *Bando generale* that legislated on both civil and religious matters. Paleotti caught wind of Doria’s intention before he published it and immediately complained to the current pope, Pius V, and to the congregation of the Council of Trent about the papal governor’s infringements on his jurisdiction. Citing the ruling of the Council of Trent that accorded bishops ultimate authority over papal governors and which ordered that, with the exception of the pope, 

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139 See Paolo Prodi, *Il Cardinalato*, vol. 2; Mazzone, “‘Evellant vicia...aedificent virtutes’”; Zarri, “Chiesa, religione, società.”
140 Ibid., pp. 955-957.
141 Mazzone, “‘Evellant vicia...aedificent virtutes,’” pp. 1027-1028.
142 Umberto Mazzone notes that in 1524 Clement VII had given one of his Bolognese Legates, Innocenzo Cibo, an extraordinary amount of power over temporal and spiritual matters, more than his predecessors had held, and that such power was granted again to Legate Giovanni Morone in 1544. Ibid., pp. 695-697.
143 ASB, *Boschi*, b. 541, fols. 111r-128v, “Bando Generale dell’ Reverendissimo Monsignor il Signor Prothonotario Bossio Governatore di Bologna” (1 and 8 February 1566).
bishops alone had jurisdiction over spiritual matters within their dioceses, Paleotti asked that Pius V intervene.\textsuperscript{144} As he wrote,

> From the time I came to this see, which Your Holiness was pleased to give me, I have worked to arrange various things according to what God has allowed me and particularly what you have established, thus concerning devout behaviour in churches, observance of holy days, and the regular discipline of the nuns and other similar matters [...]. Now that these orders, praise God, have gone well, it seems that a desire to make other provisions with different punishments or means can only be detrimental. And Monsignor the Governor having intended to publish a certain proclamation concerning these matters, influenced, I believe, by the example of some of his predecessors who, before [the opening] of the council [of Trent] and in the absence of the ordinaries, had interfered in episcopal matters, it seems right to unburden my conscience and make it known to Your Holiness so that you can order what you judge appropriate.\textsuperscript{145}

Paleotti’s recourse to the pope was not, however, successful and on 17 June 1567 Doria’s \textit{Bando generale} was published.\textsuperscript{146} As Paleotti had suspected, the proclamation legislated on both civic and spiritual matters, including discipline and silence in churches, the enclosure of nuns, and the observance of holy days.\textsuperscript{147} According to Paolo Prodi, Doria was “violently opposed” to Paleotti’s work because the two understood the relationship between spiritual and secular government differently. In Doria’s eyes, the governor was responsible for emanating such legislation, not the bishop.\textsuperscript{148}

Throughout the 1560s Doria continued to make legal pronouncements on both secular and spiritual matters as well as to exercise his authority over people and issues under the jurisdiction of the episcopal courts. For instance, he ordered the imprisonment of clergymen who under canon law could be tried only in church courts.\textsuperscript{149} He also seized church estates and payments and insisted that legal cases, which should have been heard in

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{144} Canon twenty of the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent. As quoted in Prodi, \textit{The Papal Prince}, trans. Haskins, p. 125.
\item \textsuperscript{145} As quoted in ibid., pp. 127-128.
\item \textsuperscript{146} The next year, in the summer of 1568, Pius did set up a commission to examine and decide the jurisdictional authority of the bishop and the governor. In 1569 he handed down his decision, which though it was ultimately a compromise between the two, did not secure the ultimate authority of the bishop over the governor. Ibid., pp. 133-139.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Ibid. See Prodi’s detailed discussion of the relationship between Paleotti and Doria in ibid., pp. 127-146.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Ibid., pp. 128-129.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotes}
the ecclesiastical court, be heard in the civil court instead. In all these matters, the pope continued to take Doria’s side, as he had done in the disagreement over the Bando generale, ignoring Paleotti’s frequent letters. Indeed, according to Paolo Prodi and Umberto Mazzone, throughout the 1560s the pope continuously undermined Paleotti’s attempts to assert his authority and this led to the further erosion of the bishop’s power.

In addition to having his work frustrated by the pope and the papal governor, Paleotti also had problems within the diocese itself. For instance, he faced opposition from his canons to the pastoral visits he had begun soon after assuming the episcopate. The canons resented Paleotti’s insistence that he himself lead the examination of them and their priests. Paleotti also faced opposition from the Bolognese oligarchy. A native Bolognese himself, Paleotti came from an old aristocratic family that had held senatorial positions since the early sixteenth century. Gabriele’s own brother Camillo Paleotti was both a senator as well as the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia, and during his brother’s episcopate he served as Bologna’s ambassador to Rome and Ferrara. As part of the Bolognese patriciate and from one of the families of the senatorial oligarchy, Paleotti’s claims to authority – even as bishop – drew opposition from the Bolognese oligarchy as traditional rivalries played themselves out.

As a dedicated reformer, Paleotti saw it as his responsibility to ensure that the decrees of the Council of Trent were enforced in his see. However, the pope, his papal representatives, the canons and priests of Bologna, and the Bolognese oligarchy resented Paleotti for what they saw as his attempts to impose his will on matters under their jurisdiction. Though the papal representative and the Bolognese oligarchy ultimately pushed Paleotti out of the regulation of prostitution, he did not give up trying to claim his right to do so. In December 1572, Paleotti compiled a list of 25 points on ecclesiastical jurisdiction that

150 Ibid.
154 Dolfi, Cronologia della famiglie, p. 574.
he asked the new pope, Gregory XIII, to assign to him as bishop. Point fourteen concerned the regulation of prostitution in the see. As it read:

The bishop should proceed against concubines, both clerical and lay, and against the concubinage of priests, and against prostitutes, should there be any, on the grounds of their sin and for the sake of public decency.\(^{155}\)

Even on this occasion, however, Paleotti was unsuccessful, and for the next two centuries the regulation of prostitution remained in the hands of the civic government and the Bollette. Subsequent regulation also continued to follow the system of registration and regulation introduced by 1545. Judging by their operations, the officials, notaries, and esecutori of the Ufficio delle Bollette continued to approach prostitutes and prostitution as sources of moral and social disorder and the business of prostitution as a necessary part of the civic gender economy.

This chapter has demonstrated the changes and continuities in the view of prostitutes and prostitution held by sixteenth century regulators. As in the fifteenth century, regulators and administrators alike ordered and enforced the marginalisation of prostitutes and prostitution since both were possible sources of social and moral disorder. However, the methods by which regulators enforced this marginalisation changed. While in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries regulators demanded the residential confinement of prostitutes in segregation zones, by 1540, if not earlier, this tactic was abandoned in favour of registration. Though their methods had changed, however, the goal was still the same. Once prostitutes were free to live throughout the city, regulators had to devise new ways to separate them from the honourable members of Bolognese society. Thus, prostitutes were ordered to stand at the back when they attended church and were prohibited from living or spending time near specific nunneries and monasteries.

This chapter has also demonstrated that the Catholic reform movement of the mid-sixteenth century did not radically alter the regulation of prostitution within the city either in form or intensity. Instead, regulators continued to police prostitution as they had in the 1540s, 1550s, and the early 1560s. The civic government and the Ufficio delle Bollette had devised a reformed system of their own derived from the practical experience regulating

\(^{155}\) “Quod episcopus procedat contra concubinarios tam clericos quam laicos nec non contra concubinas clericorum, ac etiam contra quasquaque meretrices ratione peccati et publicae honestatis.” As quoted and translated in Prodi, *The Papal Prince*, pp. 147-148. Prodi does not reveal the pope’s decision on this matter.
prostitution within Bologna. Indeed, given the fact that the Bollette carried out the system ordered by the civic government after 1571, it is clear that it was reluctant to trade its new and improved system for the difficulties of enforcing residential segregation. The failure of Paleotti’s project of reform for the regulation of prostitution reveals the complexities that faced Catholic reformers in implementing the Council of Trent’s decrees. Paleotti had to confront not only an aggressively local ruling oligarchy and a papal governor who were adamant about maintaining their authority over local governance, but also a conservative civic magistracy that was loathe to change its methods.

This chapter has examined the application of the regulations on prostitution by the Ufficio delle Bollette. The next chapter will engage in a much more focused and detailed examination of the application of regulation between the years 1583 and 1630 and the responses to it of prostitutes, officials, notaries, esecutori, and the wider Bolognese public.
Chapter Three
The Application of Regulation: Bureaucrats and Prostitutes, 1583-1630

On 9 January 1604, Sabadina Dardana left her room on via Frassinago, a street located in the south-west corner of the city, and began her fifteen-minute walk to the Ufficio delle Bollette, located in the piazzetta delle Bollette, just half a block west of Piazza Maggiore.1 Upon entering the office, Sabadina spoke with the notary on duty, either Giulio Belvisi or Lorenzo Cattanei, and gave him her full name, her address, and her landlord’s name. She then gave the notary five soldi, in return for which he issued her a licence to practice prostitution in the city for one month. In the eight days since the turn of the new year, at least 139 women had already registered through this process as prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ and purchased licences.2 Another 26 would do so on the same day as Sabadina, and hundreds more would do so in the coming months.3

1 In his 1635 toponymy of Bologna, Adriano Banchieri called the piazzetta the “Piazzola dl’Bullet”. See Mario Fanti, Le vie di Bologna. Saggio di toponomastica storica. 2nd ed. 2 volumes (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 2000), vol. II, p. 646. Giuseppe Guidicini likewise called it the Piazzetta delle Bollette in his toponymy, which was published between 1868 and 1873. Giuseppe Guidicini, Cose notabili della città di Bologna, ossia, storia cronologica de suoi stabili sacri, pubblici e privati (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1982), vol. I, pp. 73-76. Today, the piazzetta sits on via Quattro Novembre between via de’ Fusari and via Massimo D’Azeglio.

2 While all of the extant registers from 1583-1630 were titled “Campione delle Puttane” (Register of Whores) or “Campione delle Meretrici” (Register of Prostitutes) by the Bollette’s notaries, between 1603 and 1608 a note on the first folio page of each book specifically stated that it was to be used to record the names of prostitutes (meretrici) and donne inhoneste. In addition, conclusions of trials held by the Bollette’s tribunal show that the officials did indeed find women guilty of being unregistered ‘dishonest women’, rather than prostitutes, and these women were subsequently entered into the registration books. Exactly where the difference between such women lay is unclear, however, since women from both categories were found guilty of trading sexual services to strangers for money and gifts as well as for having long-term sexual relationships with men to whom they were not married but from whom they received gifts and sometimes shared homes and food with. As will be discussed below, for the most part the Bollette’s notaries did not use these categories in the register entries, suggesting that the differences between them were either unclear or unimportant to them in their day-to-day work. I have chosen to use the term ‘dishonest women’ throughout this dissertation for two reasons. The first is that a parallel translation of ‘donne inhoneste’ – ‘dishonourable women’ – does not render well into English and obscures meaning. Translated into English, the term lacks meaning because modern Western culture does not judge ‘honour’, essentially public reputation, in the same way that early modern Italians did. When sixteenth- and seventeenth-century women and men used the term, they were referring to a culturally recognised set of moral judgements about women’s behaviour, which, while informed by many of the same characteristics that we praise today, such as sexual abstinence or fidelity, were still quite different in quality from ours. I have thus chosen to use ‘dishonest women’ in order to ensure that modern readers remain alert to its specific early modern cultural meaning. The literature on early modern Italian women’s honour is large. For studies of Bolognese women’s honour, see Luisa Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali: La dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baracanno (1630-1680),” Quaderni storici 53 (1983): 469-497; Lucía Ferrante, “Honor Regained: Women in the Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo in Sixteenth-Century Bologna,” in Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective: Selections from Quaderni Storici, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, 499-528 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). For more on the concept of honour amongst early modern Italian prostitutes, see Elizabeth S. Cohen, “Honor and Gender in the Streets of
In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of women in Bologna registered with the Bollette through this procedure. Civic law required that all women who had sex with men that they were not married to (whether paid or not) register with the Bollette as prostitutes and purchase licences from the magistracy on a regular basis. Those who did not were threatened with a fine of ten lire. Licences could be bought for the span of one month, at a cost of five soldi, for a semester (six months), at a cost of one lira, ten soldi, or for the entire year, at a cost of three lire.\(^4\) Some women, like Sabadina, obeyed the law and registered and purchased licences from the Bollette on a regular basis. Other women did not. Instead, they were denounced by a neighbour or relative or caught by the staff of the Bollette in flagrante and forced to register.

In order to manage the licensing of prostitutes, the Bollette’s notaries kept a wide array of documentation, including annual registers of prostitutes (the campioni delle puttane or campioni delle meretrici), annual registers of innkeepers, tavern operators, and landlords (the vaccette d’osti e cameranti), and books of denunciations, investigations, testimonies, and trials (the libri inventionum, libri da esamini, libri actorum, libri debitorum, libri querelarum, and libri criminalium). Thousands of unbound sheets of paper also resulted from the Bollette’s work, which at the end of each calendar year the notaries gathered together into un-indexed bundles, called filze. These bundles range in size from a few hundred pages to over a thousand pages, and contain a wide variety of records pertaining to the licensing and regulation of prostitutes: testimonies taken during investigations, denunciations made by the Bollette’s staff, copies of citations-to-appear, notes that the Bollette’s staff leave particular women and men alone, records of marriage, records of confession, copies of the Bollette’s bi-annual proclamations, and correspondence between...

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\(^3\) In 1604, a total of 611 women were registered as prostitutes or ‘dishonest women’ by the Ufficio delle Bollette. Archivio di Stato di Bologna (henceforth ASB), Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Campione delle Meretrici (henceforth C de M) 1604, [np] section ‘S’, Sabadina Dardana.

\(^4\) In late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bologna, there were twenty soldi in a lira. Thus, the cost of a licence for a semester (one lira, ten soldi) exactly equalled six months registration at a cost of five soldi per month (5 multiplied by six = 30 soldi, or one lira, ten soldi) and the cost of a licence for one year (three lire) exactly equalled twelve months registration (5 multiplied by 12 = 60 soldi, or three lire). The Bollette’s notaries divided the year into two semesters, each of which spanned six months.
the Bollette and the city’s other magistracies.\(^5\) Thanks to the work of both the Bollette’s notaries and later archivists, much of this documentation from between 1583 and 1796 has survived into the present day.

The bureaucratic material of the Ufficio delle Bollette provides an invaluable window into the operations of the magistracy as it regulated prostitution, especially the divergence between policy and practice. For instance, though during the period the civic government imposed sumptuary and spatial restrictions for prostitutes, the bureaucratic material demonstrates that the Bollette did not enforce these restrictions in practice. Similarly, though the civic government ordered that the magistracy register male procurers, there is no evidence that the Bollette did so. An examination of the bureaucratic documentation thus reveals a significant difference between what was ordered in proclamations and what was actually being enforced by the Bollette.

Second, an analysis of the bureaucratic material reveals the issues and problems that the Bollette faced in deploying the licensing regime prescribed by the civic government, and how the magistracy’s staff adapted policy in order to deal with these issues. Above all, ensuring the registration of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ was a perennial problem for the Bollette. Women did not register or buy licences for various reasons, including poverty and illness. The difficulty of getting all women to register was compounded by the fact that the Bollette was staffed by a very small number of men, only six to twelve in any given year. There simply were not enough eyes and ears to monitor and process all of the prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ in the city. The bureaucratic material of the Bollette demonstrates the systems and administrative practices that the staff developed to better ensure the success of the licensing regime. For instance, the Bollette encouraged rapid registration by accepting self-denunciations from women as well as ex officio arrests by its staff. It also used summary justice in order to avoid lengthy investigations and trials. The Bollette’s staff negotiated policy in order to make it fit better with circumstance. For instance, registration fees or fines were sometimes waived if women could prove that they were seriously ill or impoverished. An analysis of the bureaucratic material thus reveals both the issues the magistracy’s staff faced in implementing the licensing regime and the

\(^5\) The filze also include documentation pertaining to the registration and debts of foreigners and of innkeepers, tavern operators, and landlords throughout the period, but these will not be considered here unless they are connected to the regulation of prostitution or the circumstances of a particular prostitute.
approaches they used to deal with them, including lenience, flexibility, and negotiation as well as stringency and rigidity to the law.

Finally, an analysis of the bureaucratic documentation sheds light on how the practices and habits of early modern bureaucracy complicated the deployment of the Bollette’s licensing regime. For instance, the officials and notaries of the Bollette were elected newly each year, meaning that they had to be trained each year. The magistracy’s documentation reveals that their mistakes and lack of knowledge disrupted the effective and universal deployment of the licensing regime. The documentation of the Bollette also points to the laxity and corruption of its staff. For instance, repeated orders from Bologna’s legates and vice legates forbade the notaries from keeping ‘secret’ lists of prostitutes, from removing pages from the registers, and from taking bribes. This documentation thus reveals that the Bollette was not staffed by a group of men who enforced registration primarily out of a sense of duty to ‘the state’ or to ‘the law’, or even out of a commitment to the theories behind the law. Rather, it demonstrates that the Bollette’s staff followed varying administrative logics that were informed by range of motivations and incentives. These included the desire to uphold the theories of registration, but not at the exclusion of other motivations, such as the desire for personal gain or sympathy towards individual women. Knowledge that such practices and logics shaped the deployment of the Bollette’s licensing regime further enriches the historical understanding of the regulation of prostitution in Bologna.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the sources that form the evidentiary basis of what follows. It considers the problem of the survival of documents, which was dependant on the Bollette’s sixteenth- and seventeenth-century officials and notaries as well as later archivists. A comparison of surviving bureaucratic records suggests that at the end of each year, the Bollette’s staff selectively discarded materials deemed unimportant to future

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6 That the Bollette’s staff engaged in corruption and laxity is not wholly surprising: many studies have shown that early modern bureaucrats engaged in such behaviour. See for instance, Michael Rocke’s discussion of the staff of the Ufficiali di notte e conservatori dei monasteri (The Officers of the Night) who were in charge of regulating sodomy in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Florence. Michael Rocke, Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), especially pp. 60-62, 66-69, and 73-76. Also see John K. Brackett’s examination of the Onestà (the Office of Decency), the civic magistracy responsible for the regulation of prostitutes in fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century Florence. John K. Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà and the Control of Prostitution, 1403-1680,” Sixteenth Century Journal, 24, no. 2 (1993): 273-300.
work. This section also considers the problems posed by the record taking practices of the Bollette’s notaries. Often written quickly and with specific requirements in mind, the records produced during the course of the magistracy’s day-to-day work were not uniform. This lack of uniformity poses specific problems to quantitative analyses. For instance, some records are missing information that is contained in similar entries. In some instances these issues can be overcome; this section outlines methodological approaches that allow historians to do so, such as cross-referencing documents.

This chapter then moves on to a discussion of the Bollette’s jurisdiction in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In this period, the Bollette’s work had been reduced to the registration of prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, procurers, innkeepers, landlords, and foreigners. This section explains this reduction by placing it in the context of contemporary legal and governmental reforms. It also argues that Bologna was like other northern-Italian cities in dispersing the enforcement of the various dimensions of the regulation of prostitution, such as registration, sumptuary law, and spatial restriction, to a number of different tribunals and magistracies. Finally, this section considers what this disbursement reveals about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century approaches to the regulation of prostitution and prostitutes. It suggests that law makers and law enforcement were less concerned over the sumptuary and spatial registration of prostitutes than had been those of the fifteenth century.

This chapter then moves on to a discussion of the Bollette’s contributions to public, social, and moral order in Bologna. It considers how public and repeated readings of civic proclamations on prostitution contributed to the building and safeguarding of the ideal Bolognese community. The public reading of these proclamations not only reflected social ideas about the marginality of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ in the Bolognese social body, it also encouraged such women as well as their neighbours, families, and friends to conceive of them as such. This section also reveals that the Bollette was a part of a larger web of civic institutions that, to varying degrees, worked together to impose public order on the city. It demonstrates the communication about particular cases that occurred between the Bollette and two of the city’s other tribunals – the legate’s criminal court and the court of the archbishop – and considers how these institutions aided one another in the deployment of their mandates.
Finally, this chapter discusses the daily application of the Bollette’s licensing regime by its staff. Through both quantitative and qualitative analyses, it demonstrates the challenges that attended the registration of prostitutes and how the Bollette’s officials, notaries, and esecutori negotiated them. This chapter closes by examining evidence of the corruption, laxity, and poor training of the Bollette’s staff and considers how these issues affected the ability of the Bollette to ensure the widespread, universal registration of prostitutes and ‘donne in honeste.’

1. The Bollette’s Documentation: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Notarial Practices

As noted previously, an immense amount of the bureaucratic documentation of the Ufficio delle Bollette has survived to the present day. In fact, records pertaining to the Bollette’s work survive for just over two centuries, from 1583 until 1796. This chapter examines the earliest documentation, that produced between 1583 and 1630. The choice to end the study at 1630 was based on the fact that, in that year, the city was struck by a pandemic that reduced the population by one-quarter and drastically reduced the work of the Bollette. The bureaucratic material that survives from this period includes 41 registers of prostitutes (1583-1630), 23 filze (1601-1630), and nine books of investigations and testimonies (the Liber Inventionum of 1601 and 1603, the Libro d’esami per informazione di Donne of 1612, and the Liber Querelarum of 1622-1626, and 1629). For quantitative analyses, this chapter uses the documentation produced in ten-year intervals between 1584 and 1630 (1584, 1594, 1604, 1614, 1624, and 1630). The decision to focus on these years was based on two factors. The first was the utility of surveying the greatest breadth of time, and thus to start as close to the first surviving documentation as possible (1583). The second was the desire to survey years in which the widest variety of materials survives so that they could be cross-referenced with each other for information on specific cases. Indeed, though the survival rate of the different types of materials improves after 1601 (before that year, for instance, no filze are extant), the range of surviving documentation is nevertheless uneven. For instance, while the

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7 According to Athos Bellettini, the population of Bologna in 1624 was about 61,500; by 1631 it had fallen to 46,747. Athos Bellettini, La popolazione di Bologna dal secolo XV all’unificazione italiana (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1961), Table 1, pp. 25-28.
annual register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’, the register of innkeepers and landlords, and the filza survive from 1604, only the register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ survives from 1610. The ten year intervals used in this study were thus chosen both because they offer information on long-term continuities and changes while also furnishing as much detailed information as possible.

Even with such precautions, however, the record taking practices of the Bollette’s notaries complicate both quantitative and qualitative analysis, and mean that only conservative conclusions can be drawn. For instance, the registers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ were meant only to hold specific kinds of information in a limited amount of space. They were meant for short entries noting women’s names, their addresses, and their payments. Because the notaries knew that such entries generally would be repetitive (women often paid by the month), they used a formulaic entry that could be copied word-for-word from the entries that came before it. However, sometimes the notaries recorded other information in the registers, such as the payment of fines. Because the volumes were not specifically meant for this purpose, there was often little room to write in the particular circumstances which led to the fine, and thus there are many entries in which it is clear that a woman is paying a fine but the notaries have neglected to record exactly what the fine was for. For the Bollette’s notaries, this probably did not present too great of a problem: they kept the filze and the other records in their office and thus could consult the records immediately if they needed to know the particulars of a case. For the modern historian, however, this lack of clarity can be frustrating, especially when no additional record of the case exists in the surviving documentation.8

By cross-referencing the registers and the investigative documentation, it becomes clear that the Bollette did not include in the filze every record that they had made when they archived their work at the end of each year. Some records may have been lost or discarded during the course of the year, while some may have been selectively left out. For instance, sometimes notaries would record in the register that an investigation had been started against a specific woman. However, no trace of that investigation remains in other documents. Moreover, after they were archived, the records of the Bollette were at the mercy of both

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8 As will be shown later in this chapter, the lack of clarity was also frustrating for the representatives of Bologna’s Convertite, who had a vested interest in the work of the Bollette because they inherited the goods and moneys of all deceased prostitutes.
time and use by successive generations. The *filze* in particular were not constructed to survive for hundreds of years. Some of the bundles were pierced through the centre with a string so as to hold them together in a particular order, but many were not, and thus over the years they may have lost pages. All of these issues mean that quantitative analysis can provide only conservative conclusions.

Regardless of these problems, however, the bureaucratic records of the Ufficio delle Bollette provide a unique and invaluable opportunity to peer into the regulation of prostitution in early modern Bologna. Not only do they allow historians to see the methods by which regulation was applied in practice, but when read against contemporary prescriptive material they reveal the complexities and negotiations inherent in the application of regulation to everyday-life. The Bollette’s records also provide further information about both the capabilities and limits of early modern civic governance.

2. Developments in the Bollette’s Jurisdiction

Throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Bolognese civic government published proclamations on a bi-annual basis (in January and in June or July) that ordered the registration and regular purchase of licences by prostitutes, courtesans, ‘casarenghe’, male and female procurers, and other ‘dishonest people’ from the Ufficio delle Bollette.\(^9\) However, the bi-annual proclamations lack orders concerning two key areas over which the Bollette had held jurisdiction in the mid-fifteenth century. First, they make no reference to sumptuary laws – neither their contours, nor their enforcement. Second, they say very little about their spatial restriction, except to indicate that these people had to receive permission from the Bollette if they wanted to move within or outside of the city.

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, the civic government was publishing proclamations that assigned specific sumptuary laws and spatial restrictions for prostitutes and ‘dishonest people.’ For instance, various general sumptuary laws published by the civic government and many of the *Bandi generali* published by the city’s

legates forbade prostitutes from riding in coaches and carriages, from travelling with bodyguards or attendants, and from wearing men’s clothing, other disguises, and expensive fabrics and accessories. Similarly, ad-hoc proclamations published by the civic government throughout the period prohibited prostitutes from living on specific streets. None of these proclamations, however, make any reference to the Bollette or to any other civic magistracy or tribunal, either for enforcing or for judging such offences.

A study of the Bollette’s bureaucratic documentation from this period reveals that the magistracy did not investigate or try prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, or procurers for sumptuary or spatial offences. Sometimes the Bollette’s esecutori remarked in their reports that when they came upon an unregistered prostitute she was wearing men’s clothing or some other disguise, like a Carnival mask. However, fines for these violations were not recorded in the Bollette’s surviving bureaucratic material. Of course this does not mean that the Bollette’s esecutori did not enforce sumptuary or spatial laws in practice: they may have taken such cases to the city’s other courts or they may have fined prostitutes for these offences but not reported them. As this chapter will later show, corruption amongst the Bollette’s staff was common. Officially, however, in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries the Bollette was not assigned jurisdiction over these issues and it did not try such cases in its tribunal.

This fact is remarkable because, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, under its 1462 and 1485 statutes the Bollette had been assigned jurisdiction over the sumptuary and spatial restriction of prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and procurers. Moreover, in the first decades after the Bollette’s statutes were redacted, sumptuary laws published by the civic

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government did not include specific rules for prostitutes or procurers. By 1525 this had changed: the civic government assigned sumptuary laws and spatial restrictions for prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and procurers in its general sumptuary legislation. Both of the sumptuary laws analysed in the previous chapter – the one issued by Vice Legate Goro Ghiero in 1525 and the one issued by Legate Giovanni Morone in 1545 – assigned prostitutes specific distinguishing signs, prohibited them from wearing particular clothing and accessories, and designated residential areas for them. The late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century bureaucratic records of the Bollette are not extant, and thus they can not be consulted in order to discover whether the magistracy was judging and enforcing fines for these offences. However, the 1525 and 1545 Bandi generali make no reference to the Bollette. This omission, when added to the fact that by the late sixteenth century the Bollette was no longer enforcing sumptuary and spatial laws, suggests that jurisdiction over these issues may have been taken from the Bollette as early as the 1520s.

Why had the civic government limited the Bollette’s jurisdiction to the identification and registration of prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and procurers? And why did the civic government reassign jurisdiction over sumptuary and spatial restriction to another court, rather than continuing to employ a single magistracy to police and enforce all legislation pertaining to prostitution? Why not keep all legislation, as had been traditionally done, under the purview of the Bollette?

Part of the answer lies in contemporary statecraft. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, civic and ecclesiastical authorities across northern Italy reformed their governmental and judicial structures by specifying the focus of civic institutions and courts and by rationalising their methods through the increasing use of bureaucrats. In Bologna,
this process was also informed by the strengthening of papal rule at the beginning of the sixteenth century and by developments in the ‘mixed government’ system (“governo misto”) under which the Bolognese senate worked in cooperation with the papal legate.\textsuperscript{15} The ensuing negotiations between the senate and the legate as they worked out how to share power and responsibility led to a series of reforms meant to streamline the city’s governmental, administrative, and judicial systems. During this period, new bodies were created, such as the eight Assunterie that in the 1550s were appointed by the Senate to oversee local administration. At the same time older bodies were either abolished or had their authority reduced and/or redistributed. In 1513, for instance, the Sedici Riformatori was replaced by the Senate as Bologna’s main executive body. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Anziani had had all of its political power redistributed to other bodies. Instead of providing specific governmental power to its members, by this period it only provided local social prestige through membership.\textsuperscript{16}

The reforms brought about by negotiations between the Bolognese senate and the papal legate also led to changes to the city’s judicial system. In her recent study of the Papal States, and of Rome in particular, Irene Fosi has demonstrated the patch-work nature of early modern justice. Based on various tribunals, each established at different times and with different mandates, Rome’s system of justice was neither centralised nor streamlined. This multiplicity of courts was the reality of early modern judicial systems. As Fosi put it:

In the Italian ancien régime, governance, administration, and justice could not be sundered. Our modern sensibility, with an eye to nineteenth-and twentieth-century models, would see the old multiplicity of judicial bodies as chaos, but for the time, it was entirely normal. The world expected jurisdictions to multiply and functions to tangle, thanks to a gradual accumulation of roles, so that, in institutions’ daily work, conflict was routine. To this confusion early modern popes responded, like other sovereigns in Italy and elsewhere, with an unbroken, if shifting, campaign to

\textsuperscript{15} For more on this, see Chapter Two.

make things simpler, and more uniform, and to guarantee justice’s more persuasive, effective, and coherent delivery. They did not always succeed.  

This was also the case in Bologna, which had its own multiplicity of courts, including the tribunal of the Podestà, the court of the bishop of Bologna (archbishop after 1582), and other smaller tribunals that had been established when Bologna was still an independent commune, such as the Tribuni della Plebe, the Foro di Mercanzia, and those of the many offices of profit, including the Bollette’s tribunal. Where the jurisdictional lines between each of these courts lay was difficult to determine and so, during the sixteenth and century, as in Rome, Bolognese authorities worked to reform the system.

The 1530s brought the establishment of three new main courts in Bologna as well as several other, smaller ones. The Tribunale del Torrone, which replaced the older court of the Podestà, was responsible for trying political and particularly violent crimes. Presided over by a foreign judge who was appointed by the pope, the Torrone was ultimately answerable to his representatives in the city: the legates, vice legates, and governors. In 1535, the Tribunale di Rota was established as Bologna’s main civil court, and dealt with cases involving members of the Bolognese oligarchy and those involving monetary amounts over 100 lire. The Rota was presided over by five foreign judges who were elected by the Bolognese Senate, and thus the court was, in practice, answerable to the Bolognese oligarchy. Soon after the establishment of the Rota, a second civic court was set up, and this one was answerable to the papal legate. Though it was ostensibly designed to render

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justice more quickly than the Rota, historians have argued that the legate’s civil court was also established in order to reduce the power of the oligarchy within the city by challenging its claim as the primary authority over such issues.\(^{21}\)

Throughout the sixteenth century some of the older, smaller Bolognese tribunals continued to operate, including the Tribuni della Plebe, the Foro di Mercanzia, and those of the many offices of profit. So too did the Bishop’s tribunal. However, the establishment of the new courts in the 1530s and 1550s brought with it the reduction of these older courts’ authority as issues once under their purview were reassigned to the new tribunals. For instance, the jurisdiction of the Tribuni della Plebe was reduced, though it was able to keep some of its earlier authority through association with the Foro di Mercanzia. As has already been discussed, the jurisdiction of the Bollette’s court was also reduced. To whom was responsibility for sumptuary and spatial restrictions reassigned? Evidence points to the transfer of some of its authority to the legate’s criminal court, the Torrone. Alessandro Pastore has cited two cases from 1630 of prostitutes who were arrested by the sbirri of the Torrone for wearing men’s clothing.\(^{22}\) The first involved the arrest of Chiara Frescona, a widow and a self-identified prostitute, caught and arrested by the captain (bargello) of the Torrone for wearing men’s hose while walking down the street with two servants of a local marquis. The second case involved Lucrezia Manini of Pistoia, also a widow and a self-identified prostitute, who was caught by a sbirro of the Torrone waiting for a client in the osteria dell’Asino (the Inn of the Donkey or the Inn of the Ass) on via Frassinago and wearing men’s clothing – a white leather jerkin, red stockings lined with gold, and belt with a dagger.\(^{23}\) A third case, this one from 1650, demonstrates that the Torrone enforced the

\(^{21}\) For more on this jurisdictional wrangling, see Cavina, “I luoghi della giustizia,” especially pp. 382-386.

\(^{22}\) Sbirri, or sbirro in the singular, can be translated into English as ‘police’ or as ‘cops’. I have chosen to use the Italian word because these English translations conjure up a professional specialisation that did not exist in early modern Italy. Rather than being members of a centralised police force in the modern sense, early modern Italian sbirri were not employed by ‘the state’, but rather by private individuals or religious or civic authorities to whom they alone were answerable. For more on the sbirri of early modern Bologna, see Steven Hughes, “Fear and Loathing in Bologna and Rome: The Papal Police in Perspective,” Journal of Social History, 21, no.1 (1987): 97-116. On the sbirri of the Papal States, with some reference to Bologna, see Fosi, Papal Justice, pp. 66-75.

\(^{23}\) Because Pastore’s book only focuses on Bologna in the year 1630, he furnishes no examples of such cases from other years. Alessandro Pastore, Crimine e giustizia in tempo di peste nell’Europa moderna (Rome: Laterza, 1991), p. 100 and 101 respectively. Though Pastore notes that both women described themselves as prostitutes in their testimonies, neither were registered that year with the Ufficio delle Bollette, either before or after their arrest. This does not, of course, mean that they did not work as prostitutes. In 1630,
prohibition of prostitutes from using the city’s inns. In that year, Cesare Marchisini, sbirro, reported to a notary of the Torrone that he and some other sbirri had arrested three men and two prostitutes, Giulia de Negri and Domenica Minganta, who they had found in bed together in an inn just outside of the city walls. Marchisini and the other men arrested them and jailed them in the Torrone because, as he stated, he had seen proclamations prohibiting prostitutes from using inns. It is clear that by the 1630s, if not earlier, the Torrone enforced and presided over cases of sumptuary and spatial offences by prostitutes.

It should not be assumed that the Torrone was the only place where such cases were tried. Irene Fosi has demonstrated that in Rome courts often presided over a range of cases, regardless of their original mandates. For instance, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, prostitutes were brought in front of Tribunale del Vicario, Rome’s episcopal court, for various offences. However, Fosi points out that while in theory ‘moral crimes’, such as those dealing with sex, the family, or blasphemy, were the jurisdiction of the court of the bishop of Rome, in practice they were also handled by the court of the governor of Rome. The work of Elizabeth S. Cohen and Tessa Storey confirms this, demonstrating that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the governor’s sbirri arrested prostitutes for sumptuary violations as well as for inappropriate public behaviour and violence, and that trials for these offences were held in the governor’s criminal court.

Similarly, John K. Brackett has shown that in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Florence, prostitutes were tried for sumptuary violations both in the court of the Onestà (the Office of Decency), the civic magistracy responsible for the regulation of prostitutes and

gradually mounting famines turned into a full blown pandemic, and the Bollette’s records demonstrate a serious reduction in the work of its staff. Investigation into the records of the Torrone from before 1630 will most likely provide other examples of its sbirri and judges enforcing the spatial and sumptuary restriction of prostitutes.

24 “in una stanza di essa hostaria trovali due Donne Puttane, et tre huomini asieme in conversazione et p[er]che vi sono li bandi che le putane n[on] possano andari nell’hostarie […] gli ho condotto tutti prigione dentro q[uesta] Cur[a].” ASB, Tribunale del Torrone, Testimoni e Esami, b. 6540 (20 May 1650), p. 142. In her testimony, Giulia admitted that she had been engaging in prostitution (far la puttana) when she was discovered by the sbirri in bed with Stefano Bondoli. When asked if she knew the proclamations that prohibited prostitutes from entering public inns, she said that she knew them well, but that the inn she was in had been “secured” – perhaps locked to outsiders: “io so bene che vi sono li bandi che la puttane non possano andare all hostaria, ma l’hosti ci ha assicurati.” ASB, Tribunale del Torrone, Testimoni e Esami, b. 6540 (20 May 1650), p. 143. I thank Colin Rose for sharing his pictures of this case with me.


26 Fosi, Papal Justice, p. 35. For more on the papal governor’s tribunal, see ibid., pp. 28 and 33.

prostitution, and in the city’s main criminal court, the Otto di Guardia e Balìa (the Eight of the Watch).\textsuperscript{28} This was probably also the case in Bologna too. Certainly, the archbishop’s court exercised jurisdiction over prostitutes in the late seventeenth century: in her study of adultery and fornication cases brought before that court in 1688 and 1689, Lucia Ferrante found that prostitutes were tried for such offences both in that court as well as in the Torrone.\textsuperscript{29} Further research into the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century records of the Torrone and the archbishop’s court will most likely reveal that both of these courts exercised jurisdiction over the sumptuary and spatial regulation of prostitutes in Bologna.

During the sixteenth century the Bollette’s original mandate to regulate all aspects of prostitution was reconceptualised and refocused as a part of the larger governmental, administrative, and judicial reforms of the period. Statecraft, however, was not the only reason for the transfer of some of the Bollette’s responsibilities to the city’s other courts. The transfer was also a product of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century approaches towards the enforcement of the sumptuary and spatial restrictions of prostitutes. Evidence from Rome from this period demonstrates that these particular offences were poorly enforced. Through an analysis of the Relazioni dei Birri, the records of citations and arrests made by the Roman governor’s sbirri, over the period 1594-1606, Tessa Storey found that very few prostitutes were brought in for sumptuary violations as their principal cause of arrest. Indeed, only seventeen prostitutes (out of a total of 369 arrested in the eighteen-year period) were apprehended for riding in carriages, while thirteen were arrested for wearing men’s clothing, and one was arrested for wearing a shirt “with no front.”\textsuperscript{30} Estimating that during the period there were about 1,000-1,200 prostitutes in the city, Storey calculates that only 3% of the total cohort was arrested by the governor’s sbirri in the period for any offence – including violent behaviour and public disturbances as well as sumptuary offences.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, the majority of these prostitutes were arrested around the years of the Jubilee of

\textsuperscript{28} Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 279, n. 25.
\textsuperscript{30} Storey, Carnal Commerce, p. 102, table 3. As she notes, however, the work of the sbirri was both inefficient and plagued by corruption, and thus her numbers do not represent all of the prostitutes found breaking these laws. Ibid., pp. 98-100.
\textsuperscript{31} Public disturbance and violence had similarly low rates of enforcement – in the period just 29 prostitutes were arrested for violent acts, 37 for having arguments with other men and women, eleven for “making a racket”, and eleven for being found on the streets at night. Ibid., p. 100.
1600, when the desire to enforce public order in an effort to protect the reputation of the city was especially strong because of the many people who came to visit the city.\textsuperscript{32} Indeed, a full fifteen of the seventeen prostitutes arrested by the governor’s sbirri for riding in carriages were arrested in 1600 and 1601.\textsuperscript{33}

Surviving evidence also suggests that sumptuary and spatial regulations were poorly enforced by authorities in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Florence. In this period the Onestà was responsible for the registration of prostitutes within the city. However, unlike the Bollette, it did not undergo jurisdictional restriction in this period, but rather continued to judge sumptuary, spatial, and residential offences by prostitutes. As in Bologna and Rome, Florentine prostitutes were forbidden from riding in carriages, from wearing disguises, and from dressing like men. In addition, the Florentine government required that prostitutes live in specifically chosen streets in the city and that they wear a yellow ribbon as a distinguishing sign.\textsuperscript{34} Even with this wide range of requirements, however, the number of prostitutes tried by the Onestà for these offences was quite low. In his analysis of the 1594 records of the magistracy’s tribunal, Nicholas Terpstra found that out of a total of 72 individuals who were judged guilty for various offences, only eighteen were prostitutes.\textsuperscript{35} Indeed, the majority of people found guilty and punished by the court of the Onestà were not prostitutes who disobeyed sumptuary and residential restrictions, but rather men and women accused of assault, pimping, and ‘baccano’ (public disruption through excessive noise). Twenty-five years earlier, in 1569, a total of 238 prostitutes had registered with the Onestà.\textsuperscript{36} If the same number of women were registered in 1594 (this number may have risen), that means that only 0.08 % of all registered prostitutes that year were tried and found guilty in the Onestà’s court. As with the numbers presented for Rome by Tessa Storey, Terpstra’s numbers represent only those cases that were brought and tried in the Onestà. They thus do not represent offences which were settled by other means, such as the bribery of officials or notaries. Moreover, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Florentine prostitutes were tried for sumptuary offences both in the city’s main criminal court, the Otto

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 111.
\textsuperscript{34} Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 296.
\textsuperscript{35} Nicholas Terpstra, “Sex and the Sacred: Negotiating Boundaries in Renaissance Florence.” Paper given at the Friday Workshop Series held by the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto. 3 December 2010.
\textsuperscript{36} Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 290.
di Guardia e Balìa, as well as in the Onestà. The total number of prostitutes tried and found guilty of various offences in 1594 would undoubtedly be higher if the numbers from both courts were counted together. However, even with the inclusion of cases from the Otto, the rate may still be quite low. Given that during this period the Onestà exercised jurisdiction over all legislation pertaining to prostitutes and prostitution, it can be cautiously assumed that the low rate of enforcement is representative of enforcement across all of Florence’s tribunals.

In her study, Tessa Storey is careful to point out that the characteristics of early modern society and law enforcement may have affected rates of arrest of prostitutes for sumptuary and spatial restrictions. For instance, she demonstrates that the low social status of the sbirri may have hindered their ability to arrest prostitutes in the company of a wealthy or noble men, as was often the case of women riding in carriages.\(^{37}\) Storey also suggests that many offences were not recorded due to the corruption and laxity of the sbirri and notaries, and therefore that conclusions about the low enforcement rates drawn from extant materials may be somewhat misleading. These issues encourage caution on the part of historians. However, it seems likely that if the authorities were really serious about the enforcement of sumptuary and spatial restrictions, then they would have put pressure on the sbirri to report more cases, and, in response, there would have been more recorded instances. Instead, it seems that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, whether due to the difficulty of enforcing such restrictions or because they had been replaced by other strategies of marginalisation (such as registration), the enforcement of the sumptuary and spatial restriction of prostitutes did not play a key role in the regulatory systems of Rome and Florence.

Taken in light of the low rates of the enforcement of sumptuary and spatial prohibitions in late-sixteenth and the early seventeenth century Rome and Florence, the reassignment of these regulations in the Bolognese context from the Bollette to the city’s other courts begins to make more sense. Not only was the Bollette’s work limited to registration as a part of the general administrative and judicial reforms of the sixteenth century, but it may also have been limited to registration because sumptuary and spatial restrictions were losing prominence in the mentality that informed the regulation of

prostitutes and prostitution. Though the civic government still included legislation on sumptuary law and spatial restriction in its proclamations, by removing the enforcement of these issues from the purview of the Bollette, it appears that the civic government had judged them either of less concern or too difficult to enforce. In this period the marginalisation of prostitutes was accomplished instead by the licensing regime run by the Ufficio delle Bollette.

This chapter now turns to a consideration of the theoretical reasons behind the operation of the Bollette’s licensing regime and its contributions to social and public order. As will be shown, the registration and licensing of prostitutes had become the preferred method of marginalising prostitutes, a method that was made public knowledge through the public reading of proclamations and through the punishments that the magistracy applied to the unregistered.

3. The Bollette’s Contribution to Public and Social Order

Though by the late sixteenth century the broad authority over the regulation of prostitutes and prostitution that the Ufficio delle Bollette had held in earlier centuries had been divided up and diffused across a number of other tribunals, the Bollette remained an important part of the civic government’s endeavour to effect public, social, and moral order in the city. Such an endeavour entailed not only limiting crime and violence on a day-to-day basis, but also encouraging and defending social stability through the construction of community boundaries that supported social hierarchy, division, and exclusion. The licensing of prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and foreigners by the Bollette aided the civic government in both of these aims. First, it upheld and reproduced socially, culturally, and religiously constructed identities about these groups by making their marginal social status public through the reading of proclamations and the enforcement of fines. Second, the Bollette’s licensing regime aided the civic government’s goal of ensuring public order by collecting information that could be – and was – used by other judicial and charitable groups to limit crime and to encourage social order in the city.

The theory behind the Bollette’s licensing regime was informed by a myriad of complex motivations and attitudes about prostitutes, procurers, and foreigners. Some of these were contradictory, but all of them reflected wider cultural, social, religious, and
political notions about the construction of community and about moral and public order.\textsuperscript{38} In late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bologna, as in other northern Italian cities, the groups that the Bollette licensed were viewed by some as problematic, if not outright threatening, to the moral, spiritual, and social stability of the city. Prostitutes threatened men’s salvation by encouraging them to engage in fornication or adultery; they flouted the social hierarchy when they wore expensive clothes and rode in carriages; they created and attracted noise, violence, and disorder wherever they went. Foreigners were also viewed as problematic: they too were involved in violence which disrupted public order and safety, and they sometimes brought plague and illness with them that threatened the health of the civic body.

Some Bolognese, like Bishop Gabriele Paleotti, railed against the immorality of prostitutes. Civic authorities attempted to expel foreigners, especially poor ones, in times of plague and famine. Yet there was also an understanding that these people provided useful social and economic services to the city. Foreign merchants brought important goods and money into the city, while rural laborers contributed to the city’s workforce. It was for this reason that when civic authorities expelled foreigners, it was only in the most dire times of famine and, even then, it was the poorest foreigners who were targeted, those who were superfluous to the work force and those who strained the available resources of food and charity.\textsuperscript{39} Prostitutes also had their social uses: they offered commercial sex to the scores of students and other men in the city who might otherwise turn their attentions to ‘honourable’ women, and their homes were often the sites of male sociability.\textsuperscript{40}

Moreover, as the sixteenth century wore on, it became increasingly difficult to keep women from working as prostitutes and to keep foreigners out of the city. Several years of bad weather led to devastating famines between 1590 and 1593, and a pandemic struck the city in 1630. People were drawn into the city from Bologna’s outlying regions and towns in

\textsuperscript{38} For a finely balanced and clear account of the ambiguity with which prostitutes were viewed in early modern Italian culture, see Elizabeth S. Cohen, “‘Courtesans’ and ‘Whores’: Words and Behavior in Roman Streets,” \textit{Journal of Women’s Studies} 19 (1991).


\textsuperscript{40} Cohen, “‘Courtesans’ and ‘Whores,’” p. 202; Tessa Storey, “Courtesan Culture: Manhood, Honour and Sociability” in \textit{The Erotic Cultures of Italy}, ed. Sara Matthews-Grieco (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).
search of food, work, and charity not just during these years, but also in the years immediately preceding them. In fact, the situation became so desperate and the strain on resources was so great that Bologna’s Senate ordered that a team of four beggar catchers (espurgatori) be employed to catch and expel people whom they deemed unworthy to share available resources: those who had come to the city from the countryside in the last two years, single people without family who had come to the city in the past ten years, and unemployed men over the age of 25 who had lived in Bologna for less than ten years. In the second half of 1588 alone, the beggar catchers expelled 532 people from Bologna. In the first half of 1593 they expelled 601 people from the city, and in 1597 they expelled a total of 1054 people from the city. As these numbers demonstrate, the beggar catchers simply could not stem the flow of rural poor into the city.

As Appendix 2 shows, hundreds of women registered with the Bollette throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. After the city had recovered from the famines of the early 1590s, the number of registered prostitutes shot up to over 600 a year in 1599 and 1604, and to just fewer than 550 in 1609. These numbers represent only the women who registered with the Bollette, they do not represent clandestine prostitutes. Indeed, many women used prostitution to augment their otherwise low incomes, not just with cash, but also with food, lodgings, and gifts. In his study of early modern Milan, Stefano D’Amico stated that “[i]n the life of the lower orders, [prostitution] did not represent an exceptional and disturbing feature; rather, it was a necessary survival strategy to adopt in particularly difficult periods.” Lucia Ferrante has also found that in late seventeenth-century Bologna, poor working women turned to prostitution in times of financial crises.

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41 Guido Alfani, “Population and Environment in Northern Italy during the Sixteenth Century,” *Population*, 62, n. 4 (2007), pp. 567-566. Alfani argues that while large cities attracted large numbers of immigrants during times of famine, they were also quick to turn them out because of the shortage of food. Thus, the immigrant population was constantly in flux during periods of famine. Ibid., p. 573.

42 Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity*, (p. 71). The espurgatori were also required to expel vagabonds, gypsies, tricksters, and charlatans. Prostitutes were not specifically cited as targets, however they may have been expelled because they had come to the city in the recent past. Research into the extant records of the espurgatori’s daily work, cited by Terpstra as ASB, *Opera dei Poveri Mendicanti*, 304, Mastro B, 307, Mastro D, 310, Mastro E, and 311, Mastro F, should reveal the extent to which prostitutes were expelled under these rules.

43 Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity*, (p. 71).

such as those caused by the scarcity of work or the recent death of a husband or father. While this was certainly true for many women, the Bollette’s annual registers of prostitutes from this period reveal that many women engaged in prostitution over long periods of time (see Appendix 3). For these women, prostitution was not always, or only, a response to moments of acute financial crisis. It was, rather, a regular part of their personal ‘makeshift economies,’ the variety of work that they engaged in on a regular basis in order to put food on their tables and roofs over their heads.

Guido Ruggiero, Ann Rosalind Jones, and Stefano D’Amico have all pointed out that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Venetian and Milanese civic governments understood financial need to be one of the primary factors that led women into prostitution. For this reason, authorities specifically targeted procurers who attempted to bring women into prostitution by promising them wealth. So, too, did the Bolognese civic authorities. The 1610 Bando generale of Legate Benedetto Giustiniano ordered that men or women who were caught trying to persuade girls and women to enter prostitution by using flattery, promises, or gifts were to receive serious punishments. Any woman caught doing so was to receive a public whipping and perpetual exile, while any man caught doing so was to be sentenced to five years of work in the galleys or a more serious punishment according to the will of the legate. Bolognese authorities knew that financial need was one of the reasons why women engaged in prostitution, and this shaped the regulations they ordered.

Religious and secular authorities also established charitable enclosures that provided shelter, and sometimes employment, to poor girls who were in danger of falling into prostitution. Some of these enclosures also took in prostitutes who wished to leave the trade. Enclosing these women meant keeping them off the streets and away from immoral influences. Providing them with employment gave the women work skills and the chance to

45 Ferrante, “La sessualità come risorsa.”
48 Fischer, B-11 04425, “Bando generale dell’Illustriissimo, & Reverendissimo Sig. Benedetto Card. Giustiniano Legato di Bologna,” (23 and 24 June 1610), “De Ruffiani. Cap. XXVII,” pp. 59-60. Further research into the records of the Torrone and the archbishop’s court from this period will demonstrate to what extent these rules were enforced.
earn dowries so that they could be married. Many such enclosures existed in Bologna, including the conservatories of Santa Marta (est. 1505), Santa Maria del Baraccano (est. 1528), and San Giuseppe (est. 1606).

The Santa Croce orphanage (est. ca. 1583) catered particularly to the daughters of prostitutes. As in previous centuries, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Bolognese approaches to foreigners and prostitutes continued to be informed by a complex and complicated array of opinions and motivations. These approaches were based not only on theoretical notions about these groups, but also on practical understandings of how economic circumstance affected their lives, such as acute financial need or life-long poverty.

The Bolognese civic government communicated this complex array of attitudes through the publication and public reading of proclamations outlining the Bollette’s licensing regime. Evidence of such public readings appears in the form of handwritten notes on the printed proclamations themselves. For instance, a note at the bottom of a copy of the 1602 proclamation states that on 28 and 29 June it was read aloud from the balcony (ringheria) of the Palazzo del Podestà by Ludovico Rivali and Simone de Bassi, banditores. A similar note on the proclamation of 1607 states that it had been read from the same balcony by the same men, while a note on a 1612 proclamation states that it had been read by two new banditores, Paolo Bassi and Giuseppe Galeazzo Rivali.

According to these proclamations, within eight days of their reading, all prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and procurers had to register themselves with the Bollette, and then on a regular basis for the remainder of the year. If they did not, they were to be fined ten lire. Similarly, upon entering the city all foreigners were to register and purchase a licence from the Bollette which permitted them to stay in the city for a certain number of days. Like prostitutes, if they were discovered without a licence, they were to be fined ten lire. The proclamations thus did not present prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, procurers, and foreigners...

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49 For more on these conservatories, see Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali;” Ferrante, “Honor Regained;” Nicholas Terpstra, Abandoned Children of the Italian Renaissance: Orphan Care in Florence and Bologna (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

50 Terpstra, Abandoned Children, p. 42.

as external to the Bolognese community, but rather as specific groups within it. Prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and procurers were united by their difference from ‘honourable’ women and men, while foreigners were united by the fact that they did not reside in Bologna. The requirement that members of both of these groups register and buy licences from the Bollette further differentiated them from the rest of the Bolognese community. However, it did not exclude them from the social body: it very clearly assigned them a place within it, even if that place was a marginal one.

The public reading of the Bollette’ proclamations did not just communicate legislation and command that prostitutes and procurers follow it, it also reflected and reinforced the social order through the construction of prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, procurers, and foreigners as specific groups within the Bolognese community. By doing so, it encouraged both the members of those groups – as well as the rest of the populace – to conceptualise them as such.

Indeed, the method by which prostitutes, ‘donne inhoneste,’ and foreigners were to register themselves encouraged self-regulation. Registration with the Bollette was mandatory, but prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, procurers, and foreigners were expected to register and purchase licences without coercion from the Bollette’s staff. According to the proclamations, the guards at the city’s gates and docks were to inform all foreigners who entered the city that they had to register with the Bollette. Similarly, the proclamations stated that prostitutes and procurers had to register themselves within eight days from the time they started working. In both cases, initial responsibility for registration lay with the registrants. This was partly motivated by necessity: in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries the Bollette employed a very small staff – two officials, two notaries, and a handful of esecutori, ranging anywhere from two to five men annually. There simply were not enough men to ensure the registration of the hundreds of prostitutes, foreigners, innkeepers, tavern operators, and landlords in the city, and thus the onus for registration was placed on the registrants themselves.

52 Guards at the gates or the ports of the city who were discovered to have known that one of these people was unregistered were to be fined ten lire. ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1602, [np] “Bando sopra l’Officio delle Bollette, & presentationi de Forastieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e Meretrici,” (28 and 29 June 1602).
If they failed to register themselves prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, procurers, and foreigners risked being caught by the Bollette’s esecutori or being denounced to the Bollette by others. If they were caught, they would be fined, forced to register, and to buy a licence. This was not just empty rhetoric: the Bollette’s registers and _filze_ record many cases of men and women who were fined for not registering. Often, in the case of prostitutes, the Bollette extracted payments for the months that they had gone unregistered. For instance, on 30 January 1614 Margareta Zampa paid ten soldi for a licence for both January and February 1614 as well as an additional fine of one lira, ten soldi for not having registered at the beginning of January.\(^{53}\) In 1614, at least 182 women who had failed to buy licences (53% of the 341 total prostitutes registered in that year) were forced to pay for the months that they had missed; 46 of those 182 women (25%) were also charged an additional fine for not having bought licences.\(^{54}\) Some prostitutes may have been unaware of the regulations; many tried to avoid them. In response, the Bollette used fines and forced registrations to encourage prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, procurers, and foreigners to purchase their licences punctually and with regularity.

In theory, repeated registration as a prostitute could affect a woman’s definition of herself. Self-identification as a prostitute or a ‘dishonest women’ meant that she should adjust her behaviour so as to adhere to the other restrictions placed on her group. Such behaviour included continuous and timely registration and adherence to other legislation, such as sumptuary laws and spatial restrictions. This, of course, was in theory. Strategies that promoted self-identification and reflected widely held social attitudes were complicated both by the subjective interests of individuals and, as will be shown later in this chapter, by the irregular deployment of registration by the Bollette’s notaries and esecutori. Moreover,

\(^{53}\) On 26 February she paid one lire which, when added to the ten soldi that she paid to register in January and February, completed her payment for a licence for the first semester of the year (January-June). _C de M_ 1614, p. 190. The actual amounts which prostitutes were fined varied widely and were irregularly imposed. They were also sometimes reduced by order of the Bollette’s officials. Sometimes the records clearly indicate that this was due to the women’s poverty, but more often the records do not state why the fine was reduced or waived. This will be discussed in further detail later on in this chapter.

\(^{54}\) Sometimes, the notaries clearly noted that the prostitutes were paying for the months that they had been unregistered, while at other times they did not. In these latter cases, however, it is obvious that the notaries were charging prostitutes for the months they had missed since the total amount that they paid included fees for those months. For example, on 4 January 1614 Camilla Maiatrice paid five soldi, the cost of one month’s registration. She did not buy a licence again until 14 June, when she paid 25 soldi. Though it was not directly stated, five soldi of this payment bought her licence for the month of June, while the other twenty soldi was taken as payment for the four months that she had gone unlicensed (February, March, April, and May). No additional fine was recorded, though it may have been paid ‘under the table’. _C de M_ 1614, p. 57.
the surviving bureaucratic documentation sheds little light on whether those who registered with the Bollette or who were identified by the Bollette as prostitutes or ‘dishonest women’ actually internalised these labels. In instances where women’s testimonies survive they are unhelpful because of the very fact that the women were fighting accusations of unlicensed prostitution. Moreover, it can not be assumed that these women fought these charges simply because they did not want to adopt the identity – being registered as a prostitute or ‘dishonest women’ could bring many undesirable practical consequences, including the payment of fines and the necessity of continuing to register as a prostitute.

The Bollette, however, did not rely solely upon self-regulation. The public reading of the magistracy’s proclamations encouraged neighbours, acquaintances, and the sbirri of the city’s other courts to report women suspected of engaging in unlicensed prostitution. This they did, although, as a 1586 order from Bologna’s vice legate to the Bollette’s officials demonstrates, authorities feared that neighbours and acquaintances did so out of personal malice rather than because the women were actually practicing prostitution unlicensed. Because of this, the vice legate ordered that if a woman could get one parish priest and two neighbours of good repute (“bonam condictionis et famam”) to testify to her good character, the notaries should remove her entry from that year’s register. The vice legate also ordered that, henceforth, unless she had been found in flagrante with a man, the testimonies of two neighbours of good repute, which had to be recorded in a new volume dedicated solely to such testimonies, would be required in order to find a woman guilty of practicing prostitution unregistered. The sureties of 50 lire that the Bollette required from the city’s innkeepers and tavern operators, and of ten lire from stable keepers and landlords, were also meant to encourage them to make sure that they lodged only registered foreigners or prostitutes; if they were found harboring those without licences they ran the risk of losing these sureties. Some took this very seriously: the registers of prostitutes are filled with

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55 For the vice legate’s order, as transcribed into the 1586 register of prostitutes: C de M 1586, [np], untiled, begins “Ill[ustrissim]us et R[everendissi]mus D[ominus] Bononorum Vicelegatus in eius Camera” (28 June 1586). There are no entries in the 1586 register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ which were crossed out on the basis of this order; it thus seems that women did not take advantage of it, perhaps because it was not publicised. The new book that the vice legate ordered the notaries of the Bollette to use to record testimonies does not exist. However, this is does not mean that it was not used; with a few exceptions, only the registers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ survive from the period 1583 and 1601.

instances of innkeepers, tavern operators, and landlords who brought in payments for licences for the women they lodged. Thus, the licensing regime operated by the Bollette used tactics that encouraged both self-regulation by registrants and denunciation by the community. It also defended social order and reflected ideas about community building by publicising and encouraging the populace to enforce the marginalisation of these people.

The Bollette’s licensing regime also aided the civic government’s quest to ensure public and social order through the information that it collected by registering women. The notaries recorded not only the names of women who registered, but also where they lived, whom they rented from, and sometimes whom they lived with. The records of investigations themselves, moreover, contain all kinds of personal details, including information about these women’s pasts and their current relationships. A 1596 order from Bologna’s vice legate ordered the Bollette to set up its own archive to keep all of its registers and other records and it is clear that the magistracy’s staff referred to them during investigations.\footnote{This order was copied into the volume which held the illuminated copy of the Bollette’s 1462 statutes. ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri}, Statuti, sec. XV, codici miniati, ms. 64, p. 28.} For instance, when women were being investigated for working unlicensed, the officials and notaries searched through past documentation to find out whether suspected women had been investigated previously or had registered with the magistracy in the past.\footnote{See, for instance, the entry for Gentile Righettina in the 1604 register, which contains a lengthy note dated 7 March 1605 and details the Bollette’s investigation of her in that year. C de M 1604, [np] section “Z”, Gentile Righettina. For her entry in the 1605 registration book, see C de M 1605, p. 105.}

Because of the nature of the information that the Bollette collected, the magistracy’s licensing regime was also useful to the civic government’s larger goal of ensuring public order in the city. The Bollette’s records were of great use to the city’s other magistracies and tribunals, such as the Tribunale del Torrone and the archbishop’s court, as they attempted to limit the disorderly excesses of prostitution, including violence, gambling, disturbances due to excessive noise and lewd public behaviour.\footnote{See the \textit{bandi generali} of various legates from these years for discussions of these issues. For proclamations specifically prohibiting gambling in the houses of prostitutes, see ASB, \textit{Boschi}, b. 544, fol. 240r, “Bando sopra il Gioco,” (20 May 1591). On prohibiting prostitutes from going out at night: ASB, \textit{Legato}, Bandi speciali, vol. 14, fol. 276, “Bando che le meretrici non vadano la notte per la citta e che non si portino le spade sfodrate,” (29 December 1594). On prohibiting prostitutes from being in the streets on Christmas Eve: ASB, \textit{Boschi}, b. 543, fol. 148r, “Bando contra quelle che nella notte, e feste di Natale giocaranno, o cometteranno altri eccessi,” (24 December 1586).} Not only did the records identify specific women as registered prostitutes, but they also provided information on where to find them.
If the sbirri of the city’s other courts were searching for particular women, they could start by consulting the Bollette’s registers.

By the late seventeenth century the archbishop’s court and the Bollette were constantly sharing information: Lucia Ferrante found that the court regularly provided lists of the women held in its jail to both the Bollette and to the Convertite. Though such records have not appeared for the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, the Bollette’s documentation reveals traces of conversations between itself, these courts, and their jails. For instance, in one entry in the 1586 register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’, the arrest history of a woman named Giulia was recorded. The list was long: Giulia had been arrested in the company of four men (all four of whom were named) and imprisoned in the Torrone. She was later imprisoned there again when she was caught with yet another man, Scipione Calcina. Giulia also had been imprisoned in the archbishop’s jail twice, once for being caught with a man named Gemignano de’ Medici, and most recently, in 1586 when she was jailed with another woman, Giovanna di Cesari. The details with which these cases were recorded, including all of the names of the men and the woman she had been caught and imprisoned with, suggest that the information had been derived directly from extant records kept by the notaries of the Torrone and archbishop’s prison. Moreover, her second imprisonment in the Torrone had occurred between two to six years earlier: as the notary recorded, it had occurred during the time of Pietro Donato Cesi, who served as Bologna’s legate between July 1580 and January 1584.

Communication between the city’s courts and the Bollette was also useful for the execution of the magistracy’s own work. As already stated, the Bollette’s staff was so small that sharing information would have been crucial to its ability to enforce registration and to collect fees and fines. As ordered by the Bollette’s 1462 statutes, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the magistracy was staffed by two officials and two notaries.

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61 Lucia Ferrante also states that she was not able to find such lists from the early seventeenth century. Ibid., p. 996, n. 25.
62 The woman’s name is difficult to make out because it had been crossed out by one of the notaries since, as the notary recorded, she had left prostitution and gone to live with her husband. C de M 1586, [np] section “I”, “Mad[onn]a Julia de Cesariis nel borgo di san Marino”.
63 “et al tempo di Monsignor Ill[uistrissi]mo Cesis fu pigliata.” Ibid.
64 See ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri, Scritture Diverse, busta 1, “Statuti”, fols. 1r and 4r.
The Bollette also employed a treasurer and one or two esecutori. The officials and notaries were required to be present in the magistracy’s office in order to receive registrations, the payment of fines, and denunciations. The work of the esecutori took them out into the city on a daily basis, delivering the written communication of the Bollette to other courts and magistracies and handing out citations to appear at the magistracy to women and men suspected of unregistered prostitution and procuring. In order to make better use of their public presence, in 1586 Vice Legate Domenico Toschi granted them the power ex officio, that is, on their own authority, to seize women suspected of unlicensed prostitution.\(^65\) Much like modern-day bounty hunters, these men sought out suspects, following denunciations given at the Bollette or tip-offs given to them in the street by concerned inhabitants. If, following up on one of these denunciations, they found a woman *in flagrante*, or simply with a man reputed to be her lover, the esecutori could, and sometimes did, seize her and bring her before the officials of the Bollette.\(^66\)

This extra power gave the esecutori greater ability to ensure the registration of prostitutes. However, the fact that the office employed only one to two men in this position at any one time made the enforcement of registration difficult for them to manage on their own; there simply were not enough eyes to peek into every window or dark portico in the city.\(^67\) Because of this, the Bollette relied upon the denunciations of others, including the sbirri and guards of the city’s other courts and magistracies. While these men do not appear in the records as the instigators of investigations – probably because the Bollette’s esecutori wanted to keep for themselves the reward of 50\% of the fine for women caught practicing

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\(^66\) Reports given by the esecutori about such seizures are contained in the *filze* from various years, the books of discovery (*libri inventionum*) of 1601 and 1603, the books of denunciations (*libri querelarum*) of 1622, 1623, 1624 and 1629, and very occasionally, in the registers themselves. Women caught in this manner must have been imprisoned overnight until the officials arrived at the Bollette in the morning, however, I have thus far been unable to discover where they were held. The jail of the archbishop’s court or of the Torrone are two likely possibilities.

\(^67\) Unlike the names of the officials and notaries, the names of the esecutori were not recorded on the Bollette’s annual proclamations because of the low-status nature of their work. A close reading of the bureaucratic material reveals that the following men were employed in this role for the sample years used in this study: 1584: Antonio Pazagli; 1594: Antonio Pazaglia and Paulo Emilio Zavarini; 1604: Ludovico Pizzoli, Flaminio di Lorenzi; 1614: Flaminio di Lorenzi; 1624: Pietro Benazzi and Lorenzo Messieri; 1630: Pietro Benazzi. In 1604, Pietro Paulo, son of Flaminio di Lorenzi, and Tiberio di Lorenzi (who may have also been Flaminio’s son), are listed in the register of prostitutes as the companions of Flaminio di Lorenzi. C de M 1584, 1594, 1604, 1614, 1624, and 1630; Filza 1604, 1614, 1624, and 1630.
prostitution without a licence – there is evidence that their testimonies were taken in cases against unlicensed prostitutes. In 1624, Jacopo de Mignani and Claudio Abello, both attendants (beroarii) of the archiepiscopal prison, testified to the character of Bartolomea Bertochi. Both men swore that she had been previously imprisoned in the archbishop’s jail for having been found naked and in bed with her lover, Oratio Ghardini.\(^{68}\) Such evidence points to the wider conversations that occurred between the staff of the Bollette and the city’s other tribunals and magistracies, the majority of which were given verbally, and thus did not leave a paper trail.\(^{69}\) Given the small size of the Bollette’s staff, its specialised focus, as well as the overlapping jurisdictional interests of other Bolognese tribunals, this sharing of information was probably a common feature of practice, suggesting that in this period a web of magistracies, courts, and jails worked together, at least to some extent, to regulate prostitutes and to enforce public and moral order in the city.

The Bollette’s licensing regime also helped to ensure the moral order of the city through the money that the magistracy gave to the city’s pious charitable institutions. The information it collected helped to support the city’s Convertite (house for repentant prostitutes) that, under the 1569 papal bull of Pius V, was entitled to the goods and monies of prostitutes who died intestate, regardless of whether they had surviving children.\(^{70}\) Lucia Ferrante has demonstrated that this was enforced in practice, citing cases held in the archiepiscopal archive that were brought by the children of prostitutes attempting to claim their inheritances from the Convertite.\(^{71}\) The personal information gathered through registration was key to the Convertite’s ability to claim these inheritances; not only did it identify the women that the Convertite could inherit from, but it also provided personal information that could be used to collect those inheritances, such as where a prostitute had


\(^{69}\) Research into investigations by the archiepiscopal court and the Tribunale del Torrone may reveal testimonies given by the staff of the Bollette.


\(^{71}\) Lucia Ferrante, “‘Malmaritate’ tra assistenza e punizione (Bologna, secc. XVI-XVII),” in Forme e soggetti dell’intervento assistenziale in una città di antico regime, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1986), pp. 75.
lived and sometimes even whom she lived with. In fact, this information was so important that the signature of the procurator of the Convertite was required before the entry of a previously-licensed prostitute or ‘dishonest woman’ could be removed from the registers.\textsuperscript{72}

The Bollette also gave money to the city’s monasteries, nunneries, and civic charitable institutions, income that was desperately needed to keep the latter, in particular, open.\textsuperscript{73} For instance, an undated note in the records of the Bollette lists the monies given by the magistracy to 38 monasteries, nunneries, conservatories, orphanages, and hospitals. Amongst the recipients were the Convertite, the conservatories of Santa Marta, Santa Maria del Baraccano, and the Pia Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo, the orphanages of San Bartolomeo di Reno and San Giacomo, and Bologna’s centralised charitable organisation, the Opera Pia dei Poveri Mendicanti.\textsuperscript{74} Another note, dated 13 June 1602, records that Ludovico Pizzoli, the Bollette’s esecutore, gave 30 lire to the conservatory of Santa Maria Maddalena as charity (“per ellemosina”).\textsuperscript{75} By redistributing to the city’s charitable institutions and monastic houses some of the money that it gathered through fees and fines, the Bollette thus contributed to the city’s larger efforts to provide charity to its religious and ‘worthy’ poor.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{72} For examples of this, see ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1614, [np], “Virginie del Aghuchiis” [10 December 1614]; Filza 1624, [np], untitled, begins “Consentio ego Jo[ann]es Baptis[tis]ta Roscius syndicus Reverendissimo m[onich]alium Converti[um] civis Bononiae” (11 July 1624). See also C de M 1614, pp. 34, 35, 65, 68, 99, 265; C de M 1624, [np], section 'B', Bartolomea Motta, and section ‘L’, Lucretia Fachina. Throughout most of the early sixteenth century, Giovanni Battista Rossi acted as the Convertite’s procurator.

\textsuperscript{73} It is unclear whether these were freely-given donations or obligatory payments. No proclamation or order from the civic government has appeared in the documentation examined in this study that ordered the Bollette to give portions of its income to the convertite or to other charitable institutions. However, Florence’s Onestà was legally required to give some of its income to the convertite: in 1569 Cosimo I’s government ordered that taxes levied on wealthy prostitutes were to be divided evenly between the Onestà and the convent of the convertite. Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 292.

\textsuperscript{74} Unfortunately, the list does not record the amounts given, only the number of times charitable gifts were given. ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1605, [np], “Elemosine delle Bollette.” (undated). For more on these conservatories and orphanages, see Terpstra, \textit{Abandoned Children}. On the Mendicanti, see Giovanni Calori, Una iniziative sociale nella Bologna del ‘500: l’Opera mendicanti (Bologna: Azzoguidi, 1972).


\textsuperscript{76} For more on the concept of the ‘worthy poor’, especially in opposition to the ‘unworthy’ or ‘undeserving’ poor, see Robert Jütte, \textit{Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially Chapter Two: Images of Poverty.
This chapter now moves to a detailed analysis of the application of the licensing regime by the Bollette officials, notaries, and esecutori between 1583 and 1630. Using the bureaucratic records produced by the magistracy’s notaries as its main evidence, this section outlines the parameters of the day-to-day practice of registration. It demonstrates that the licensing regime was designed to speedily identify, process, and collect fees and fines from prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’. It then moves on to a detailed analysis of the complications that were brought to the fore when the policy of regulation was put into practice. Not surprisingly, many women either did not, or were reluctant to, register with the Bollette and purchase licences on a regular basis. As this section will show, this was due to many factors, but common amongst them were claims of poverty, illness, or fear of being labelled a prostitute. This section reveals how the Bollette’s officials, notaries, and esecutori dealt with these situational complications and finds that negotiation, flexibility, and even sympathy, characterised their work. Finally, this section analyses how the habits of the Bollette’s staff themselves, including negotiation but also negligence, laxity, corruption, and a lack of knowledge of procedure, both helped and hindered the successful implementation of the licensing regime.

4. The Practice of Registration

Although the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century bi-annual proclamations of the Ufficio delle Bollette stated that male procurers (ruffiani) were required to register, in practice this was not enforced by the magistracy. Not a single register of procurers exists in the Bollette’s bureaucratic material. Moreover, the filze and other investigative records contain no investigations of men suspected of unlicensed procuring. Given the vast amount

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77 As the June 1602 proclamation stated: “It is still commanded that within eight days all of the prostitutes, courtesans, ‘casarenghe’, and other ‘persone inhuoneste’ [...] [and] male and female procurers living in the said city must personally present themselves (and not use a third party unless they receive a legal mandate [to do so]) before the Lord officials [of the Bollette] or their notaries.” “Ancora si comanda a tutte le Meretrici, Cortegiane, Casarenghe, & altre persone inhuoneste, che inhuonestamente vivono, Ruffiani, & Ruffiane habitanti in detta Città, che fra termine di otto giorni debbano presentarsi personalmente, & non per interposta persona, se non haverà legittimo mandato dinanzi a detti SS. Officiali, ò suoi Notari.” ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1602, [np] “Bando sopra l’Officio delle Bollette, & presentazioni de Forastieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e Meretrici,” (28 and 29 June 1602).

78 Lucia Ferrante also argues that the Bollette did not enforce the registration of male procurers based on the fact that did not find any proceedings against them in the bureaucratic documentation of the Bollette. See her “‘Pro mercede carnale.’ Il giusto prezzo rivendicato in tribunale,” Memoria: Rivista di storia delle donne 2, no. 17 (1986): 46. The surviving documents of the Bollette contain thousands of records of
of the Bollette’s documentation that was archived in the early modern period, especially after 1601, and which has survived into the present era, it is unlikely that such registers were ever kept at all. As for the continued use of the term ‘ruffiani’ in the proclamations, this appears to be an artefact drawn from past proclamations rather than a reflection of contemporary regulation. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Bollette’s 1462 and 1485 statutes had included extensive regulations governing male procurers. By the late sixteenth century, however, the Bollette was no longer enforcing them. Moreover, like the term ‘male procurers’, the term ‘casarenghe’ was also used in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century proclamations of the Bollette even though in the period the notaries did not use the term in their records.

It is less clear whether in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Bollette enforced the registration of female procurers (ruffiane). There are no extant records of investigations into women for procuring. Yet female procurers were different from male procurers since they may also have been engaging in prostitution. A woman who worked as a prostitute may also have engaged in the work of a procurer or a go-between and vice versa: arranging meetings between clients and other prostitutes, overseeing transactions, or providing a place for clients and prostitutes to meet on an ad-hoc or continuous basis could bring in extra money for women. Because of the potential for such work on the part of both of these women, the conceptual difference between procurer and prostitute may have been difficult for the Bollette’s notaries (and perhaps also the prostitutes themselves) to differentiate in practice.

The annual registers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ shed little light on this question. While it is possible that the Bollette’s notaries entered female procurers into the registers, there is no way to know. Between 1583 and 1605, the Bollette’s notaries did not use in the registers any of the labels that appeared in the bi-annual proclamations (‘meretrice’, ‘cortegiana’, ‘casarengha’, ‘donna in honesta’, or ‘ruffiana’). Rather, they used a formulaic entry that stated that the woman had denounced herself, had asked to be investigated, and I do not claim to have done an exhaustive search. However, based on the hundreds of cases that I have seen from the years 1584, 1594, 1604, 1614, 1624, and 1630, I feel confident that the Bollette did not licence male procurers.

For more on these regulations, see Chapter Two.

registered for a certain amount of time, and had paid a specific fee. For example, the entry for Antonia Fiorenzola, alias di Faldi, from 1594 stated:

4 January 1594: The aforementioned Donna Antonia appeared and personally denounced herself, and she asked that she be registered until June, which she has been, and she paid one lira, ten soldi.\(^1\)

For 23 years, between 1583 and 1605, this formula was repeated hundreds of times in the registers with very little variation. Even when the formula was slightly revised in 1606, each and every woman was noted to have registered “as a prostitute” (\textit{pro meretrice}). For example, on 5 January 1606, Antonia Pignatura’s registration was recorded thus:

On 5 January the aforementioned Antonia denounced herself as a prostitute through her sister Peregrina, and she promised to comply and to pay, and for the present month she paid five soldi.\(^2\)

Between 1614 and 1630, the notaries again ceased to identify registrants, dropping even the vague “pro meretrice” from their formula. Certainly, it was no secret what these women were registering for: between 1583 and 1630 each register was labelled as “Campione delle Puttane” (Register of Whores), “Campione delle Meretrici” or “Camplonus Meretricum” (Register of Prostitutes). Moreover, between 1603 and 1608, and again in 1630, a note on the first folio page of each register specifically stated that it was to be used to record the names of ‘meretrici’ and ‘dishonest women’ or ‘mulieres inhoneste’. Whether female procurers were considered prostitutes or not is unclear because in the entries no distinction was made between women.

An analysis of the registers of landlords and innkeepers suggests that some female procurers were registered by the Bollette as landlords. Two specific cases illustrate this point. The first involves Antonia Albertazza and appears in a 1604 investigation into a woman suspected of unlicensed prostituting. The Bollette’s esecutore, Ludovico Pizzoli, reported that the woman had lived in the house of Antonia Albertazza, whom he identified


as a “ruffiana”.\textsuperscript{83} Antonia was not registered in that year’s register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’. She had, however, been registered as a landlord six years earlier, in 1598.\textsuperscript{84} In 1601, Antonia had again registered as a landlord and was also recorded as buying licences for three of the six women who claimed to rent from her.\textsuperscript{85} Not only, therefore, was she identified in 1604 as a ‘ruffiana’ by Ludovico Pizzoli, but she had been involved in the business of prostitution, even if only peripherally, for at least seven years. In 1604, however, she was registered neither as a prostitute nor as a landlord, even though in that year two registered prostitutes claimed that they rented from her, and even though she was recorded as having gone to the Bollette’s office to purchase a licence for one of those prostitutes.\textsuperscript{86} There is thus tantalising evidence that Antonia was a procurer – she rented to prostitutes for many years, she bought licences from the Bollette for them, and she was called a ‘ruffiana’ by the Bollette’s ‘esecutore’. Yet while in some years she was regularly registered as a landlord, she was never registered as a prostitute or ‘dishonest women’.

The second example of a woman who acted as a procurer and was registered as a landlord is that of Ginevra Caretta, also known as Junipera. In both 1598 and 1601, Ginevra registered with the Bollette as a landlord and in 1601, two prostitutes registered as renting from her.\textsuperscript{87} In fact, Ginevra had been renting to prostitutes for a long time: registering prostitutes cited her as their landlord for fourteen years, between 1584 and 1597, and again in 1601. Like Antonia, Ginevra was also recorded as purchasing licences from the Bollette for the prostitutes who rented from her and, like Antonia, she rented to prostitutes over a long period of time.\textsuperscript{88} Over all of these years, however, Ginevra registered only once as a

\textsuperscript{83} ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1604, [np], “Contra Lucia de Anconella” [15 January 1604].

\textsuperscript{84} This is the earliest surviving book of landlords and innkeepers. ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Osti et Cameranti Vacchetta 1598, [np] ‘A’ section.

\textsuperscript{85} ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Osti et Cameranti Vacchetta 1601, [np] ‘A’ section. The prostitutes who were recorded as renting from her were Maria di [blank] d’Imola, Laura Manfreda, Orsina di Nani, Orsina da Venezia, Antonia dalla Barisella, and Cherubina di Grossi. C de M 1601, pp. 139, 51, 209, 204, 174, and 176, respectively. Antonia bought licences for Maria, Laura, and Orsina da Venezia.

\textsuperscript{86} C de M 1604, p.55, Caterina Ansalona Modenesa, and [np] section “Z”, Lavinia di Giordani Ferraresa. In some years it was common practice for the notaries to only number the pages of the registers in increments, such as every five pages. Antonia was recorded as buying Lavinia’s licence.

\textsuperscript{87} ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Osti et Cameranti Vacchetta 1598, [np] section “I”, Junipera Caretta; Osti et Cameranti Vacchetta 1601, [np] section “I”, Junipera Caretta. In 1601, Ginevra lived in an apartment on via Senza Nome, which she rented from a shoemaker named Giovanni Pietro. C de M 1601, pp. 188 and 130.

\textsuperscript{88} In 1597, for instance, Ginevra purchased a two-month licence for Livia Paduana, a prostitute who lived with her near the church of San Colombano (on today’s via Parigi). C de M 1597, p. 76.
prostitute, in 1588. For some reason, in this year either she or the men of the Bollette decided that she was a prostitute or a ‘dishonest woman’. For the most part, however, the notaries of the Bollette categorised her as a landlord – and possibly as a procurer – though they did not label her as such.

In contrast, men who ran brothels or who rented rooms to prostitutes were not registered as landlords or as innkeepers. For instance, in 1601 four registered prostitutes identified their landlord as Messer Giulio Cesare Calcina, whose house was on Borgo degli Arienti. Calcina was not, however, recorded in that year’s register of innkeepers and landlords. Neither was Paolo muradore (the mason), whom Orsina Fabraci cited as her landlord, nor Lucchese Bavelino, who rented to Domenica Bertalda. Certainly, the Bollette did not shy from registering male innkeepers: the registers are full of entries of men who are labelled as hospes (hosts). Yet none of these men was recorded as renting to women in the registers of prostitutes. Why the Bollette registered women who rented to prostitutes as landlords but not men who did the same had less to do with their desire to register procurers and more to do with their desire to register all women involved in the business of prostitution. As noted above, prostitutes and female procurers could have easily slipped from one form of work to the other, having sex with men at some points, while arranging meetings between prostitutes and clients at others. At the very least, the Bollette charged landlords (both male and female) an annual surety of ten lire, an amount that was much higher than the three lire that prostitutes paid to register each year. Perhaps the Bollette was willing to register women as landlords because it brought in more money. Additionally, if landlords failed to register themselves every six months, then the Bollette would have no problem collecting their fine, since they already held the ten lire as a surety.

This chapter now moves on to a discussion of the application of the Bollette’s licensing regime. Between 1583 and 1630, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of women were registered as prostitutes or ‘dishonest women’ (see Appendix 2). However, successful,

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89 It is unknown if Ginevra registered as a prostitute in 1585, 1595, and 1596 since the registers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ for those years are not extant. C de M 1588, [np] ‘G’ section.

90 These women were Isabetta Rabi, Caterina Senese, Camilla Battalia, and Angela de Fernani. C de M 1601, pp. 105, 23, 24, and 5 respectively. Calcina did not go to the Bollette and purchase licences for these women in this year, though Caterina Senese bought Camilla Battalia’s for her.

91 Ibid., pp. 155 and 173 respectively.

universal registration of all prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ was complicated by three main factors. The first was the very small staff employed by the Bollette. The second was the reluctance of women to register themselves, whether due to poverty, to illness, or to fear of being labelled a prostitute. Finally, the third issue that complicated registration was the corruption and laxity of the Bollette’s staff itself. This section analyses these issues in depth and uncovers the methods the Bollette and the civic government used in an attempt to overcome them. What emerges is a picture of the Bollette’s staff as flexible and accommodating in some cases, while corrupt and lax in others. It was orderly and organised in some of its work, while unsystematic in others. Indeed, an analysis of the bureaucratic documentation produced by the Bollette in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries demonstrates that the regulation of prostitution was deployed selectively and unevenly based on the social distinctions amongst prostitutes as well as its staff’s own subjective interests.

The first issue that complicated the application of the Bollette’s licensing regime was its small staff. As mentioned previously, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the magistracy employed only two officials, two notaries, and one to three esecutori each year. Registration, judgement, and the collection of fines were daily affairs and were well attended. The office of the Bollette was open nearly every day of the year, and prostitutes and their representatives were constantly moving in and out of the building as they purchased monthly licences, answered citations to appear, and paid fines. Table 3.1 shows the numbers of prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, or their representatives who visited the Bollette during the month of January in each of the sample years used in this study. January was a very busy month for the Bollette since all prostitutes had to register themselves at the start of each new year. Generally, just over 100 people did so, but sometimes up to 200 or 300 (379 in 1604, for instance, and 239 in 1614) visited the Bollette in that month. Over the course of the year the number of visitors to the Bollette grew as unlicensed prostitutes were caught and forced to register and as new prostitutes came to the city. With hundreds of prostitutes or their representatives visiting the office every month, in addition to foreigners, landlords, tavern operators, and innkeepers, the Bollette was forced to employ practices designed to speed up its work.
Table 3.1: Number of women who registered as prostitutes between 1 and 31 January, as recorded in the annual registers, by sample year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of women registered in January</th>
<th>Total number of women registered that year</th>
<th>Percentage of total number of women registered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1584</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed analysis of the bureaucratic documentation produced between 1583 and 1630 reveals that the licensing regime attempted to ensure the rapid identification, registration, and continuous licensing of prostitutes. Ideally, women came to the office and denounced themselves of their own accord and on a regular basis (either every month or every semester), since self denunciation saved the small staff of officials, notaries, and esecutori the time and effort involved in investigations and trials. In the interest of speedy registration, the notaries recorded only the information that could help the Bollette find a woman if she ceased to register: her name, her place of residence (sometimes given as street or area, sometimes with reference to the brothel keeper or innkeeper from whom she rented), and, sometimes, whether she was new to the city. If she was simply renewing her licence, then the notary amended her entry, documenting any personal changes, such as illness or residential change, and made a record of her payment in the register. If the officials or the notaries questioned the woman about the details of her work, her age, whether she was married, or who she lived with, they did not record her answers in the registers. In return for her payment, the notary provided the woman with a licence (a bolletta) that she could use as proof of registration.

The use of third-party registrations further demonstrates the Bollette’s desire to ensure the rapid processing of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’. The magistracy’s bi-annual proclamations ordered that women could not have other people buy their licences for them unless they had received permission from the officials or the notaries in advance to do so.\(^93\) In practice, however, it appears that many women did get ‘proxy’ registration without

\(^{93}\) Ibid.
such writs. No examples survive in the bureaucratic documentation, while hundreds of women were registered by family members, friends, other prostitutes, procurers, lovers, paid go-betweens, landlords, and brothel owners each year. In 1584, for instance, 63% (179 of 284) of the women who registered did so through a third-party at least once during the year, and most did so multiple times. In 1604, 76.5% did so (468 of 611), and in 1614, 75.6% did so (258 of 341). Again, all of these women generally used third-parties multiple times per year. Registration through a third party was thus very common. Occasionally even the Bollette’s esecutori brought in payments for women. In the register of 1604 there are twenty such recorded cases, not counting instances in which payments appear to have been forced or include the payment of a fine. Technically, the esecutori were not supposed to do this; in 1586 Bologna’s vice legate ordered that the esecutori could not accept money from prostitutes for any reason, unless the officials of the Bollette had ordered them to do so. However, the esecutori were willing to purchase licences for prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ in the interest of ensuring registration and licence renewal.

The Bollette used summary justice in cases of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ who failed to register, and did so in the interest of quick registration. A woman suspected of unlicensed prostitution could be judged guilty without the benefit of a trial or investigation if the officials were convinced of her guilt because she had been caught in flagrante by the esecutori. If, however, a woman fought an accusation, then the Bollette began a protracted investigation into her life that involved gathering testimonies from her friends, family, and neighbours, and holding a trial in the Bollette’s tribunal. Such processes could be lengthy, taking up time and attention that the Bollette’s small staff could devote elsewhere. While extant cases of women fighting accusations of unlicensed prostitution

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94 Chapter Four will discuss the practice of family, friends, other prostitutes, and other people registering and buying licences for prostitutes in greater detail.
96 Summary justice’ is essentially judgements given without the benefit of a trial by men without professional training in the law. It is applicable to the justice handed down by the Bollette since its tribunal was overseen by the magistracy’s two officials, who, as discussed in Chapter Two, were members of the Bolognese oligarchy, and thus most likely lacked professional training in the law. The term also applies to the work of the Bollette because many women were pronounced guilty without a trial. I thank legal historians Bradley Miller and Jim Philips for help with this term. Michael Rocke also uses the term to describe the judicial practices of Florence’s Office of the Night. Rocke, Forbidden Friendships.
97 The proceedings, and sometimes the judgements, of the Bollette’s tribunal are held in ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filze. The tribunal dealt not only with cases of unregistered prostitutes and
vary in number across the years, they never amounted to more than 100 annually. Instead, the Bollette relied on summary justice as much as it could in order to ensure quick registration and the payment of fines. The magistracy almost always applied monetary fines, rather than physical punishment, since they were easier to apply, quicker to collect, and more profitable.

While hundreds of women and their representatives came each month to the Bollette to register, not all did so without coercion from the Bollette’s esecutori. This was the second issue that the staff faced when putting the policy of licensing into practice. It is impossible to know how many women who practiced prostitution or had illicit sexual relationships with men escaped the Bollette’s attention. The bureaucratic documentation, however, demonstrates the extent of the problem. Even a very brief survey of the registers and the investigative material reveals that, month after month, the Bollette investigated women for failing to register as prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’. The filza of 1604, for instance, contains documentation pertaining to 80 distinct investigations begun after denunciations were given to the Bollette or the esecutori found women in flagrante. 25 of these women were found innocent, while 35 were found guilty of practicing prostitution unlicensed. The other twenty were never found, and thus their cases were dropped, though the Bollette kept records of their investigation in case the women were denounced or caught again in the future.98

The number of cases contained in the filze and the other investigative documentation does not represent, however, the total number of women suspected of unlicensed prostitution that the Bollette pursued each year. Because the magistracy employed summary justice,
detailed records of many of the cases were never made and/or archived with the Bollette’s other documentation; the only evidence of cases settled through summary justice is the entries written into the registers. Though, as discussed earlier, on the whole these entries contain little more information than that the woman paid a fine – they often do not record what the fine was levied for – some did. In the 1584 register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’, the notaries recorded that 52 women had been caught unregistered. In the 1604 register they noted that 99 women had been caught for the same offence and in the 1614 they noted that 44 women had been (see Table 3.2). It is important to note that these numbers are conservative: the entries made in the registers by the Bollette’s notaries varied wildly in levels of clarity and completion; these numbers thus reflect only the entries that clearly state that the woman had been caught and/or was being fined because she had not yet registered that year. The variations in the entries’ clarity and completion suggest that there may have also been instances when a woman was found guilty of working unlicensed, but the notary did not record it because of unsystematic record keeping practices, or worse, because he was corrupt and had received a payment from the woman under the table.

### Table 3.2: Number of women who were caught by the Bollette for not having registered by the third week of January as recorded in the annual registers, by sample year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of prostitutes who had not registered by January and were caught and registered</th>
<th>Total number of prostitutes registered that year</th>
<th>Percentage of prostitutes caught for not registering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1584</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This chart analyses only the entries of women who paid for licences during the year; it does not include women who never purchased licences, but for whom the notaries made entries in the registers.

The Bollette also had to deal with women who registered at the beginning of each year yet, for various reasons, ceased to register. Sometimes, women went to the Bollette to request that they be allowed to stop registering due to illness or poverty; the registers show that such requests were granted from time to time. In 1604, for instance, the officials
allowed Nastasia di Salmi to go unregistered for the month of April because she was visibly ill and in a wretched state ("visa infirma et miserabilis"). They did so, as the scribe recorded, "amore Dei", for the love of God. Such accommodations may have been motivated by compassion, but they may also have been motivated by practicality. By waiving these women’s payments until they were well, they might be encouraged to register themselves, and thus the Bollette’s staff would be saved the time and energy it took to track such women down and force them to register.

Many women did not make such requests, however. Instead they simply stopped purchasing licences. Again, the registers can give us only a glimpse of this problem. They do show, however, that after their initial annual registration, at least a third to a half of all licensed prostitutes were caught and forced to pay for the months they had missed, an indication that they had stopped registering at some point in the year (see Table 3.3). Some of these women’s entries note that they had claimed to have been too ill to work or too poor to afford a licence, that they had ceased to work as prostitutes and taken up ‘honourable’ lives, or that they had married (see Table 3.4). However, most of these entries list no reason at all, suggesting either that these women’s excuses had not been convincing or that the women had not attempted to defend themselves. Thus, not only was getting prostitutes to register at the beginning of each year a problem that the Bollette had to face, but so too was keeping them registered.

Table 3.3: Numbers of women who were caught for not purchasing licences at some point throughout the year after their initial registration, as recorded in the annual registers, by sample year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of prostitutes who ceased to buy licences and were caught</th>
<th>Total number of prostitutes registered that year</th>
<th>Percentage of prostitutes caught for not registering (caught either through denunciation or ex officio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1584</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These numbers do not include those women who registered only once and never bought licences again.

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99 C de M 1604, [np] ‘N’ section. Nastasia had registered previously, on 26 January. She did not register again in 1604.
* The majority of those prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ who registered in 1630 (91 of 136 total registrants) were recorded buying licences on only one occasion throughout the entire year. 38 were recorded as having done so twice, five women three times, one woman four times, and two women five times. No women were recorded buying licences in August or September, only three women were recorded as doing so in November, and only one was recorded as doing so in December.

**Table 3.4: Reasons given by women for not having registered or for having ceased to buy licences as prostitutes, as recorded in the annual registers, by sample year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason:</th>
<th>1584</th>
<th>1594</th>
<th>1604</th>
<th>1614</th>
<th>1624</th>
<th>1630</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness and poverty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to husband</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to house of father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became a servant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered the Convertite</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered the conservatory of San Paolo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left city for a period (without permission)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swore they had ceased practicing prostitution</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was in jail</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One record in this year states that the woman was suffering from syphilis (*morbo gallico*).

The Bollette developed a number of laws, record-keeping methods, and practices in order to deal with the many women who failed to register or ceased buying licences throughout the year. For instance, the Bollette prohibited prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ from changing residences within the city or from leaving the city without first informing its notaries. Those who failed to do so would, according to the Bollette’s bi-annual proclamations, be charged a ten lire fine. Knowledge of where prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ lived could be used to find them if they ceased to buy licences – the officials could send the esecutori to their last known addresses to see if they still lived there, or to inquire with neighbours about their current circumstances. The notaries did in fact record residential changes in the registers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’, though, again, it appears that this was not done uniformly. A comparison of the number of instances of such records taken over the sample years of this study does show, however, that this information was noted

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with increasing regularity. For instance, in 1584 only nine of the 284 registered prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ were recorded as having moved in the year (0.03%), while in 1594 65 of the 372 registered were (17%). The increase in the recording of residential changes continued to climb throughout the early seventeenth century: in 1604, 148 of 611 registrants were recorded as moving (24%), in 1614 74 of the 341 registrants were noted to have moved (22%), and ten years after that, in 1624, 62 of 165 registrants were recorded as moving (37.5%). However, while such records became increasing regular throughout the period, they may represent only a fraction of the actual residential changes made by ‘dishonest women’ and prostitutes, since women or their representatives may have failed to report moves and notaries may have failed to record them.

The Bollette also used record-keeping methods that helped them to identify unregistered prostitutes. In the third week of January of each year, the notaries went through the previous year’s register and by cross-referencing it with the present year’s register, identified the women who had not yet registered. The notaries made lists of these women and then, armed with written citations, the esecutori went out into the city, inquiring after suspects. They started at the woman’s last-known address; if they found her there, they could do one of two things: they could either seize her and bring her into the Bollette to face the officials, or they could seize an item of value from her and bring that to the Bollette, to be returned when she paid her fine and registration fee. The records demonstrate that esecutori did both. If the esecutori could not find her, then they questioned her neighbours and landlord to discover her current circumstances.

The records also demonstrate the fine-tuning of this system over the years. In the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first of the seventeenth century, the Bollette’s notaries made lists of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ who had failed to register in a given year on unbound sheets of paper. By 1609 the notaries had begun to write these lists on the inside of the front cover of each register, and by 1614, they were pre-emptively making individual entries in the present year’s register for each and every one of the prostitutes and

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101 Some of these women were recorded to have moved multiple times in the same year.
102 Extant citations survive in the filze of the various years.
103 For examples of the “January lists”, see C de M 1587, [np], untitled, begins “Pago Angelica da castiune nel tu[r]leone”, (undated); Filza 1604, [np], “Lista di queli esse son anda con dio et maridate et morte”, (29 January 1604); C de M 1609, [np], “Nomi di tutte le meretrici ch[e] sono nel campione 1608 ch[e] no[n] si trovano hora in bol[ett]a p[er] rellatione di Lud[ovi]co [esecutore]” (undated).
‘dishonest women’ who had previously registered and paid for licences – even up to three years previously. For instance, Antonia Casaia’s entry in the 1614 register noted that she had been inscribed into the register [literally “enrolled”] because she had been inscribed in the 1613 register.104

After 1614, then, the notaries inscribed in the present year’s register the name of every woman who had registered at any point in the previous two or three years, regardless of whether she had registered in the year immediately preceding the current one. Because of this, after 1614 the annual registers of prostitutes are full of entries that, except for the women’s names and addresses, are otherwise blank (see Appendix 4). For example, there are a total of 641 entries in the register of 1614, but only 341 women actually purchased licences that year. Similarly, the register of 1624 contains 257 entries, while only 164 women purchases licences. The number of inscribed women in the 1614 register, therefore, does not reflect the number of women who had actually registered in 1613, but rather a combination of those who had registered in 1611, 1612, and 1613.

Though Appendix 4 must be read with the above cautions in mind, it nevertheless reveals that between 1604 and 1614, 270 women ceased to register as prostitutes with the Ufficio delle Bollette. The registers partially explain this reduction: as Table 3.4 demonstrates, women ceased to register for many reasons, such as because they returned to their husbands, because they married, or because they entered service. Other women either died or moved out of the city. However, these occurrences do not explain the drastic reductions and increases in the number of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ who registered throughout the period of this study. Instead, one needs to look at the demographic changes that occurred in Bologna during the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries.

According to demographer Guido Alfani, after the famines of 1590-1593, northern Italy experienced a phase of general recovery that lasted until 1619. During this period, more women not only would have been coming into the city from the surrounding countryside in search of work and food, but also would have stayed because they found these things, and this is reflected in the increase of women registering as prostitutes after 1594. However, Alfani also notes that this period of recovery was then followed by one of

104 “contrascripta Ant[oni]a rescripta fuit in praese[n]ti Camplono ex qua descripta erat in Camplono anni 1613.” C de M 1614, p. 3.
stagnation (between 1610 and 1619), and then by one of increasingly acute famines and food shortages throughout the 1620s. This final period eventually led to the pandemic of 1629-1630. The decrease in the numbers of women who registered as prostitutes after 1614 clearly reflects this shift, as women either left the city of their own accord in search of food or were thrown out by the beggar catchers discussed earlier in this chapter. Though this demographic shift is signalled in Appendix 4, it was probably not as drastic as it appears there. It was around 1614 that the notaries of the Bollette began the practice of pre-emptively writing the names of previously registered prostitutes into the new year’s registers – even if they had not registered for upwards of three years. Thus, the 641 entries contained in the register do not represent the number of women who registered in the current and previous year, but rather over the past few years.

There were many and varied reasons that women did not register with the Bollette as prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’. First and foremost were their difficult financial situations. The fee charged for registration was certainly not very high: it cost a woman five soldi to register for one month, for a total of three lire per year. In 1607, when the city was recovering from the famines of the 1590s, three lire could buy approximately sixteen kilograms of bread. This registration fee was, however, apparently too high for some Bolognese women, especially for those with children or dependant mothers and sisters to feed and shelter. For instance, on 8 January 1624, Constanza Bergamora requested that she be allowed to go unregistered until she could earn enough money to pay for a licence. The officials agreed because, as the scribe noted, Constanza was destitute (“non ha niente”). Not all women had Constanza’s foresight. Instead, they remained unregistered and hoped that they could avoid being caught or denounced to the Bollette. In the most dire of cases, the Bollette could be persuaded to show mercy. On 28 January 1614, for example, Domenica di Nobili Ferraresa’s fine for not registering was waived because of her poverty. In addition, after paying for that month’s registration, she was absolved from registering for two months because of her wretched and impoverished condition (“stante eius miserabilitate et paupertate”). In December of that same year, Domenica was again absolved from

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106 Lucia Ferrante, “Pro mercede carnali,” p. 44.
107 C de M 1624, [np], ‘C’ section. Constanza did not register again that year.
108 C de M 1614, p. 64.
registering due to poverty. In 1604 the fines levied against four of the 99 women who were caught for not registering by the third week of January were either reduced or completely waived due to poverty.\footnote{C de M 1604, [np], ‘C’ section, Clarice di Giudoni; ‘T’ section, Lucia Poltronieri di Pedrazzi; ‘M’ section, Maddalena dall’Auolio; ‘R’ section, Virginia di Pii.} These kinds of accommodations were motivated, to varying degrees, by both sympathy as well as practicality; for the Bollette, some revenue was better than none, and even when they waived women’s fines they still received the money from her purchase of a monthly licence.

That some women could not afford the fee of a licence, even one as low as five soldi, is not entirely surprising when we consider that many of the women registering with the Bollette were the poorest of the city’s prostitutes. Indeed, even at that low rate, many registrants paid for their licences on a month-to-month basis, and some were constantly in arrears. These were the women who could not afford to bribe the esecutori, notaries, or officials, those without rich benefactors to protect them against being dishonoured by registration or punished for disobeying sumptuary and spatial restrictions.\footnote{On the importance to wealthy prostitutes of not being associated with poor ones by being registered or made to follow sumptuary and residential restrictions in Florence, see Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” p. 293-295.} It is thus no wonder that they attempted to avoid registration.

It appears, however, that wealthier prostitutes also attempted to avoid registration with the Bollette. These women may have wanted to keep their names out of the ‘public’ register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ in order to differentiate themselves from poorer prostitutes. By disassociating themselves in this way, wealthier prostitutes could construct or conserve the public honour that allowed them to attract and to keep wealthy and elite clients. In June 1586, Bologna’s vice legate, Domenico Toschi, commanded that the officials and notaries of the Bollette cease keeping two registers. The first he referred to as the campione, the annual register, while he referred to the second as la vachetta secreta, literally, the private book. According to Toschi’s order, the Convertite’s procurator had discovered the existence of this second book and requested that he intervene; because the Convertite inherited from deceased prostitutes, it was in their interest to know each and every woman who worked as a prostitute in Bologna. Toschi ordered that henceforth the Bollette could keep only a single register, that it had to be paginated, and that no pages could ever be torn out of it. Moreover, the register was to be made available to the Convertite’s
Though Toschi did not clearly state it in his order, given the Convertite’s concerns as well as the details of his instructions, it seems likely that the second register was used to record payments for exemption from registration by wealthier prostitutes.

There is evidence that such selling of exemptions from registration was also practiced by Florence’s Onestà. Beginning in 1614, prostitutes could buy such exemptions at a cost of twenty scudi, which was to be given to the city’s Convertite. In 1625 this was reaffirmed, though the method of payment was changed to a yearly fee of six scudi, seven lire, paid quarterly. In other northern-Italian cities that did not register prostitutes, such as Rome, prostitutes could purchase exemptions from sumptuary and spatial restrictions as well as immunities from harassment by the sibirri. Research into the statutes, proclamations, and records of Bologna’s Bollette has not turned up orders for the selling of such exemptions. However, given the concerns voiced by the Convertite, the details of Toschi’s 1586 order, and the commonality of selling exemptions from regulations to wealthier prostitutes in northern Italy, it seems likely that this is exactly what the Bollette was doing.

Toschi’s order did not, of course, stop the Bollette’s staff from showing preferential treatment to prostitutes who could pay. Judging by extant documentation, after 1586 the erasing of women’s entries from the registers without the agreement of the procurator of the Convertite was a recurring problem. Injunctions against this practice survive from 1596, 1608, and 1623, and the last two assigned a fine of 200 gold scudi for the offence. Such erasures may have occurred because socially-mobile prostitutes paid the Bollette’s notaries to have their names removed from past registers.

While financial concerns or social status led some women to attempt to avoid registration, other women did not register with the Bollette because they felt that being listed in the annual registers, and thus being labelled as prostitutes or ‘dishonest women’, would hurt their chances of contracting a marriage. In 1604, for example, the Bollette’s tribunal

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111 C de M 1586, [np], ‘Z’ section.
113 Storey, Carnal Commerce, p. 114.
114 ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1601, [np], “Decretus R[everendissimi] D[omini] Zanoti contra officialibus bolletarum,” (20 November 1596); Filza 1608, [np], “Monialium Convertitam Bononiae,” (22 January 1608); Filza 1623, [np], printed order, untitled, begins “Comandiamo à voi SS. Vfficiale è Nottarij dell’Officio delle Bolette di questa Città di Bologna” (20 February 1623). A copy of the latter order also exists in the filza of 1625.
found Lucrezia Rafaelli guilty of being a ‘dishonest woman’ because she had recently given birth to a child and, as she confessed, she had never been married. The Bollette’s officials assigned her a fine of four lire and ordered that she be registered. They also ordered that she begin buying monthly licences “as the other ‘dishonest women’ [do]” (“prout cetere inhoneste mulieres”). Lucrezia begged the officials not to inscribe her “so that it would be easier for her to get married”.\footnote{“supplicantem illam non describi [esse] in d[ict]o camplono ut facilius possit se nuptui traddere.” ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796}, Filza 1604, [np], “Cont[ra] Lucretia[m] de Raffaelis” (23 January 1604).} She swore that she was planning to give her child to the \textit{Bastardini} (Bologna’s orphanage for infants) and that she would pay the fine and live ‘honourably’ in the future if only they would not write her name into the register of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’.\footnote{For more on the Bastardini, officially called the \textit{Ospedale dei Santi Pietro e Procolo}, but also referred to as the ‘Esposti’ (the exposed) and the ‘Bastardini’ (the little bastards), see Umberto Rubbi and Cesare Zucchini, “L’Ospizio Esposti e l’Asilo di Maternità in Bologna,” in \textit{Sette secoli di vita ospitaliera in Bologna. Comitato per le celebrazioni del VII centenario degli Ospedali di Bologna} (Bologna: Cappelli, 1960), pp. 401-417; Mario Fanti, \textit{San Procolo. Una parrocchia di Bologna dal medioevo all’età contemporanea} (Bologna: Cappelli, 1983), pp. 154-185.} The officials granted her request; Lucrezia’s name does not appear in the register. How many other women also managed to keep themselves from being registered based on the argument that it would hurt their chances of making marriages is unknown. However, Lucrezia’s case demonstrates that the men of the Bollette were willing to accommodate women for this reason and suggests that they may have done so for others. Moreover, the fact that the notaries did not obliterate the records of Lucrezia’s investigation, but instead archived them with their other documentation, suggests that they did not fully believe her claim that she would reform her life and thought that she might come to their attention again in the future.

For those without a plausible excuse or a convincing promise that they would reform their lives, failure to register could elicit both a fine and the forced payment for missed months. The bi-annual proclamations of the Bollette prescribed a fine of ten lire for prostitutes who were caught without a licence. In practice, however, very few women were charged the full ten lire. Instead, fines were usually reduced to an amount between one and four lire, based on the amount of time the woman had gone unlicensed and, perhaps, also based on the amount that she could conceivably borrow from family, friends, or lovers to pay for the fine. For instance, on 6 February 1604, Lucia Colieva was fined two lire for not
having registered in January and was made to pay an additional ten soldi (five soldi for a licence for January, and five soldi for one for February).\textsuperscript{117} On 14 February 1614, Domenica Anconella was fined an unspecified amount for not registering in January. The fine was reduced to two lire, four soldi (the reason for this was not specified), but she was forced to pay for licences for six months, which included the month of January.\textsuperscript{118} Fines may also have been reduced due to either the goodwill or simple practicality of the officials, who allowed women to pay what they could because it brought in some revenue and because it might make it more likely that the women would continue to purchase licences for the remainder of the year. Such accommodations and flexibility, therefore, could help the successful deployment of the Bollette’s licensing regime. If, however, the investigator thought a woman was a particular flight risk, he could seize some of her goods to ensure that she would come to the Bollette to pay her fine and registration fee. This was the case on 1 March 1604 when, upon finding Laura Spinelli at home and unregistered, Ludovico Pizzoli seized two blankets, one of which was made of taffeta, and brought them to the Bollette.\textsuperscript{119}

The second major issue the Bollette faced in applying the registration policy was getting all women to register themselves as prostitutes or ‘dishonest women’. Extant evidence shows that the staff of the Bollette expected this, and thus developed ways to deal with it. This included the use of methods that identified women who had not registered at the beginning of each year. It also included flexibility when dealing with the women themselves, characterised by a willingness to negotiate and to accommodate the realities of the lives of both impoverished and wealthier prostitutes.

The third major problem that faced the application of the Bollette’s licensing regime was the laxity, corruption, and even poor training of the Bollette’s administration and staff. For the most part, the surviving bureaucratic material is silent on these matters. However, a few documents, such as a 1586 order from Bologna’s legate, do remain and illustrate that, like other early modern magistracies, corruption was a matter of course in the Bollette.\textsuperscript{120} Also useful is an analysis “along the grain” of the Bollette’s bureaucratic documentation.

\textsuperscript{117} C de M 1604, [np] ‘N’ section.
\textsuperscript{118} On 12 June, Domenica paid for the remaining six months of the year (one lire, ten soldi). C de M 1614, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{119} “et pignus est una cohoperta a lecto, et uno taffetato.” C de M 1604, [np] ‘T’ section.
\textsuperscript{120} Further research into the briefs, decrees, and letters authored by Bologna’s legates and vice legates in the period, housed in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna, may provide more evidence of the Bollette’s corruption.
itself: analysing these documents for evidence of the record-taking practices of the notaries provides evidence of laxity and poor training, both of which compromised the universal deployment of the Bollette’s licensing regime.\textsuperscript{121}

This chapter has already discussed the fact that the Bollette employed only a small number of officials, notaries, and esecutori, a situation that was the perfect breeding ground for corruption. In an attempt to avoid this, the officials and notaries of the Bollette were, in practice, newly elected each year and did not serve more than once in a lifetime. Regardless of this precaution, however, corruption was a perennial problem at the Bollette. Indeed, it was institutionalised. As new notaries and officials took up their positions at the Bollette, they would have been trained by those who had held their position in the previous year. Their instruction was thus based on these men’s previous personal experience, rather than on a codified system of rules created by authorities who were at a distance from the actual application of registration, such as the legates. Their method of instruction, then, allowed for corrupt practices to be passed down to new employees who either thought it was par for the course or simply did not know any better.

The fact that the Bollette’s officials and notaries were replaced every year posed other problems to the deployment of the Bollette’s licensing regime. New employees meant that holders had to be freshly trained each year. As with anyone taking up a new job, in the beginning these notaries and officials made mistakes in their work, since they were in the process of learning the magistracy’s procedures. Evidence of such mistakes can be seen in the registers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’: entries lack addresses and they do not record amounts paid for licences. Sometimes they contain extraordinary information, such as a detailed explanation of the relationship between a prostitute and the person who had come in to purchase her licence. Mistakes made by the notaries may also explain the low rates of recording residential changes and the vague entries about fines. New notaries simply may not have known, or may have forgotten, that they should record such information. Some of what seems like laxity in recordkeeping, therefore, may have been in fact a product of the notary’s lack of knowledge about the processes they were to follow.

\textsuperscript{121} I take the phrase “along the archival grain” from the recent work of colonial historian Ann Laura Stoler who argues that historians can learn as much about bureaucracies, and on a larger scale, about governance, from studying evidence about the process of record making as from studying the content of the records themselves. Ann Laura Stoler, \textit{Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense} (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).
Certainly, new notaries could ask the Bollette’s past officials and notaries in instances where they did not know how to proceed. The could also refer to past documentation and documentary practices. However, this again opened up the possibility of duplicating corrupt practices or making mistakes. In order to avoid this, the orders from the legates could be instructive, such as that of Toschi made in 1586, which prohibited the keeping of two registers or the erasing the names of women without the agreement of the procurator of the Convertite. Yet this was true only if past officials and notaries alerted new ones to the existence of such documents.

Unlike the notaries and the officials, the esecutori who enforced regulations held their positions for many years in a row. Antonio Pazaglia held this position for at least twelve years (1583-1594), Ludovico Pizzoli for at least thirteen years (1597-1609), and Pietro Benazzi for at least seven years (1624-1630). Unlike the officials of the Bollette, these men were not elected from the citizenry of Bologna and, unlike the notaries, they received no formal training. Instead, they were low-status inhabitants of the city, drawn from the working poor and, perhaps, like many of the sbirri who served early modern magistracies and judicial bodies across the peninsula, they were drawn from the city’s populations of outcasts and criminals. Like the sbirri, the esecutori may have been hated by much of the populace because of the violence associated with their work, with the result that neighbours and friends may have helped unlicensed prostitutes hide when the esecutori made their rounds.

While the familiarity with the city’s prostitutes, innkeepers, tavern operators, and landlords, which they gained from many years of work, may have meant that the esecutori were more successful at catching unregistered prostitutes, it also may have led to patterns of bribery, extortion, and forced payments that were difficult to monitor. This was certainly on the mind of Vice Legate Toschi when, in his letter of 1586, he forbade the esecutori, on pain of losing their jobs, from taking bribes or from taking payments from prostitutes unless the

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122 In fact, all three may have served for longer periods. The Bollette’s bureaucratic documentation is not extant before 1583 or for 1595 and 1596, and Benazzi may have served after the year 1630.
123 For more on the sbirri of early modern Bologna, see Hughes, “Fear and Loathing in Bologna and Rome.” On the sbirri of the Papal States, with some reference to Bologna, see Fosi, Papal Justice, pp. 66-75.
124 Further research into the records of the Tribunale del Torrone, Bologna’s criminal court, may provide examples of the investigator’s violence.
officials had specifically ordered them to do so. Florence’s Onestà also experienced this kind of corruption. In 1544, for instance, it was discovered that the Onestà’s functionaries were collecting excessively high fines and fees from prostitutes, even before charges had been filed or investigations had been completed, and that the notaries were colluding with them by cancelling records of charges. In response to this, Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici assigned to the Conservatori di Legge the responsibility of auditing the work of the Onestà.

One of the key reasons for corruption among the esecutori of Bologna’s Bollette was the method by which they were paid: by emoluments, that is, by receiving a percentage of the fines collected as a result of their work. An analysis of the registers of prostitutes demonstrates that throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this amounted to 50% of the fines collected from unregistered prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’. In March 1604, Ludovico Pizzoli found and cited Diamante di Fortuzzi, who had yet to register that year. A record from that day notes that she was fined four lire, ten soldi, and also made to register and pay for the first six months of the year (one lira, ten soldi). The same note recorded that Pizzoli received two lire and five soldi for his work, exactly half of the four lire, ten soldi fine. When Flaminio di Lorenzi found Santa Venturini of Modena sleeping with Paolo Aldrovandi (“dormire cum d[ett]o Paolo”) in his room on the night of 21 January 1614, she was fined six lire. Flaminio was paid three lire, exactly half of her fine. Finally, on 23 February 1624, Lena Fontana was found by Pietro Benazzi in bed with her lover (amante) in the house of Caterina Barzona, a known prostitute and procurer (ruffiana). Lena was fined five lire for being unregistered, half of which went to Benazzi and the other half to the Bollette. Being paid by emoluments was meant to encourage the esecutori to perform their work with diligence and care, but it may also have led to forced

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125 C de M 1586, [np], ‘Z’ section.
127 On 26 February 1604, the Bollette’s officials ordered that Diamante be entered into the register and that an investigation be started. Diamante finally paid the four lire fine directly to Pizzoli on 6 August, who delivered it to the office of the Bollette for her. She did not register again for the rest of the year. C de M 1604, [np], ‘E’ section.
128 C de M 1614, p. 249. Later that same day (21 January) the man that she was found with, Paolo Aldrovandi, paid both her fine and for one month’s registration. The next day he paid five soldi so that she could leave the territory of Bologna. On 20 August 1614, Bologna’s Legate ordered that Santa’s entry be removed from the register (“aboleri de pr[a]jesenti camplono”) and that the Bollette’s esecutori not harass her in future. As with many other women’s entries that were ordered to be removed, Santa’s was not. Ibid.
129 ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Libro Querellarum 1624, p. 3. Neither Lena nor Caterina were listed in the year’s registration book, and no documentation on them survives in the filza of 1624.
registrations because the esecutori wanted the money. It was for this reason that Toschi forbade the esecutori from taking either bribes or payments from prostitutes.

5. Conclusion

This chapter began by considering the jurisdiction of the Ufficio delle Bollette in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Based on a comparison of the extant bureaucratic documentation with the civic proclamations published on aspects of prostitution, it revealed that by this period the power and responsibility of the Bollette had been reduced greatly from what it had been in the mid fifteenth century. While the Bollette still had the responsibility of registering and licensing of foreigners, prostitutes, ‘dishonest women’, and procurers, its jurisdiction no longer extended to enforcing the sumptuary and spatial offences of prostitutes and procurers. Instead, it was limited to ensuring their regular and timely registration. The specific motivations for this reduction in focus can be clearly seen in the wider reforms to governance and justice in Bologna during the period, but this reduction also parallels similar reforms in secular and ecclesiastical government that occurred across northern Italy in the sixteenth century.

This chapter has also argued that the focus of the Bollette’s jurisdiction meant that, in practice, the magistracy came increasingly to rely upon the aid of other magistracies and tribunals. This was in part a result of the nature of early modern northern-Italian governmental and judicial systems, which were characterised by overlapping jurisdictions employed by a number of different magistracies and courts. But it was also a consequence of the Bollette’s very small administrative and bureaucratic staff, which meant that it did not have enough people to universally enforce the registration and licensing of prostitutes on its own. In order to complete its work, the Bollette used the city’s web of magistracies, sharing and receiving information from the notaries and the sbirri of the city’s other courts. An in-depth study of the Bollette’s jurisdiction and of its role in the administration of governance in sixteenth-century Bologna thus adds nuances to the historical understanding of the regulation of prostitution in an early modern northern-Italian city, the strategies of statecraft during the period, and the administrative logics and practices that informed the operations of early modern bureaucracies.
This chapter then moved to a discussion of the contributions that the Bollette’s licensing regime made to the civic government’s attempt to encourage public and social order in the city. Through the public reading of proclamations on the regulation of prostitution as well as through the act of registration itself, the Bollette’s licensing regime upheld and reproduced the cultural construction of prostitutes and procurers as a unified and socially marginalised group. By doing so, the Bollette promoted self-identification of individual men and women with this group and encouraged them to regulate their behaviour. It also encouraged the wider populace to identify prostitutes and procurers as such. The work of the Bollette also contributed to the governance of the city through the alms the Bollette gave to monasteries and convents, especially to the Convertite, and to charitable institutions such as orphanages, conservatories, and the city’s centralised charitable organisation, the Opera Pia dei Poveri Mendicanti. Finally, this section discussed the sharing of the information on women collected by the Bollette with the city’s other magistracies and tribunals, such as the Tribunale del Torrone and the archbishop’s court.

This chapter then analysed the application of the Bollette’s licensing regime. Through quantitative analysis and the discussion of specific cases, it revealed the complexities the Bollette’s staff faced when they tried to apply the policy of regulation and the strategies they employed in order to overcome these complexities. A complicated mix of both accommodation and pervasiveness characterised the Bollette’s application of the licensing regime. In order to form a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the application of the regulation of prostitutes in early modern Bologna, the willingness of the staff of the Bollette to negotiate with the realities of women’s lives and to show individual prostitutes mercy must be considered alongside evidence of their corruption, laxity, and poor training.

Recent historians have debated the extent to which northern-Italian governmental and judicial administrations were centralised and bureaucratised during the early modern period. Some, such as R. Burr Litchfield in his study of ducal Florence and Paolo Prodi in his study of the sixteenth-century papacy, have argued that the period saw a greater centralisation of authority through the rise of absolutist rulers who developed new, fully-disciplined institutions and employed a growing, impersonal bureaucratic class that used
new ‘rationalised’ methods in their work.\textsuperscript{130} Others, such as Wietse de Boer in his study of Borromean Milan and John K. Brackett on ducal Florence, have argued the opposite: that while early modern political theorists, civic law makers, and religious authorities may have desired orderly, disciplined, and centralised states, this was never fully achieved in practice. These historians cite the characteristics common to early modern administration as the reason for failure, such as the prevalence of overlapping jurisdictions, the unsystematic training of employees, and laxity and corruption. They also argue that administrators and law-enforcers resisted centralisation and professionalization either because they did not support them, or because they did not understand how to accomplish such reforms.\textsuperscript{131}

This chapter joins this debate by providing an analysis of the work of one early modern magistracy, the Ufficio delle Bollette. Evidence demonstrates that in the sixteenth century Bolognese civic authorities tried to reform the administration of governance and justice on a civic level. In terms of the regulation of prostitution, this meant a refocusing and limiting of the Bollette’s jurisdiction and repeated corrections of the flawed practices of its staff. As this chapter has shown, the universal, efficient, and impersonal deployment of the licensing regime by the Bollette remained elusive regardless of the efforts of the civic government. This was primarily because those charged with enforcing registration continued to follow administrative logics that were informed by a complex set of cultural mentalities about prostitutes, by traditional practices of law enforcement, and by personal motivations.


Chapter Four
In the Neighbourhood: Residence and Community

In the late 1560s, Bishop Gabriele Paleotti attempted to separate prostitutes and other ‘dishonest women’ from most of Bolognese society through residential confinement. Citing the desire “to restrain their wickedness and uncontrolled freedoms of life” and to stop them from polluting others with their “filth,” he, along with the papal legate, published three decrees that ordered all prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers to live in a handful of specific city streets.¹ However, after a year and a half Paleotti’s ambitious reforms had failed, and by 1571 the civic government had regained exclusive control over regulation. It returned to the more tolerant strategy it had employed before the bishop’s intervention: all prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ were required to register and purchase licences from the Bollette, but they were neither required to wear distinguishing signs nor to live in assigned streets or areas. Instead, they were free to live throughout the city.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, Bologna was unique for its tolerant residential legislation. In Rome, Florence, and Venice, authorities required ‘meretrici’ and ‘donna inhoneste’ to inhabit designated areas and streets. After much experimenting, Roman authorities designated the large area of Campo Marzio for their residence, located on the opposite side of the city from the Vatican.² Venetian authorities ordered women to reside in the old medieval civic brothel, the Castelletto, located near the city’s commercial centre, the Rialto.³ Rather than confining them to one specific area, the Florentine ducal government designated a few streets located in the poorest areas of each city quarter.⁴ As historians have shown, segregation was motivated by concerns about morality as well as the more pragmatic issues of civic disorder, noise, and policing. Theoretically, containment protected sacred

¹ “di frenare la loro malvagia e sfrenata licenza di vivere deputate et nominate alcune contrade nelle quali si dovessero ridure ad habitare a effetto che stando disperse per la citade come prima facevano con la machia loro non cercassero o dessero caggione ad altre persone di contaminarsi di simile lordezza.” Archivio di Stato di Bologna [hereafter ASB], Boschi, b. 541, fol. 170v, “Bando sopra le meretrici et riforma de gli altri bandi sopra a cio fatti,” (31 January and 1 February 1568).


spaces and honest, pious inhabitants from the immorality and disruption of prostitutes and their clients.\(^5\) Confinement also aided the better policing of prostitution, since it made it easier for lawmen to locate and arrest women, increasing order as well as the fees and fines collected, which would support the city as well as local convents of repentant prostitutes.\(^6\)

Late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bolognese civic law, however, did not seek to protect honest men and women and sacred spaces from meretrici and donne inhoneste. Not only were these women legally permitted to live across the city, but evidence drawn from the Bollette’s records demonstrates that they did. The annual registers provide the unique opportunity to map where they did and did not dwell in the city. As will be shown, from 1583-1630, hundreds lived within the city walls, mostly, though not exclusively, on streets just within the walls. About half lived on streets with ten or more prostitutes, and very few dwelt on streets with twenty or more. Consequently, the residence of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ was a fact of life in many early modern Bolognese neighbourhoods.

How did Bolognese religious houses and ‘honest’ people react to the presence of these women in their neighbourhoods? To what extent, and how, did they accept, reject, or ignore them? During the period 1583-1630, no major campaign to expel them from the city was launched by authorities or the laity. Instead, men and women lived with prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ in various streets and lanes throughout the city’s outskirts. Indeed, the evidence from Bologna suggests that for many labouring-poor, prostitution and prostitutes per se were not a substantial problem.

Scholars of Roman, Venetian, Milanese, and Florentine prostitution have come to similar conclusions based on the fact that, while authorities attempted to separate prostitutes from ‘honest’ people, this goal was met only with moderate success. First, prostitutes continued to live outside of designated streets and areas. In Venice and Rome legislation was repeatedly enacted throughout the period ordering them back designated areas, a clear sign that women ignored confinement.\(^7\) A mid-sixteenth century Venetian catalogue of 200 prostitutes listed such women as working not only out of the Castelletto but also out of

\(^7\) Cohen, “Seen and Known,” pp. 403 and 405-408; Ruggiero, Binding Passions, p. 49.
private homes throughout the city. Additionally, in both Florence and Rome, magistracies continued to sell exemptions that allowed prostitutes to live outside of the designated streets. Moreover, in all of these cities, ‘honest’ men and women lived alongside prostitutes in designated areas. The picture from Rome, Venice, and Florence thus reveals the residential intermixing of honest and dishonest women and men regardless of prohibitions.

As these scholars have also shown, however, not all people were happy to have meretrici and donne inoneste for neighbours. Legal cases brought before local tribunals in Rome and Milan reveal that neighbours were often annoyed and sometimes even fearful of the discord of the noisiest, most disorderly prostitutes, clients, and companions. Early modern Italian cultural sources reflect this concern in printed broadsheets and stories that depict prostitutes engaged in parties, drinking, and gambling and plagued by loud, jealous clients who serenaded them with ‘rough music’ and often came to blows with one another in the street. Like other northern-Italian cities, Bolognese laws responded to concerns about social order by forbidding prostitutes from having parties in their homes, from entertaining in inns and taverns, and from being in the city’s streets with more than three men. Other Bolognese proclamations demonstrate that convents, churches, and confraternities also found prostitutes and ‘dishonourable people’ disruptive because of their immorality and noise – these women drew attention to themselves and posed bad examples to the faithful with their ‘shameful words and deeds.’ Bolognese institutions could petition the legate and vice legate to expel dishonest women and men from their environs, and those with enough social power were successful. However, most neighbours, including some convents and churches as well as lay people, found themselves without effective recourse to the authorities. While cohabitation with registered prostitutes was a fact of life in the working-poor neighbourhoods of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bologna, some prostitutes were worse than others, and some neighbours would not endure their presence.

This chapter examines the residential, and by extension, social, integration of meretrici and donne inhonesti in Bologna’s neighbourhoods. By mapping where early modern Bolognese prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ lived, the first section analyses their distribution across the city in order to examine how far residential ‘freedom’ extended in practice. It demonstrates that registrants lived throughout the city, though mainly just within its walls on small and medium-sized streets, where rents were cheap and the majority of Bologna’s population resided. It also reveals that, while about half of registered meretrici and donne inhonesti clustered on roughly sixteen specific streets, the other half lived on 85 other streets with ten or fewer other prostitutes. Consequently many of Bologna’s respectable inhabitants shared their streets and neighbourhoods with registered women.

The second section of the chapter puts spatial evidence in discussion with registrant’s relationships with family, clients, lovers, friends, and neighbours using evidence recorded in the annual registers and testimonies given to the Bollette’s officials. Though prostitutes lived in many of Bologna’s neighbourhoods, their integration into local communities was complex and sometimes contested. Inclusion was partially unavoidable: working poor men and women may have lived beside prostitutes because neither could afford to live elsewhere, and thus they were neighbours of necessity, rather than neighbours of choice. However, prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women were also integrated into local networks through the familial, affective, and working relationships they had with other local men and women. Indeed, the Bolognese evidence demonstrates that these women gave and received the support, companionship, and security that created and secured the alliances necessary to survive in the impoverished, community-centred world of early modern Italy. On the whole, the evidence demonstrates that most meretrici and donne inhonesti fit, if more uneasily at some times than others, within most of Bologna’s neighbourhoods.

The third section examines late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century proclamations that forbade meretrici and donne inhonesti from residing in specific city streets. It finds that such decrees did not prohibit their residence near all convents and churches, nor were they issued on a regular, or even annual, basis, as was done in the early and mid-sixteenth century. Instead, the decrees reflect the civic government’s general attitude of tolerance and pragmatism: they were published on an as needed basis in response to the specific complaints of powerful convents, churches, and schools located in areas with
large prostitute populations. This section also considers whether lay neighbours were aware that their neighbours lived by prostitution. On the basis of trial records, cultural sources, and recent scholarship on gossip and visibility, it argues that they did. Based on residential evidence and on the affective relationships of registered women, it argues that for most ‘honest’ neighbours this was not particularly troubling. More troubling were the displays of wealth by individual women, the noise and disorder that some brought to their neighbourhoods, and instances where neighbours lost control over their communities. Taken together, the residential and legal evidence demonstrates that prostitutes lived in most working-poor neighbourhoods of early modern Bologna and that they were tolerated, even if only begrudgingly by some.

1. The Geography of Early Modern Bolognese Prostitution

Mapping the streets on which meretrici and donne inhoneste registered demonstrates that the majority resided in the outer half of Bologna, between the second and third sets of city walls (see Map 4.1). Bologna’s most symbolic religious and civic sites were located in the city centre: San Petronio, the civic basilica, Palazzo Pubblico, the seat of the local government, and San Pietro, Bologna’s cathedral and seat of the bishop (and after 1582, the archbishop). These sites were important to the Bolognese because they demonstrated the power and strength, whether real or imagined, of the historical and contemporary city. Each year only a handful of prostitutes lived near the city centre, usually on short alleys hidden behind larger buildings that, before the sixteenth century, were permitted areas of prostitution. For instance, in 1584 two prostitutes lived on Simia, a small alleyway half a block east of San Petronio, tucked in behind the seat of the university, the Archiginnasio, and just east of the civic basilica, San Petronio. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Simia, then called the Corte dei Bulgari, had thrice been home to Bologna’s civic brothel before it was finally...

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12 The second set of city walls was completed in 1070, and the third in 1327. Naomi Miller, Renaissance Bologna: A Study in Architectural Form and Content (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 16-17.

13 Today, the alley is via Giovanni Massei. The two women were Isotta Boninsegna and Giovanna di Martini. In 1604 Polonia, daughter or widow of Domenico Galina of Modena lived on Simia, while in 1614 Maria Roversi did, and in 1630 Domenica Borgonzona lived there. Archivio di Stato di Bologna (henceforth ASB), Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Campione delle Meretrici [henceforth C de M] 1584, [np] ‘I’ and ‘G’ sections; 1604, [np] ‘P’ section; 1614, p. 190; 1630, [np] ‘D’ section.
moved south-east of Piazza Maggiore and enclosed under the Bollette’s 1462 statutes.\textsuperscript{14} A few prostitutes also lived around the now defunct walled-in brothel area, including Florida Argellata, who in 1594 lived “in the stew by the Celestini monks.”\textsuperscript{15} While each year a few prostitutes lived near the symbolic city centre, they did so on back alleyways where they were hidden from view of important and powerful authorities and visiting dignitaries.

\textsuperscript{14} Mario Fanti reports that this street was called, amongst many other names, the ‘via stufa della Scimmia,’ the ‘postribolo’ or ‘lupanare nuovo’, as well as the Corte dei Bulgari. Mario Fanti, \textit{Le vie di Bologna. Saggio di toponomastica storica} (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 516-517.

\textsuperscript{15} C de M 1594, [np] ‘F’ section.
Throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, most registered prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ lived between the second and third set of city walls. From the central core of Piazza Maggiore, the city radiated outwards in parallel with medieval civic expansion. In general terms, the further away from the centre, the newer, larger, and more populated were the streets and the poorer the inhabitants. In such areas men and women found affordable rooms and apartments and could reside near their workplaces. This was also true for prostitutes, who had short- and long-term relationships with local inhabitants, students living in nearby colleges, and travellers who used the city’s many gates and stayed in nearby inns and taverns.

Rather than collecting in one or two specific areas, such as by a particular gate or market, Bolognese meretrici and donne inoneste lived throughout the outskirts. Table 4.1 charts the number of registrants who lived in each quarter in 1584, 1604, and 1624 and their percentage of the total annual registrants.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1: Residence of registered prostitutes in Bologna’s quarters</th>
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<td><strong>Quarter</strong></td>
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<td>Porta Piera</td>
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<td>Porta Stiera</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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* This table includes only those women whose addresses I could locate on the map and thus categorize by quarter. In 1584, I could locate 88% of registrants addresses (250 of 284 total registrants), in 1604 91.8% (561 of 611), and in 1624 92.7% (153 of 165). Sources: Campione delle Meretrici 1584, 1604, 1624.

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16 I could not locate addresses on the map either because the women did not give ones or because the identifiers were too vague. For instance, in 1604, eleven women were recorded as living “on bràina” (“nella bràina”). However, there were at least two ‘bràinas’ in the city as evidenced by other women’s registrations that year: bràina di stra San Donato, located in the quarter of Porta Piera, by the north-western gate of San Donato, and bràina di Faccialcollo, located in the quarter of Porta Procola, by the south-eastern gate of Castiglione. Both streets are listed in Zanti’s 1583 Bolognese toponomy, *Nomi, et cognomi di tutte le strade*, pp. 22-23 and 23. Similarly, seven women were registered as living “on Vinazzi” (“nelli Vinazzi”): Zanti lists two ‘vinazzi’: vinazzi di Malvezzi, located in the quarter of Porta Piera, by the eastern wall and the gate of San Vitale, and vinazzi di San Procolo, located in the quarter of Porta Procola, by the southern wall and San
Two caveats must be kept in mind when reading Table 4.1. First, as Map 4.1 shows, each quarter did not encompass exactly one-quarter of the city’s total geographical area. For example, the quarters of Porta Procola and Porta Piera were both much larger than Porta Ravennate, and this accounts for their larger populations of prostitutes. Even though Porta Stiera was about equal in size to Porta Piera, mapping the women’s residences demonstrates that they seldom lived by the northern-western city wall. Agostino Carracci’s 1581 map, which is the map reproduced in this study, suggests that the area closest to the northern walls had few residential buildings and was dominated instead by fields.\textsuperscript{17} This is supported by Agostino Mitelli’s mid-seventeenth-century map, on which he labelled the area as diverse agricultural fields (“orti diversi”).\textsuperscript{18} The inhabitable area in Porta Stiera was thus smaller than the actual quarter, explaining why fewer prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ generally resided there.

Additionally, the total number of women who registered in each of the sample years is staggeringly different. Between 1584 and 1604 registrations rose by 327 women (from 284 to 611 registrants) and between 1604 and 1624 they decreased by 446 women (from 611 to 165 registrants) (see Appendix 2). As Lucia Ferrante has argued, in 1604 the Bollette was operating with exceeding efficiency,\textsuperscript{19} perhaps even over zealously. But it did not do so for long. In 1584 and 1624 the Bollette was working under its capacity, resulting in lower registrations and decreased policing in certain areas. The numbers of registrants in the earliest and latest years are conservative, and a comparative analysis is somewhat misleading. Indeed, comparing registrations may in fact tell us more about changes in where the Bollette concentrated its work than about where prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ actually lived.

\textsuperscript{17} Carracci’s map, entitled “Bononia docet mater studiorum” and held at the Universitätsbibliothek Salzburg (G 71 III), is available online through Wikimedia Commons at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wolf-Dietrich-Klebeband_St%C3%A4dtebilder_G_071_III_img01.jpg. Another copy is available in Bologna at Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna, Gabinetto disegni e stampe, “Raccolta piante e vedute della città di Bologna,” port. 1, n. 14. Available online at http://badigit.comune.bologna.it/mappe/14/library.html


What charting residence by quarter does demonstrate is that donne inhoneste and meretrici lived fairly evenly throughout the outskirts of the city. If we accept that 1604 gives the most accurate representation of the three sample years, then no one quarter significantly dominated the others. Moreover, prostitutes were fairly spread out within each quarter. In 1604, registrants lived on at least 102 streets, yet only eight were home to twenty or more women, and only eight were home to ten to nineteen women (see Table 4.2). A few streets housed an uncommonly large number of meretrici and donne inhoneste, like Borgo Nuovo di San Felice, in the western quarter of Stiera by the city wall, and Campo di Bovi, located in the quarter of Porta Piera by the eastern city wall. Women also clustered in the ghetto after the Jews were expelled from the Papal States for a final time in 1592. In 1604, 21 women lived in the area, often referred to in the registers simply as “the Ghetto” (nel Ghetto), but also by two of its streets, via dell’Inferno and via de’ Giudei. As in Rome and Florence, in Bologna ‘honest’ men and women lived in these streets regardless of the fact that they were full of prostitutes, including dyers, masons, silk workers, bakers, shoemakers, and used clothes dealers.

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20 Borgo Nuovo di San Felice was one of the streets that in Bishop Gabriele Paleotti had ordered prostitutes to live in, though in his proclamation it was called Borgo Nuovo di Pratello. ASB, Boschi, b. 541, fols. 170r-171v, “Bando sopra le meretrici” (31 January and 1 February 1568). The street appears on Agostino Carracci’s 1581 map of Bologna, but not on Agostino Mitelli’s mid-seventeenth century map. Carracci, “Bononia docte mater studiorum”; Mitelli, “Bologna in pianta città del Papa.” In his 1583 toponomy, Zanti refers to the street as Borgo Novo di San Felice and states that “Now in this place live le meretrici.” Zanti, *Nomi, et cognomi*, p. 16. Today the street is called via San Rocco. Campo di Bovi was just steps from the gates of San Vitale and the thoroughfare of the same name. The street had once been the field where the cattle market was held. Zanti, *Nomi, et cognomi*, pp. 24-25.


22 Secreta Minozza lived on Campo di Bovi in the house of a dyer (pittore). On Fondazza, Caterina Bravati lived in the house of Paolo the mason (muratore) and Maria Ruinetta lived in the house of Angelo the shoemaker (calzolaio). Finally, Isabetta di Toschi lived in the Ghetto in the home of Giovanni Maria the used-clothes dealer (strazarolo). C de M 1604, [np] ‘S’ section; ‘C’ section; p. 171 [this page is paginated]; and ‘I’ section.
Table 4.2: Streets with more than ten resident prostitutes in 1604, by quarter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter of Porta Piera</th>
<th>Quarter of Porta Procola</th>
<th>Quarter of Porta Stiera</th>
<th>Quarter of Porta Ravennate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Ghetto – 21</td>
<td>Frassinago – 21</td>
<td>San Felice by the gate – 13</td>
<td>Broccaindosso - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgo di S. Giacomo – 20</td>
<td>Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza – 21</td>
<td>Avesella - 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torleone – 18</td>
<td>Borgo degli Arienti - 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo di San Marino – 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bràina di stra San Donato – 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gattamarza – 13</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Campione delle Meretrici 1604.

Most streets in Bologna’s outskirts, however, were populated by only a few prostitutes. In 1604, a total of 84% (86 of 102) of the streets on which they registered housed nine or fewer prostitutes, and these women accounted for almost half of all registrants that year (44%). Further, 66% (68 of the 102 streets) housed five or fewer. Consequently, many of these women lived on streets that were dominated not by prostitutes, but by ‘honest’ men and women. A typical example of this is the south-western corner of the city (see Map 4.2). In 1604, three of the area’s streets were heavily populated by prostitutes: Senzanome housed 36, Frassinago housed 21, and Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza housed 21. However, the majority of the neighbourhood’s streets had five or fewer resident prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’: five women lived on Altaseda, four on Nosadella, and three on Capramozza. The surrounding streets of Bocca di lupo, Belvedere di Saragozza, Borgo Riccio, and Malpertuso had two or fewer.

In all of these streets meretrici and donne inhoneste mixed with local day-labourers, artisans, and merchants. They rented rooms from pork butchers and shoemakers, lived in inns, and resided next to potters. These were the immediate neighbours of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women,’ those who were separated from them by only the porous boundaries of walls.

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23 Francesca Ballerina rented from Giacomo the pork butcher (lardarolo) on Frassinago. Giacoma di Ferrari da Reggio, Ursina de Bertini, and Lucrezia di Grandi all lived in the house of Giovanni Pietro the shoemaker (calzolario) on Senzanome. Lucia Tagliarini lived on Frassinago in the inn of Zanino. Giovanna
The numbers following the street names represent the number of prostitutes and 'dishonest women' who lived there in 1604.

Churches, religious houses, and colleges:
1) Collegio di San Clemente (or di Spagna)
2) Convent of Corpus Domini
3) Priory of Sant' Antonio
4) Collegio Montalto
5) Sant' Agostino
6) Convent of Sant' Agnese
7) Palazzo of the Alberghetti family
8) Convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli
9) Convent of San Giovanni Battista
10) San Francesco

stairways, doorways, and windows, and those with whom they had constant, day-to-day interactions. To be sure, like other working-poor women, they were not confined to the streets that they lived on, but could and did move through the surrounding area buying food, engaging in chores, finding work, visiting friends, and going to the Bollette to buy their licences. Thus, they also crossed paths with pious people going to visit the many nearby convents and churches, with servants and retainers from the nearby palazzo of the Albergati, with students from the colleges of San Clemente and Montalto, and with foreigners who entered the city from the south-western gate of Saragozza and stayed in local inns. To use the words of Elizabeth S. Cohen, prostitutes were both “seen and known” in this neighbourhood.

2. Communities

While many women who lived by prostitution resided in streets dominated by honest people, they were not alone: they lived and worked within affective social and familial circles. The Bollette’s documentation reveal their kin, housemates, occasional clients, long-term lovers, and neighbours, both friend and foe. For example, some women were registered as living in their mother’s, sister’s, and (more rarely) cousin’s homes, while other women’s female kin, housemates, lovers, and servants bought their licences. Unfortunately for the historian, the notaries did not record such details as a point of procedure, but rather only sporadically, so a quantitative analysis of the registers sheds very little light on the people in these women’s lives. Moreover, while men regularly appear in the registers paying for


27 Cohen, “Seen and Known.”

28 For instance, in 1604, 611 women registered and only eleven mothers and four sisters were recorded as purchasing licences for their kin. These numbers must surely be conservative given the findings of Chojnacka and Storey discussed below.
licences, the specifics of their relationships with the women were almost never recorded.\textsuperscript{29} The Bollette’s investigative documents, particularly testimonies in cases of debt against clients and long-term amici, provide much richer information about women’s familial, social, and work relationships. However, the lion’s share of the tribunal’s work was investigating women suspected of prostitution and ultimately cleared, not the hundreds of women who already bought licences. Thus, a quantitative analysis of these sources also renders little usable information.

The Bolognese evidence, however, can be placed in the context of evidence from other northern-Italian cities that demonstrates that prostitutes were surrounded by family, housemates, and allies. Analysing Venetian censuses at the turn of the seventeenth century, Monica Chojnacka found that out of 213 prostitutes, three-quarters lived with other people. Most headed their own households, while some lived as boarders and some with their mothers. The majority of those who headed households sheltered dependant female kin, children, and a variety of unmarried women, including servants and other prostitutes. A few heads of households (6\% lived with men, who were either their intimates or boarders).\textsuperscript{30} Similar patterns of cohabitation could be found in contemporary Rome. Studying parish censuses from 1600-1621, Tessa Storey found that 47\% of prostitutes lived with at least one family member, mostly children but also siblings, nieces and nephews, and widowed mothers.\textsuperscript{31} Placing the modest evidence from Bologna in the contexts of these findings suggests that many Bolognese prostitutes also lived within kinship and affective networks.

2.1 Family
As in most other northern-Italian cities, prostitution in Bologna could be a family affair since everyone within the household economy benefitted from the income and goods earned by these women. Sometimes, sisters were registered prostitutes, like Dorotea di Savi, called “Saltamingroppa” (literally “Jump on my behind”) and her sister Benedetta, who lived together with their servant Gentile on Broccaindosso.\textsuperscript{32} Similarly, Margareta and Francesca

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{29} One exception is the son of Arsilia Zanetti, who will be discussed further in this chapter and the next.  
\textsuperscript{31} Storey, \textit{Carnal Commerce}, pp. 128-129. On widowed mothers, see ibid., p. 141.  
\textsuperscript{32} Benedetta was listed as “sorella di Saltamingroppa.” C de M 1604, [np] ‘B’ and ‘D’ sections.}
Trevisana, both nicknamed “La Solfanella” (“The Matchstick”), lived together on Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza for eight years. While Francesca registered consecutively from 1598-1605, Margareta did so only in 1602, 1604, and 1605.\textsuperscript{33} Before her registration, Margareta doubtlessly enjoyed the income that her sister earned through prostitution and most likely aided her in preparing for and entertaining clients. The Bollette suspected that she had, and so launched an investigation against her when she became pregnant in 1601.\textsuperscript{34}

Mothers and daughters also lived and worked together, like Lucia di Spoloni and her daughter Francesca, who lived on San Mamolo by the old civic brothel area, and Anna Spisana and her mother Lucia, who lived together on Borgo degli Arienti.\textsuperscript{35} In 1604, Domenica di Loli bought licences for her daughters Francesca and Margareta, and all three lived just south of the church and monastery of San Domenico on Borgo degli Arienti. Francesca had lived on the street since at least 1600, and while she was no longer registering in 1609, her sister still was. Margareta continued to live on Borgo degli Arienti until 1614, perhaps with her mother and sister.\textsuperscript{36}

### 2.2 Co-residents
Prostitutes also counted other prostitutes among their friends and allies, and they often lived together in rented rooms, small apartments, and inns. Residential clustering was not uncommon for unmarried women of the lower orders in early modern Europe. In her path-breaking work on eighteenth-century England, Olwen Hufton found what she termed ‘spinster clustering,’ the co-residence of unmarried women who shared the costs of running a household through employment in lace making, street-peddling, prostitution, and laundering.\textsuperscript{37} In her study of early modern Venice, Monica Chojnacka found similar

\textsuperscript{33} C de M 1605, p. 175. For Francesca, see C de M 1598, p. 56; 1599, p. 49; 1600, p. 68; 1601, p. 60, 1602, p. 72; 1603, p. 72; 1604, [np] ‘F’ section; 1605, p. 86. For Margareta, see C de M 1602, p. 201; 1604, [np] ‘F’ section; 1605, p. 175. In 1605, Margareta was deregistered when began working as a wet nurse for the Ercolani, a senatorial family. As the register reads: “Sta per balia del 40 Hercolanni.” On the Ercolani, see Dolfi, \textit{Cronologia delle famiglie nobili di Bologna}, pp. 288-293.

\textsuperscript{34} C de M 1601, p. 140. ASB, \textit{Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796}, Inventionum 1601, [np] fol. 19v (28 June 1601).

\textsuperscript{35} C de M 1584, [np] ‘L’ section. Both were registered under Lucia’s name. C de M 1624, [np] ‘A’ and ‘L’ sections.

\textsuperscript{36} C de M 1600, p. 73; 1604, [np] ‘F’ and ‘M’ sections; 1609, p. 171; 1614, p. 172. C de M. Domenica was not registered.

instances of women living together in order to pool resources, lend pragmatic support, and share bonds of companionship. Elizabeth Cohen found that Roman prostitutes also clustered together, choosing to live in streets and houses together, “cultivating amongst themselves friendships and networks of mutual support.”

As in Rome, in Bologna large houses of co-resident prostitutes, those with ten or more, were uncommon. One operated in the 1580s: in 1583, 21 prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ lived in the ‘casa’ of Gradello on the heavily populated Borgo Nuovo di San Felice, by the eastern wall. However, while registrations climbed in the 1580s, the population in Gradello’s place declined, dropping to fourteen women in 1584, and to eleven in 1588. Moreover no other large houses appeared throughout the period. Indeed, in 1604, when the highest number of prostitutes and dishonest women registered with the Bollette, the most populated street was Borgo Nuovo di San Felice, which was home to 47 women. The most populated house was that of Lucrezia Basilia, which housed 13 women. While this was a substantial number, it was almost half of the 21 who had lived at Gradello’s twenty years earlier. Moreover, the other women who lived there resided in small numbers in different establishments and apartments; no place had more than five registered prostitutes living in it. On the second and third most populated streets in 1604, Campo di Bovi and Senzanome, the situation was much the same: no house had more than six prostitutes living in it.

It was more common for women to live with their families or with one or two other prostitutes in rented rooms and small apartments. In 1597, Elisabetta di Negri lived with Lucia Colieva and the latter’s ‘casa’ on Borgo di San Martino. The next year, Lucia had moved to Senzanome, and was living with another registered prostitute, Vittoria

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38 Chojnacka, Working Women, pp. 18-19.  
41 C de M 1583 and 1584.  
42 Of those who registered, almost all gave their street and residence (44 of 47).  
43 Five women lived in the ‘casa’ of Lucrezia Chiugina, five in that of Giovanna Mantuana (including Giovanna), four in that of Leonora Romagnola, four in that of Ortensio Magnani, four in that of Gaspare di Sensi the innkeeper, two in a building owned by the Grassi, two in the ‘casa’ of Zaccaro, one in the ‘casa’ of Cavazone, one in the ‘casa’ of Bologna, one in the casa of Pompeo Tempioli, and one in the home of Messer Giovanni Battista dai Zacchi.  
44 A total of 27 (75%) of the 36 women who lived on Campo di Bovi identified their homes: five lived in the ‘casa’ of Messer Filippo Scranaro, and All the rest lived with two or fewer other prostitutes. A total of 30 (87%) of the 35 women who registered on Senzanome identified their homes: six lived in the ‘casa’ of Giulia di Sarti, called l’Orba (the Blind), who was not registered, and four lived in the ‘casa’ of Giovanni Pietro the shoemaker. Otherwise, all the rest lived with two or fewer other prostitutes. C de M 1604.
Fiorentina.\textsuperscript{45} Similarly, in 1601 Isabella Rosetti, Giulia Bignardina, and Cassandra di Campi all lived together in Isabella’s home on Frassinago. By the next year, however, Giulia had died and Cassandra was no longer registered.\textsuperscript{46}

Prostitutes also lived in inns where they not only enjoyed relationships with other prostitutes, but where they also benefitted from the protection of the innkeepers. Inns popular with prostitutes included those of Matteo the innkeeper (“osto”) on Frassinago and of Angelo Senso on Pratello. Seven women lived at Matteo’s inn in 1589, and ten lived in Angelo’s inn in 1597.\textsuperscript{47} However, residence in inns may have been a temporary situation rather than a permanent arrangement. Few women stayed in them from one year to the next and most registered without surnames, but instead with reference to a town, city, or region, suggesting they were recent immigrants. For example, in 1589 Flaminia from Ancona (“Anconitana”), Francesca from Fano (“da Fano”), Ludovica from Modena (“Modenesa”), and Maddalena di Celegagni from Mantua (“Mantuana”) lived at Matteo’s place.\textsuperscript{48} Though these names do not prove that the women were recent migrants to the city (they may have inherited them from immigrant parents),\textsuperscript{49} inns and brothels may have been a likely place for such women to stay because they lacked the social networks that helped them to secure places of their own. Living in these establishments could help them to develop these crucial relationships.

Prostitutes also clustered with a handful of others in homes managed by other women. For just under ten years, Madonna Ginevra Caretta, who was unregistered, managed
such a place. Ginevra’s place was probably a small apartment, since each year, six to eight other meretrici and donne inhoneste lived with her. Moreover, unlike Bologna’s inns and taverns, Ginevra’s house was mobile, moving across town and back again over the years it operated. In 1588 it was located on Saragozza, in the south-western corner of the city, yet the next year it moved to San Colombano in the quarter of Stiera, north-west of Piazza Maggiore. At least one woman, Lena Fiorentina, had followed Ginevra to the new street. Ginevra and her women remained on San Colombano for almost a decade, until she moved to Paglia. A few of the prostitutes lived with Ginevra for a number of years, like Pelegrina di Tarozzi, who lived with her for at least four years (1594-1597), and Chiara Mantuana, who did so for at least three. The same was true in the case of Domenica Cavedagna’s casa. Herself a prostitute who registered for thirteen years (1597-1609), Domenica ran a house on Centotrecento and then on Bràina di stra San Donato. In 1604, seven other prostitutes lived with her. A year later, four of these women continued to reside with, but six new women had moved in. A few, but not many, stayed with her over the long term. Gentile di Sarti from Crespellano lived with her for four years (1601-1604). Domenica Fiorese from Cento lived with Domenica for five years, until the latter’s death and burial the local parish church, Santa Maria della Mascarella, in 1609.

The Bollette’s registers explain why some of the women moved out of Domenica and Ginevra’s case. Some entered service (either domestic, sexual, or both) like Lucia Fiorentina, who left Ginevra’s to serve in the house of a local scholar. Others moved to

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50 This was between 1588 and 1597. Ginevra registered once, in January 1588, when she paid for a one month licence. C de M 1588, [np] ‘G’ section.
51 In 1588, six registered prostitutes lived with her, in 1589 seven did, and in 1594 and 1597 eight did. C de M 1588; 1589; 1594; 1597.
53 C de M 1599, p. 28. Ginevra was still there in 1601, when Margareta Tinarolla lived in her home. See C de M 1601, p. 130.
55 For her first registration, see C de M 1597, [np] ‘D’ section.
56 C de M 1601, p. 79; 1605, p. 100. Crespellano is a town about fifteen kilometers west of Bologna.
58 The man is referred to as Signor Dottore. C de M 1589, [np] ‘L’ section.
different streets or left Bologna entirely to try their luck in other cities like Ferrara.\(^{59}\) While living with other prostitutes could bring economic, professional, and even personal security, it could also mean increased attention from the sbirri, who saw their homes as easy targets for making arrests. It could also lead to personal rifts between prostitutes caused by living in close quarters. Indeed, just because the women lived and worked together did not necessarily mean that they always got along.

### 2.3 Men

Men filled the lives of registered prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women alike as occasional clients, long term amici, absentee husbands, jealous lovers, and as acquaintances, if not friends. Women who found themselves alone, whether because they were not (yet) married, were widowed, or because they were separated, were financially and socially more vulnerable than women who lived with husbands. They lacked the added stability of a man’s higher wage, the honour accorded to the married, the support of an extended kinship circle, and, in some cases, the physical protection of their husbands. Because they were not under the watchful and disciplining eye of a husband, single women also were more vulnerable to sexual slander, to charges of magic and sorcery, and to general suspicion by neighbours and authorities alike.\(^{60}\) Relationships with men afforded them a degree of protection from the financial and social marginalisation they experienced because of their gender, economic status, and work, and so women turned to them not just for income and companionship but also for a measure of protection.

### 2.4 Husbands

The civic government had always prohibited married women from prostituting themselves, since by doing so they committed adultery. The Bollette’s fifteenth-century statute explicitly forbade married women from prostituting themselves and ordered that those caught doing so

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\(^{59}\) Diana di Sacchi Romana lived in Ginevra’s casa in January 1594, but moved twice more that year, to Borgo Polese and then to Altaseda. C de M 1594, [np] ‘D’ section. C de M 1594, [np] ‘L’ section, Lucia Fiorentina. It is unclear but possible that this was the same Lucia who entered service in 1589.

were to be whipped and then expelled outside the city walls. Officials who allowed them to do so were to be fined 100 Bolognese lire.\textsuperscript{61} In the late sixteenth century, wives who lived with their husbands still could not register. Whether abandoned wives could was a more complicated problem. Many working-poor women in early modern Italy had absentee husbands who had gone to war or left the city in search of better work and never returned, or who had remained in the city but ceased to live with their wives. Finding themselves without the income and stability of a husband, some of these women turned to prostitution to make ends meet. This was Francesca di Galiani’s claim: when her husband Bartolomeo di Grandi, a needle maker (aguchiarolo), went to war three or four years previously, he had left her with a three-year-old daughter to feed. She had given birth recently to the daughter of the cloth worker (garzolaro) Giovanni, with whom she had been in a relationship for about a year “in order to make the expenses.”\textsuperscript{62}

For the Bollette, the question of whether these women could and should register was a practical one since women who registered were women who paid fees. Those suspected of unregistered prostitution like Francesca often appealed to the sympathy of the Bollette’s officials for their economic and social plight by claiming that they were married but had not seen their husbands in many years. Moreover, while admitting they were married, they left unanswered the question of whether their husbands were alive or dead. This ambiguity about the ultimate fate of their husbands would have freed them from charges of adultery at the archbishop’s tribunal (if the husband was alive) while at the same time freeing them from registration with the Bollette (if he were dead). Francesca did not state whether she thought her husband was dead or alive, or, if the question was put to her, the notary did not record her response. Ultimately, her kinsmen Vincenzo Dainesi the shoemaker swore that he would ensure she left her “wicked life” (“mala vita”) and that he would take her into his home to

\textsuperscript{61} See ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri, Scritture Diverse, busta 1, “Statuti,” [np] fol. 8r.

live with him and his wife. The officials were satisfied with this, and so Francesca remained unregistered.

In 1586, at the request of the Bollette, the civic government settled on a pragmatic solution: Vice Legate Domenico Toschi granted the esecutori the power to seize “all married women who do not live with their husbands” caught at night in bed with their lovers (amatiis). This was to the great scandal of Archbishop Gabriele Paleotti, since such women were clearly committing adultery. In fact, in the very same year, 1586, in his bull Ad compascendum, Pope Sixtus V declared that any married person whose spouse was alive and had sex with another person, even if they had a separation from an ecclesiastical court, should be sentenced to death. Nevertheless, Toschi’s decree was reconfirmed ten years later by the new vice legate, Annibale Rucellai, and for a third time in 1614. If a woman returned to her husband, however, she was to be immediately deregistered. Once wives were back within the bonds of marriage and under the (theoretically) watchful eye of their husbands, they could not be allowed to practice prostitution. If they continued to live dishonest lives, they were no longer under the Bollette’s jurisdiction, but rather that of the archbishop.

2.5 Clients and Long-Term Lovers

Stable relationships with men, like that of Francesca and Giovanni mentioned earlier, were especially valuable for prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ and were common in Bologna and throughout northern-Italy. Such men were referred to in Bologna as amici, “lovers,” or as

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63 Vincenzo is described as Francesca’s “cognatus.” Ibid., fol. 1r-v.
64 “mandavit et ordinavit per executor d[e] off[ici]o Bollettarum possit et valeat pignorare omnes mulieres coniugatas non habitantes cum eorem viris rep[er]tus [fame]s per eum de nocte cum earum amatiis sine aliqua exceptione.” This permission was copied into the 1586 register and the 1462 illuminated statutes: C de M 1586, [np] ‘Z’ section (28 June 1586); ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri, Statuti, sec. XV, codici miniati, ms. 64, p. 28.
Their arrangements provided a measure of economic security for prostitutes; ‘amici fermi’ provided them with money, clothing, and food in varying amounts depending on the men’s own status. When Arsilia Zanetti brought Andrea di Pasulini, notary of the archbishop’s tribunal, in front of the Bollette’s tribunal for compensation for their three-year sexual relationship (“amicitia carnale”), she listed some of the things he had given her, including three pairs of shoes, a pair of low-heeled dress slippers, and a few coins (a ducatone, half a scudo, and a piastra, a Spanish coin). Buying the woman’s licences could also be part of the arrangement. Pasulini had done so for Arsilia during their relationship, and so did Giovanni Battista Agucchi, who had a two-year relationship with Isabetta Negri. When she brought him before the Bollette’s tribunal, Isabetta claimed that Agucchi had lived in her house and that she had had “carnal commerce” (“commercio carnale”) with him to the exclusion of other men. Agucchi did not deny their relationship, but refused to give Isabetta the pair of stockings that she requested because, amongst other gifts, he had purchased her licences from the Bollette. An examination of the 1605 register reveals that Agucchi had indeed done so. Set at a monthly rate of five soldi, and an annual rate of three lire, while the cost of licences was not particularly high for most women, it was another expense that they did not have to worry about.

Lovers and ‘firm friends’ also helped women in their interactions with the law. Aloisio di Rossi, cavaleggiero, had a three-year sexual relationship with Pantaselia Donina,

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69 For examples of these terms, see the various filze. John Florio defines ‘amico’ as “a friend, also a lover.” John Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, or, Dictionarie of the Italian and English tounges, collected and newly much augmented by John Florio (London: Melch. Bradwood for Edw. Blount and William Barrett, 1611), p. 24.

70 This case will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1601, [np] “Arsilia Zanetti” (12 November 1601). For a detailed study of Bolognese registered prostitutes who took clients to the Bollette’s tribunal for debt, see Ferrante, “Pro mercede carnale.”

71 He bought her two six month licences in July 1598 and January 1601. Arsilia’s son, Giovanni Battista, paid for the other months. C de M 1598, p. 48; 1599, p. 3; 1600, p. 4; 1601, p. 4. Agucchi and Negri’s case is discussed in Ferrante, “Pro mercede carnali,” pp. 51-52.

72 It is unclear whether their relationship was monogamous, since other men registered her and bought her licences throughout their relationship: in 1604 and 1605 Lord Antonio Maria Pavarelli bought her a six-month licence and two two-month licences (in January and September 1604 and in January 1605), Lorenzo Trimbocco, a shoemaker, bought her a one-month licence in March 1605, and in 1606 Vicenzo Ferro bought Isabetta two six-month licences, in January and in July. C de M 1604, [np] ‘I’ section; 1605, p. 122; 1606, p. 119.

73 These were purchased on 13 July and 24 September 1605. He was not recorded as buying any in 1604 or in 1606. Ibid.
alias di Salani. When Pantaselia’s landlord complained to the Bollette that she had not paid the rent, di Rossi acted as her procurator and ultimately paid the landlord. Other prostitutes similarly maintained relationships with local, low-level arresting officers, called sbirri. In her work on early modern Rome, Elizabeth S. Cohen has uncovered many relationships between prostitutes and such men, arguing that “the two disparaged professions often struck up alliances in which the women traded sex, companionship, and information for protection and money.” Such partnerships were not unusual in Bologna, and were similarly beneficial for the women involved. In May 1583 Pompilio, sbirro, registered Francesca Fiorentina as his “woman” (“femina”) and got her a six-month license for free. Women similarly had relationships with the Bollette’s esecutori, traces of which can be found in the Bollette’s documentation. In 1624 three women registered as living in the ‘casa’ of the Bollette’s esecutore, Pietro Benazzi, on Borgo di San Martino. Pietro registered Caterina Furlana on 11 January 1624 and paid for a one month license. She was subsequently deregistered, however, because “she went to stay in order to serve Pietro Benazzi.” Similarly, when Caterina di Rossi moved out of her place on Borgo degli Arienti and into Pietro’s house on San Martino, she paid for one month and never again. Though the men could not keep these women’s names out of the registers, they could keep them from paying for licenses, even though they were most likely still living by prostitution. Their known

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74 Ludovico Pizzoli, the Bollette’s esecutore, claimed that for three years Rossi had purchased her licences because he was having a continuous sexual relationship with her even while she was having sex with other men. “perche egli haveva la sua amicitia, et lei haveva anco[ra] amicitia di piu altre persone.” ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1606, “Cont[ra] Pantaselia Donina[m] al[ia]s de Salanis” (19 August 1605), fol. 1r. John Florio defines ‘amicitia’ as “amity, freindship [sic], good will.” Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, p. 24. The Bollette’s 1602 register confirms that Rossi paid for her licences in person as well as giving money to Pizzoli to pay on his behalf. C de M 1601, p. 160; 1602, p. 154; 1603, p. 170.


76 Florio defines ‘sbirro’ as “a Catchpole, a Varlet, a base Servant or officer to arrest men.” Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, p. 467.


78 The record in the register does not say why it was given for free, only that Pomilio “solvet nihil.” C de M 1583, [np] ‘F’ section.

79 These were Angelica Bellini, Caterina Furlana, and Caterina di Rossi. U de B 1624, [np] ‘A’, ‘C’, and ‘C’ sections.


81 Ibid.
association with these men may also have helped to protected them from harassment by Bollette’s other esecutori, and perhaps the sbirri of other city courts.

2.6 Friends and Neighbours

Finally, prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ also had male friends in their neighbourhoods, or at least those of their lovers, families, and landlords, who could be rallied for support. This was particularly true for women who had lived in one street or area for a substantial period of time. Such women had the opportunity to build reputations and financial and social ties with their neighbours who they could call on in times of trouble. When Margareta Trevisana, called “The Matchstick” (Solfanella), was investigated by the Bollette in 1601, she had been living on Borgo di Santa Caterina di Strada Maggiore with her sister for at least eight years. If not a prostitute, by her own admission Margareta was a ‘dishonest woman’: she confessed that three years earlier she had given birth to the child of Messer Antonio Simio, a married man. Though the Bollette had investigated her, they allowed her to remain unregistered on the promise that she would reform her life and go to live with an honourable woman. However, Margareta admitted that she was pregnant again, this time with the child of Francesco di Luminali. Moreover, she said that she did not have a husband and that she had never had one. The final nail in the coffin seemed to come when she said that currently she was living with her sister Francesca, a registered prostitute, in the house of a contadino named Barba Antonio on one of the Bologna’s streets most popular with prostitutes, Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza.

Though seemingly an open and shut case, Margareta produced statements professing her honesty signed by two male neighbours on Santa Caterina, Domenico Galleazzo, a silk worker (bavelino), Donino, son of Andrea di Rossi. Both maintained that she was a good

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82 This was according to the curate of her parish church. ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Inventionum 1601, [np] fols. 20r-21v (2 July 1601). For her sister Francesca’s registrations: C de M 1598, p. 56; 1599, p. 49; 1600, p. 68; 1601, p. 60.

83 ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Inventionum 1601, [np] fol. 20r-v (30 June 1601).


85 Ibid., [np] fol. 20r-v (30 June 1601).
woman (“donna de bene”) and had been during the time they had known her. In a separate note, a curate at her parish church, Pellegrino de Petra, confirmed that she had confessed and taken communion the previous Easter. Ever suspicious, the Bollette called de Petra in for questioning. He claimed that he had known Margareta for about ten or twelve years, having first met her when he lived in the same house as she and her sister. The Bollette’s registers confirm that her sister Caterina had lived on Santa Caterina for at least eight years (1598-1601). When the Bollette asked de Petra what kind of life Margareta led, he said that he did not know. When pressed, he admitted that she appeared pregnant, yet claimed that as far as he knew, she was not married. De Petra’s testimony cleared her of charges of adultery, but could not save her from registration with the Bollette.

In the end, the ambiguous testimony given by the curate and Margareta’s visible pregnancy led to her registration and a fine of three lire. She was not forced to purchase licences, due to her pregnancy, and the officials ordered that she not be harassed for the rest of the year. She was, however, put on probation. In May 1602, Margareta produced statements about her “honest life and reputation” provided by two different neighbours and another curate at Santa Caterina di Saragozza. With the agreement of the syndicate of the Convertite, Margareta name was abolished from the register. Whether she was dishonest or not, Margareta was able to rally four male neighbours and two different curates at her local church to support her claims.

The case of Margareta Trevisana, although unusually well documented, is illustrative of the wide circles of kin, neighbours, and friends that prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’

89 “Sig[no]re non che non so mancho che lei habbi havutto mai marito.” “Io no[n] so altro se no[n] per quanto si vede che si vede che [sic] è gravida.” Ibid.
90 C de M 1601, p. 140.
91 These were Domenico, son of Guidoni de Galletti, a silkworker (bavelino), Giovanni Battista, son of Roberto de Zanni, and curate Sebastiano de Seghi. ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1603, [np] “Malgarita trevisana al[ia]s Sulfanella” (26 June 1602).
92 C de M 1602, p. 21. For the syndicate’s confirmation, see ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1603, [np] untitled (12 October 1602).
moved within in their daily lives. Margareta had a sister with whom she lived, and a number of male neighbours who supported her against the Bollette. Moreover, Margareta had lived on the same street for ten or twelve years, developing many relationships with her neighbours and housemates. While all prostitutes lived in streets amongst ‘honest’ men and women, they were clearly not alone. Within their homes and the streets they moved amongst family, friends, long-term lovers and occasional clients. Moreover, these relationships were built on reciprocal, if uneven, bonds of financial, emotional, and legal support and protection. Consequently, meretrici and donne inhoneste were not just physically a part of Bologna’s working-poor neighbourhoods, they were also socially and affectively integrated into their communities.

3.Prostitutes as Bad Neighbours: Immorality, Disorder, and Noise

Although Bolognese civic law tolerated prostitution and permitted prostitutes’ residence throughout the city, some Bolognese men and women were annoyed by the disorder they and their companions created and, consequently, were not willing to tolerate their proximity. Contemporary decrees published by the Bolognese legate at the request of convents, churches, confraternities, and schools frequently lamented the dishonest words and daily and nightly revelling of prostitutes and other disreputable people that scandalized religious and lay residents.\(^93\) Indeed, noise as an intrusive, disruptive, alarming event was a problem. Noise was both a product of bad behaviour and a vehicle for immorality and social disorder: it carried blasphemous words, violent acts, and sexual slander through windows, over walls, and into streets, squares, and other residences. Though sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century decrees issued on behalf of religious houses and groups did not use dramatic, morally charged words like “pollution” and “stain” as they had in earlier centuries, the idea underlying the problem was still the same: religious women and men were being made an unwilling audience to the immoral behaviour of dishonest people via noise.

Not just a problem of immorality, prostitutes and their companions also threatened civic peace. Contemporary cultural sources about prostitutes portray the violence of their companions, often brought on by jealousy. Broadsheets illustrating prostitutes’ life-cycles

\(^93\) See for instance, BCB, Bandi Merlani, V, fol. 106r, untitled, begins “Non essendo conveniente che presso li Monasterij di Monache” (24 March 1603). This decree will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

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usually include a scene in which two men fight with knives and daggers after discovering that ‘their’ woman had another lover. In the 1657 Venetian broadsheet “Mirror of the Harlot’s Fate” a nearly topless prostitute flees her room as her lover unsheathes his dagger after finding another, younger man hiding under her beautifully draped bed. As the caption below the image reads:

Overcome with the heat of an impetuous love, she throws herself into the arms of the new young gallant, but her ardor suddenly turns to ice when her first lover returns. The young gallant is betrayed by the barking dog, the courtesan flees naked, and the maid runs into the garden shouting for help. The lover begs in vain for mercy from the proud steel which takes its cruel revenge.

Barking dogs, brawling men, and screaming women heard through the porous boundaries of flimsy walls and open windows disrupted the tranquility of convents and churches and added to the noise of crowded squares, laneways, and streets. These disturbances erupted into neighbourhood spaces not just audibly, but physically too, like the maidservant who ran into the garden shouting for assistance. Fights between men also occurred in doorways and on streets, in full sight and hearing of neighbours. In Giuseppe Maria Mitelli’s engraving, “La vita infelice della meretrice compartita ne dodeci mesi dell’anno lunario” (“The Unhappy Life of the Prostitute Compared to the Twelve Months of the Lunar Year”) (Bologna, 1692), the eighth scene (August) shows a man standing in the street, just outside of a prostitute’s door. Holding a large stick above his head, he readies himself to strike another man who cowers on the ground. As the caption reads, “[a]rmed wrath breaks out amongst her rivals, who try to prove who is the truest among them, despite the vileness of

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94 Along with the following example, see also “Vita et fine miserabile delle meretrici” (“Life and Miserable End of Prostitutes”), ca. 1600, reprinted on p. 275 in David Kunzle, History of the Comic Strip: Volume 1: The Early Comic Strip: Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450-1825 (Berkley: University of California Press, 1973).


96 For early modern urban streets as noisy, crowded, and loud, see, for instance, Elizabeth S. Cohen, “Honor and Gender,” especially pp. 600-601; Cohen and Cohen, “Open and Shut.” On Venetian public spaces as centres of conversation and information sharing, see Filippo de Vivo, Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially Chapter Three: “Communication in the City.”
the object of such faith.”97 A richly dressed prostitute stands in the doorway, hands raised in surprise and protest. While not directly the fault of the women themselves, people linked such disorders to them because they believed that they were created by the women’s promiscuity.

Historians of Roman prostitution agree that homes of both poor and wealthier prostitutes were places where local men socialised, eating, making music, or simply talking.98 While sometimes these parties remained relatively quiet, at others they filled the neighbourhood with wine-fuelled singing, laughing, and the sounds of dancing and of fights over games of chance.99 In an effort to reduce the noise and possible violence that could erupt from prostitute’s gatherings, the Bolognese legate Giustiniani forbade them from throwing parties (festini) and forbade them from ‘making merry’ (trebbi) in the homes of honest people. Following the same logic, he also prohibited prostitutes from eating or drinking in taverns and inns.100 Other Bolognese decrees forbade games of chance and betting, like dice and cards.101 Out in taverns or at parties or roaming the streets late at night, most likely having drunk too much, and in the company of prostitutes, these men, especially if they were young, could easily fall into disorder and violence with other men in the streets or go off in search of enemies for whom they had slowly simmering resentment.102 Consequently, Bolognese laws specifically targeted groups of men who were in the presence of prostitutes. In 1602 meretrici and donne inhoneste were forbidden from travelling through the city at night with more than three men, under fine of 100 scudi for the men and whipping for the women.103 Similarly, in his 1610 Bando generale, Papal Legate Benedetto Giustiniani forbade prostitutes from going through the city at night with any men, under

99 Storey, Carnal Commerce, pp. 208-209.
100 Tessa Storey also notes the anxiety of city authorities about men who indulged in drink and prostitutes. Ibid., p. 96.
101 ASB, Assunteria di Sanità, Bandi (XVI-1792), Bandi Bolognesi sopra la peste, 45, “Bandi Generali del Ill[ustrissimo] et Reverendiss[imo Monsignor Fabio Mirto Arcivescovo di Nazarette Governatore di Bologna,” (17, 18, and 19 February 1575), fol. 2v; BCB, Bandi Merlani, V, fol. 64r, “Bando Sopr’al gioco, & Biscazze, alli balli nell’Hosterie, & che le Donne meretrici non vadano vestite da huomo,” (9 December 1602).
102 Elizabeth S. Cohen agrees. See her “To Pray, To Work, To Hear, To Speak,” p. 302.
103 BCB, Bandi Merlani, V, fol. 64r, “Bando Sopra’al gioco, & Biscazze, alli balli nell’Hosterie, & che le Donne meretrici non vadano vestite da huomo,” (9 December 1602).
penalty of whipping for the men and the prostitutes. The problem was less the individual prostitutes themselves, and more the threat that their companions posed to social peace.

3.1 Convents, Churches, and Schools
The disorders of prostitutes, their clients, and associates were especially a problem for convents. The Council of Trent had ordered the strict (re)enclosure of all female religious communities, including the blockage of windows, in order to reduce nuns’ view of the immoralties of early modern streets. However, blocking out the sounds of the streets was a more difficult proposition. What could convents do? In the 1560s, Bolognese authorities confronted this problem by establishing exclusionary zones around convents. However, by the late sixteenth century this method was no longer employed. Instead, legates and vice legates issued single proclamations expelling prostitutes and other disreputable people from specific streets on an ad hoc basis. Between 1571 and 1630, at least 50 proclamations were issued which dealt with 25 distinct streets, about one quarter of the total streets inhabited by prostitutes in 1604. Most of the proclamations concerned eight specific convents, all of which sat in the city’s outskirts. The remaining decrees dealt with two monasteries, one college, the Jesuits and their school, one church, and one miraculous image, the Madonna della Neve. All of these convents, monasteries, churches, and schools either had elite connections or were newly built, and most were located near streets heavily populated by prostitutes. The legates, interested both in protecting and increasing piety in the city as well

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105 In 1565, Governor Francesco de’Grassi set the exclusionary zone at 30 pertiche (approximately 114 meters), while in 1566 Francesco Bossi extended the zone to 50 pertiche (190 meters.) ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 3, fol. 16r, “Bando sopra le meretrice, ruffiane, et gente disoneste circa il pigiornare dalle case, overo vendere, & quanto debbano star lontane da i Monastieri di Monache,” (1 February 1565); ASB, Boschi, b. 541, “Bando Generale del Reverendissimo Monsignor il Signor Prothonotario Bossio Governatore di Bologna” (1 and 8 February 1566), fol. 115r. One perticha was equivalent to ten piedi, or 3.80 meters. Thus, 30 pertiche was a distance of approximately 114 meters and 50 was approximately 190 meters. See Martini, Manuale di metrologia, p. 92.
106 These convents were San Bernardino, Santa Caterina by Strada Maggiore, San Guglielmo, San Leonardo, San Ludovico, Santa Cristina, San Bernardo, Corpus Domini, and Sant’Agnese. Proclamations were also issued to protect the new monastery of San Giorgio, the Benedictine monastery of San Procolo, the college of the Hungarians, the Jesuits and their school, the new church of Santa Maria Mascarella, and one miraculous image, the Madonna della Neve.
as in maintaining and strengthening their ties to the local oligarchy, responded to their complaints by issuing ad hoc decrees.

For example, in 1603 Vice Legate Marsilio Landriani forbade all prostitutes, procurers, and other dishonest women from living on the streets of Bocca di lupo, Capramozza, and Belvedere di Saragozza (see Map 4.2).\footnote{BCB, Bandi Merlani, V, fol. 106r, untitled, begins “Non essendo conveniente che presso li Monasterij di Monache” (24 March 1603).} This cluster of streets was bordered by two very powerful convents: to the east was the Clarissian house of Corpus Domini, established in 1456 and led by Saint Catherine of Bologna (born Caterina de’ Vigri), whose physical body was preserved at the convent and was locally venerated as a saint.\footnote{Gabriella Zarri, “I monasteri femminili a Bologna tra il XIII e il XVII secolo,” Atti e Memorie della Deputazione di storia patria per le province di Romagna n.s., 24 (1973): 177; Sherri Franks Johnson, Monastic Women and Religious Orders in Late Medieval Bologna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 235-237.} To the south of these streets was the Dominican convent of Sant’Agnese, founded in 1223. Sant’Agnese was one of the city’s richest and most prestigious convents; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it housed over 100 nuns.\footnote{On Sant’Agnese, see Zarri, “I monasteri femminili,” p. 166; Marcello Fini, Bologna sacra: tutte le chiese in due millenni di storia (Bologna: Pendragon, 2007), pp. 14.}

The 1603 proclamation stated that the nuns were greatly disturbed and scandalized by the daily and nightly reveling of the meretrici, procurers, and other disreputable people, the ‘dishonest’ words that they spoke, and the wicked examples they posed.\footnote{“Non essendo conveniente che presso li Monasterij di Monache sia tolerato l’habitarvi donne Meretrici, che con l’occasione de bagordi che si fanno il giorno, & la notte in quelle contrade con le parole dishoneste che vi si sentono, & con l’esempio della mala vita di tali donne, sono à detti luoghi sacri di grandissimo disturbo & scandalo.” BCB, Bandi Merlani, V, fol. 106r, untitled, begins “Non essendo conveniente che presso li Monasterij di Monache” (24 March 1603).} Landriani gave them just over a month to move out; those found there after 8 May would be publically whipped, and people who rented to them would be fined 50 gold scudi and lose their outstanding rents.\footnote{One third of each fine was to go to the accuser, one third to the city treasury, and one third to the esecutore.} The straightforward and swift punishment of whipping without the complication of a monetary fine suggests that Landriani was serious about enforcing the law to protect these powerful and wealthy convents.

Both before and after the publication of the 1603 decree, however, few meretrici and donne in honeste actually registered on the streets. In 1601 seven women registered on Bocca
di lupo, Capramozza, and Belvedere di Saragozza, while in 1604 only four did. In 1604, moreover, new women had moved into the streets: Cecilia Folisela had moved on to Bocca di lupo and two other women had moved onto Capramozza. It is hard to know how representative the registers are since registrations dropped so dramatically in the 1610s and 1620s, yet they demonstrated that residence in these streets continued to drop over the years: in 1614 only one woman registered on Belvedere and one on Capramozza. The registers can not tell us how many prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ used these streets, whether traversing them on their way to other places, buying food or goods from their merchants, or attracting and entertaining clients in their taverns or under their porticoes, and perhaps this was the real problem. Whatever the case, the proximity of prostitutes continued to be of concern to the convents: twenty years later, in 1622, the expulsion was repeated in an almost verbatim proclamation, though with the addition of two neighbouring streets, Altaseda and Mussolina. Like the first three streets, these two generally housed only a handful of prostitutes. In 1624 they housed none.

Some powerful convents were situated near city gates where large numbers of prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ either resided or visited the local inns and taverns. The Vallambrosian convent and parish church of Santa Caterina di Strada Maggiore stood two short blocks from the eastern gate of Strada Maggiore. Founded in 1522 by Barbara Orsi, member of the senatorial Orsi clan, Santa Caterina continued to maintain close connections to the Bolognese oligarchy, taking only elite women. On the eastern side of the convent was Torleone, which, due to its proximity to the city gate, had multiple inns and taverns and was heavily populated by prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women (see Map 4.3). Between 1584

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112 In 1601, one woman registered on Bocca di lupo, two on Capramozza, and four on Belvedere di Saragozza. In 1604, one registered on Bocca di lupo, three on Capramozza, and one on Belvedere di Saragozza. C de M 1601 and 1604. One of the women who lived on Belvedere in 1601 continued to do so in 1604, while another had moved three blocks west to Senzanome, and a third had moved across town to Campo di Bovi by the north-eastern wall. These were Vittoria Pellizani, Gentile di Parigi, and Angela Amadesi, called ‘La Zoppina.’ For Vittoria: C de M 1601, p. 204 and 1604, [np] ‘V’ section. For Gentile: C de M 1601, p. 74 and 1604, [np] ‘G’ section. For Angela: C de M 1601, p. 136 and 1604, [np] ‘A’ section.

113 By 1604, Maria Amadesi, called ‘La Stuffelina’ and Camilla Salarola lived on Capramozza. Neither registered in 1601. C de M 1604, [np] ‘C’ section and ‘M’ section. For Cecilia: C de M 1604, [np] ‘C’ section.

114 These were Camilla di Fiorentini, who lived in the house of Caterina the widow, and Cecilia Baliera. C de M 1614, pp. 288 and 39 respectively.

115 See BCB, Bandi Mernani, XI, fol. 28r, untitled, begins “Non essendo conveniente, che appresso li Monasterij di Monache” (18 January 1622).

116 In 1624, four women lived on Altaseda and none on Mussolina.

117 On the Orsi, see Zanti, Nomi, et cognomi, pp. 558-568.
Map 4.3: The north-eastern corner of Bologna
and 1609, it generally housed twenty or more such women each year.\footnote{In 1584, 21 lived on the street, in 1589 23 did, in 1594 eight did, in 1604, eighteen did, and in 1609, 24 did. C de M 1584, 1589, 1594, 1604, and 1609.} In 1613, Legate Matteo Barberino expelled all “tavern operators, innkeepers, prostitutes, and other dishonest people” living on Torleone, on Borchetta (located on the western side of the convent), or within 30 pertiche (about 114 meters) of Santa Caterina.\footnote{Se bene stante la disposizione delli Bandi altre volte pubblicati sopra la prohibitione, che li Tavernieri, Hosti, Meretrici, & altre persone inhoneste non possino habitare nelle vie del Torlione, & Brochetta appresso il Moasterio delle Suore di S. Caterina per spazio di trenta pertiche.” The tiny alley of Borchetta ran along the western side of the convent. Though it was home to very few prostitutes - only one in 1604 and none in 1609 -- the convent may have feared that prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ would move out of Torleone and into the alley, and so it was included in the decree. C de M 1604 and 1609. BCB, Bandi Merlani, VIII, fol. 199r, “Bando e prohibitione Alle Meretrici, & altre persone inhoneste, Che non habitino nelle Case poste nelle vie del Torlione, e Brochetta, & alli Patroni di esse, che non le possino affittate à simili persone, & alli Conduttori, che non gli le possino sublocare,” (7 May 1613).} Failure to move out by 8 May would bring a fine of 25 gold scudi and a public whipping. In the case of Santa Caterina di Strada Maggiore, not only was it a powerful convent with elite connections, it was also located in an area where there was constant noise and disorder from dishonourable people – including a large number of resident prostitutes, but also foreigners, local artisans, and day labourers who drank, ate, slept, and made merry in the street’s inns and taverns.

The evidence drawn from the Bollette’s registers suggests that this decree was enforced with vigour. The year after it was issued, only one woman registered on Torleone and one on Borchetta, and later that year both moved to other parts of the city.\footnote{One moved south-west to stra Santo Stefano and one moved north to Borgo di San Giacomo. C de M 1614, p. 21 and 42 respectively.} Ten years later, not a single prostitute or ‘dishonest woman’ was registered on either street. They may not have abandoned the area completely, however, but rather moved to any of the surrounding streets, directly south across Strada Maggiore to Fondazza, for instance, or north to Campo di Bovi or Gattamarza (see Map 4.3). Neither Fondazza nor Gattamarza had a powerful convent or church like Santa Caterina di Strada Maggiore on it, and both were popular with prostitutes because they too ran along the eastern city wall and were capped by major city gates.\footnote{Thirteen registered prostitutes lived on Gattamarza in 1604, eight did in 1614, and seven did in 1624, while 29 lived on Fondazza in 1604, nine did in 1614, and seven did in 1624.} Though prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ may have been vulnerable to marginalisation by the civic government and local law enforcement (in this case in their inability to ignore expulsion) they could reduce the impact of this marginalisation, and
continue to enjoy the financial benefits of living near the city gates, inns, and taverns, by simply moving a few streets further away.

Some churches and confraternities also had recourse to the legate, whom they could petition when the noise of dishonourable people disrupted the holy offices and posed bad examples to lay residents. In the south-western corner of the city was Senzanome, which throughout the 1590s and 1600s was extremely popular with prostitutes and ‘donne inhoneste’ (see Map 4.2). In 1594, 23 women lived on the short street, while in 1604 36 women did, and in 1609 35 did. At the north end of Senzanome sat the church and confraternal oratory of the Madonna della Neve, which in 1479 had been built around an image of the Virgin that had miraculously appeared on a section of the northern city wall. The confraternal brothers repeatedly complained to the legate about the noise of Senzanome’s prostitutes and other “people who have little fear of God and his most holy mother.” Particularly troubling was their merriment (ruzzaletti) and the ‘dishonest’ words they spoke in the street, under the cover of porticos, and in tavern doorways. This noise interrupted the celebration of the Mass and other divine offices, and forced young, unmarried girls (donzelle) and respectable residents to hide in their houses in order to avoid hearing, seeing, and meeting them in the street. Not only were these dishonest people not showing proper reverence to the Madonna’s image, they were disrupting the sanctity of the Mass and were a serious impediment to the freedom of pious, innocent residents.

124 John Florio defines ‘ruzzáre’ as “to wantonize, to dally with. Also merrily to jeast, to flout, to mocke, to frumpe or to tickle up and downe.” Florio, *Queen Anna’s new world of words*, p. 457. I take the original “rugoletti” to mean “ruzzaletti.” As the decree ordered: “non possa, ne possano, ne debbano sotto qual si vogli pretesto, a quesito colore fermarsi, o star ferme per detta strada, sotto il portico, suso il lor’uscio, o d’altri, o suso l’uscio dell’ Hostarie.” ASB, *Legato*, Bandi speciali, vol. 17, fol. 225r, untitled, begins “Havendo l’Illustriss[im]e Reverendiss[ime] Sig[nor] Car[dinal] di Bologna pien notitia” (6 June 1608).
Between 1587 and 1621 at least four published proclamations expelled ‘dishonest’ people and prostitutes from Senzanome and around Santa Maria della Neve. The decree of 1608 threatened women caught residing or even simply lingering in the street with a fine of ten scudi the first time, and expulsion the second time. Men were to be fined ten scudi the first time, and then were to be fined another ten scudi and given three lashes the second time. The proclamation also named three specific women, Giulia da Gesso, Doralice Moroni, and Ludovica Giudi, “as well as every other meretrice.” Nevertheless, in 1609 all three of these women still lived on Senzanome: Doralice Moroni registered in the ‘casa’ of the priest Campanino, Giulia da Gesso in the ‘casa’ of a priest of San Niccolo, and Ludovica Giudi in the ‘casa’ of Messer Giovanni Pietro. Moreover, they shared the street with 35 other registered prostitutes. Over the long term, however, registered prostitutes’ residence in Senzanome appears to have diminished: in 1614 and 1624, only two women registered on the street, one in each year. Perhaps the expulsion had been enforced in this later period with great success, so that prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ moved out and stayed away. Or, perhaps, they had taken Legate Giulio Savelli’s advice: in his 1621 decree he stated that dishonourable people living on Senzanome should move to Frassinago, to Borgo Novo, or to “another street appointed to similar people.” Though he did not cite the fact that there were no convents, churches, or oratories on the first two streets, in all likelihood that was his

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126 These were published in 1587, 1602, 1608, and 1621. BCB, Bandi Merlani, I, fol. 449r, untitled, begins “Devieto di affitare a persone disoneste nella contrada di S. Maria della Neve” (26 April 1587); ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 15, fol. 198r, untitled, begins “Essendo la Contrada di Santa Maria dalla Neve sempre stata Contrada quieta” (31 January 1602); ASB, Legato, Bandi speciali, vol. 17, fol. 225r, untitled, begins “Havendo l’Illustri[ss]ime Reverendiss[ime] Sig[nor] Car[dinal] di Bologna pien notitia” (6 June 1608); BCB, Bandi Merlani, X, fol. 128r, “Bando Contra le Meretrici, & Persone inhoneste,” (20 August 1621).


130 C de M 1609, pp. 73, 121, and 151, respectively.

131 These were Agata Martelli, alias Bagni, from Castel San Pietro and Lena di Stefani who lived in the casa of Messer Domenico Bonhuomo. C de M 1614, p. 19 and 1624, [np] ‘L’ section.

132 “essersi partire di detta strada, né esse, né altre Meretrici, e persone inhoneste debbano per l’avvenire habitare, né stare in detta strada, ma andare in Borgo novo o nel Frasinago, o altro loco deputato per simile persone.” BCB, Bandi Merlani, X, fol. 128r, “Bando Contra le Meretrici, & Persone inhoneste,” (20 August 1621). Though the Savelli did not specify which of the city’s “Borgo Nuovo’s” they should move to, in all likelihood he meant Borgo Nuovo di stra Maggiore, which had no convents or churches on it.
reason for proposing them. Since prostitutes and the dishonourable could not be expelled from the city, it was better to have them live on streets where they could cause the least disturbance to pious people and the least disrespect to sacred images like the Madonna della Neve. This is another example of the pragmatism that characterised the Bolognese regulation of prostitution and prostitutes.

Traces in the Bollette’s documentation reveal that religious houses could also petition the archbishop to have specific donne inhoneste and meretrici expelled from their streets. In 1604, the Bollette investigated the widow and washerwoman Giovanna di Bertuzzi Romagnola, who they identified as “a woman of wicked and dishonest life, a woman on her own and free.”133 In his initial denunciation, the Bollette’s esecutore claimed that earlier that year the Dominican nuns of Santa Maria Maddalena di via Galliera134 had petitioned the archbishop to expel Giovanna. Located on Galliera by the northern city wall, Santa Maria Maddalena was relatively new: it was founded in 1566 to take the nuns who lived in Santa Maria Maddalena di Valdipietra, which was located outside of the southwestern gate of Saragozza. The archbishop was intent on building and protecting the reputation of this new convent. Whether the Bollette’s information was based on gossip or inquiry with the archbishop’s sbirri or its tribunal is unclear. However, as the notary recorded:

This year in the month of May [Giovanna] was staying in the street behind the sisters of Santa Maddalena of Galliera, and she was causing so much wickedness nearby that the sisters reached out to My Lord the Archbishop with the result that they drove her out of the neighbourhood.135

In her interview with the Bollette, Giovanna admitted that she had been arrested and expelled from her street by the archbishop’s sbirri because she was a “donna inhonesta,”

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134 Santa Maria Maddalena di via Galliera was not Bologna’s convent for repentant prostitutes. That was Santi Filippo e Giacomo delle Convertite, which from 1569 until 1805 was located on via delle Lame. Zarri, “I monasteri femminili,” pp. 180-181 and 205.
135 “Et di questo anno fatto il mese di Maggio costei stava nella sua p[u]gliola dietro le sore di Santa Lena di Galliera et faceva tanta mala vicina[n]za che le sore con un memoriale che porsero a Monsig[no]r Arcivescovo la cacciarono di detta vicina[n]za.” ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Filza 1606, [np] “Ex offic[jo con[tra] Jo[v]a[n]am d[e] Bertutiis,” (26 September 1606), fol. 1r. The convent sat on via Galliera, just north of the Reno river, on the border of the Porta Stiera and Porta Piera quarters. The street (pugliola) may have been one of the alleyways directly south or east of the convent. Mario Fanti says that the meaning of “pugliola” is unknown, but suggests that the word was first used in the Middle Ages for streets that were immediately outside of Bologna’s second set of walls. Fanti, Le vie, vol. I, p. 69.
though she did not define exactly what she had done. She did say, however, that while she was not sure who had complained, she guessed that it was either a woman who lived in her house who once had called her a woman of wicked life (“donna di mala vita”) or the nearby sisters of Santa Maria Maddalena.\(^{136}\) Giovanna testified that when the archbishop’s sibirri released her, they had cleared her of the charge but forbade her to return home to her street. It was her neighbours who had denounced her, said the men, and it was they who requested that she not be permitted to return. By the time of her questioning by the Bollette, five months later, Giovanna had moved four blocks west of the convent, to Borgo Polese.

The prostiuctions discussed above targeted not only prostitutes, but also ‘dishonest’ men some of whom were procurers, innkeepers, and tavern operators, as well as women’s clients, especially university students. Early modern European culture characterised young men as hot-headed, boisterous, and given to violence. They often opposed acceptable public behaviour with formal and informal ritual competitions which led to impulsive and reckless quarrels and bloodshed.\(^{137}\) Students commonly assaulted each other with slanderous words shouted in the streets and fought each other in duels.\(^{138}\) Christopher Carlsmith has found that in Bologna many such quarrels began when students from different colleges would not relinquish precedence (precedenza), right-of-way, to each other in the street.\(^{139}\) Cases from the city’s criminal court, the Torrone, reveal them swinging swords, breaking doors, and throwing insults and punches at landlords and shopkeepers who wanted payment.\(^{140}\) Not only did students flirt, cajole, and harass prostitutes in the streets, they also quarrelled and fought with landlords, shopkeepers, and each other.


\(^{138}\) Carlsmith, “Student Colleges,” p. 77.

\(^{139}\) For examples, see ibid., pp. 78-80.

\(^{140}\) These examples are drawn from Niccoli, “Rituals of Youth,” p. 81.
At least one Bolognese proclamation attempted to quell, or at least diminish, the disturbances produced by prostitutes and dishonourable people when they mixed with students. The small street of Centotrecento, located by the northern wall and the gate of Mascarella, was never home to a large number of prostitutes (see Map 4.3). However, the many prostitutes that lived on the surrounding streets of Borgo di San Pietro, Borgo di San Martino, and Bràina di San Donato were undoubtedly attracted to it because of the students who lived at the college of Ungaro-Illirico, commonly known as the College of the Hungarians. In 1604, nine women lived on Centotrecento itself, while 31 lived on the three surrounding streets. In reaction to complaints made by the brothers of the confraternal oratory of the Resurrection, in 1606 Vice Legate Alessandro di Sangro ordered that all prostitutes, male and female procurers, and food regrators (*trecole*) move out of Centotrecento by the feast day of San Michele di Maggio (8 May). The problem, stated Sangro, was that dignified people had been driven out of the street by the combination of the uproars and merry-making of the students (*tumulti, far trebbi*) and the scandalous behaviour and examples posed by the prostitutes. In order to ensure the reverence of the oratory, the well-being of the college, and the peace of neighbours, dishonest people were to move out in the next ten days under threat of public whipping, the immense fine of 100 gold scudi, and banishment from the city. Anyone found renting to them was to lose the rent still owed to them. Sangro’s decree aimed to improve the dignity and tranquility of this street, from

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141 In 1604, seventeen lived on Borgo di San Martino, eleven lived on bràina di San Donato, and three women lived on San Pietro.


which pious and honest inhabitants had been driven by the cacophony of noise created when students mixed with prostitutes and other dishonourable people.

3.2 Lay Neighbours

Like the regular clergy, the laity also was troubled by the noise and disorder of dishonest people, including prostitutes, their clients, and associates. However, unlike residents of religious houses, these people had direct, day-to-day contact with the women and knew details about their lives: prostitution and relationships outside of marriage were difficult to keep a secret in the close-knit communities of early modern urban neighbourhoods. Locals spent the lion’s share of their days within a small radius around their dwellings, and since most were on foot their movement through the streets, alleys, and other public spaces was slow and involved many interactions with other passers-by.\(^{145}\) Gossip – the sharing of local and extra local information – typified neighbourhoods and formed the basis of community self-regulation.\(^{146}\) Alexander Cowan has demonstrated that early modern gossip and conversation generally drew on what people had seen or heard; people constantly watched and listened to their neighbours from the streets, in doorways, through windows, on balconies, and through flimsy walls.\(^{147}\) Thus, inhabitants shared information about women that they had gleaned both via their own observation as well as from what they had been told.

Elizabeth S. Cohen has pointed to the public, visible nature of some early modern prostitution.\(^{148}\) She notes that visitors to Rome, like the French author Michel de Montaigne, remarked that prostitutes sat at their widows and leaned out of them, while others observed that the women promenaded proudly through the streets.\(^{149}\) In his *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (1616), Tommaso Garzoni commented at length about the fact that prostitutes actively worked to catch men’s eyes while sitting at their widows, gesturing and


\(^{148}\) Cohen, “‘Courtesans’ and ‘Whores,’” pp. 204-205; Cohen, “Seen and Known,” pp. 396-397. In a later article Cohen argues that “[t]hough typically noisier and more abrasive than feminine ideals would dictate, much of prostitutes’ street behavior was not radically distinct; rather it fell toward one end on a spectrum of working class practices.” Cohen, “To Pray, To Work, To Hear, To Speak,” p. 310.

bantering with them. If they could afford to buy or rent them, some prostitutes called attention to themselves by wearing brightly coloured gowns with ostentatious decorations and jewels on their fingers and at their necks. Contemporary Italian broadsheets, like the previously discussed “Mirror of the Harlot’s Fate” and “The Life of the Rake,” similarly depict women sitting at their widows and in their doorways while older women act as go-between, scaring up business from passing men. In the sixth scene of “The Life of the Rake,” modest prostitutes, rather than richly dressed courtesans, lean out of their windows to answer the call of a man seeking entrance. A humbly dressed woman with her hair gathered in a tidy bun looks on from her doorway across the street where she is sitting in a chair winding yarn.

That Bolognese neighbours knew that women were prostitutes because of what they saw and heard is born out in testimonies taken by the Bollett. Witnesses often claimed that they had seen women going through the streets or into buildings and apartments with men. Caterina Marema’s 1601 testimony is typical example of this: she claimed that when she lived in the same casa as Lucrezia Buonacasa, she always saw Gian Domenico Sesto, the tailor, come to stay and sleep with her. Others saw more intimate behaviour, like Bartolomea, daughter of Antonio di Miani, who claimed that she knew her neighbours Margareta and Cornelia were “meretrici” because she saw them laughing, dancing, embracing, and kissing men. She also heard that they went to register with the Bollett.


154 “Io in quanto a me credo che siano meretrici et questo lo dico p[er]che le ho visto rider et balar con deli huomini et piu volte gli ho deto che si venghino a far scrivere alle bolete [...] et gli ho visto alle volte d[ett]e sorelle inbracio alli giovani et basciarle et spogliarsi dalle claze in piu et in quanto a me credo che siano piu texto donne di malla vitta.” Ibid., [np] 23 July 1601.
Still others testified more simply that “everyone in the neighbourhood considers her to be a whore,” or, “everyone says that she is his whore.” Finally, some men talked with each other about their sexual relationships with women. Silvio, son of Rodrigo di Manedini, claimed that over the previous three years his friend Tarquino, sbirro, told him repeatedly that he was having sex (chiavava) with Lucrezia Buonacasa. In this case, Silvio claimed to also have first-hand knowledge of their relationship: he said that he had seen the two in bed together at Lucrezia’s house on via Paradiso and at the watch house of the sbirri. In a close knit, intensely local world like this, prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ would have been hard-pressed to keep their relationships and work a secret.

In pragmatic terms, some women may not have wanted to keep their work a secret: gossip and visibility acted advertisement and could attract better clients. Local knowledge of women’s attachments to men might also earn them a measure of respect, even if only for as long as the relationship continued, especially if the man was honoured locally because of his wealth or status. These relationships could conceivably bring a sort of social protection.

Yet while relationships like these might provide benefits, they also made individual women vulnerable. For lay neighbours, concerns about prostitutes were linked in complex ways to economic jealousy and frustration at the inability to police their own community. Stefano D’Amico’s close study of a 1671 investigation of a Milanese woman suspected of prostitution (which was illegal there), reveals the testimony of locals who claimed their mounting disturbance by the late-night traffic of men and the noise of their coaches rattling over the cobblestones. These local women’s statements reveal their jealousy over the comfortable lifestyle that the prostitute and her kin enjoyed because of her relationships with the noble lovers who rode in those noisy coaches.

Roman testimonies also reveal neighbour’s frustration at the inability to control their streets. Elizabeth Cohen’s study of early seventeenth-century house-scornings, rituals meant to defile a person’s honour by attacking their residence, demonstrates the role of neighbours

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155 “et io visto il sud[ett]o Tarquinio et la sud[ett]a Lucrecia a letti insieme piu et piu volte la a casa nel Paradiso et ancho qui nella Guardia delli Sbirri, et Tarquinio p[redet]o mi ha deto piu et piu volte che lui chiavava la d[ett]a Lucrecia.” Ibid., [np] 22 January 1601. John Florio defines ‘chiavare’ as “to locke with a key. Also to transome, but now a daies abusively used for Fottere.” He defines ‘fottere’ as “to jape, to flucke, to sard, to swive,” and “fottente’ as “fucking, swiving, sarding.” Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, pp. 97 and 194, respectively.


157 Ibid., pp. 115-116.
in driving off assailants and protecting the neighbourhood from intruders. In one example, a group of men attacked the house of a prostitute at 1:00 a.m., shouting and beating on her door, playing music on a lute and guitar, and singing an obscene song. A neighbour, perhaps a friend of the prostitute, rose from her bed, went to her window, and cried out at the noise, ordering the assailants to leave the prostitute alone. The victim herself pleaded with her neighbours to help her, and in reaction they appeared at their widows, witnessing the incident and, in Cohen’s words, applying “social pressure [through] their presence.” The result was that the men, afraid that they might be identified to the authorities, “fell silent and retreated ‘at a good clip.’”

However, such community policing was sometimes not possible. In D’Amico’s study, the wife of a butcher testified that her husband previously had warned her not to complain about the noise to either the authorities or their neighbours since the woman’s clients were members of the governor’s court and thus wealthy and powerful. He feared that if the men got wind of her complaints they “would have all her hair torn out from her head.” Thus, not only was the noise of prostitution disturbing, but some neighbours bristled with frustration at the inability to police their own communities.

Whether or not women or their clients and lovers made spectacles of themselves, prostitution was both seen and known. Yet in Bologna, meretrici and donne inhonesti lived throughout the neighbourhoods just within the city walls. This suggests that most working-poor people were not overly scandalised by the fact that their neighbours lived by prostitution or at least that they had resigned themselves to living amongst them. Elizabeth S. Cohen has suggested a similar resignation amongst the men and women who lived in Rome’s Ortaccio when prostitutes were first confined there in the 1560s. She compares their lack of protest with the opposition of the residents of Trastevere, whose streets previously had been selected by Pope Pius V for prostitutes’ confinement: the men and women of Trastevere threatened “to burn down their own houses rather than share their streets with the whores.”

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159 Ibid., p. 614.
161 See Cohen’s “Seen and Known,” p. 402.
162 Ibid.
In late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bologna, no evidence has come to light that working-poor women and men made a concerted effort to drive prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ as a group out of their neighbourhoods. This was partially due to the fact that most streets on which registered prostitutes lived housed ten or fewer such women. On such streets, prostitutes and their companions may have been quieter overall and less given to overt public display, since, unlike streets dominated by prostitutes, they did not have to compete with each other for the attention of the men and youths who came in search of their services. Nor were there as many women, meaning that there was less of the serenading, violence, and harassment by rowdy students and drunken men that offended neighbours, and less attention from patrolling lawmen looking to fill their purses with rewards earned for arrests.\(^{163}\) Tessa Storey has argued that as long as women maintained local order and maintained the appearance of respectability, neighbours did not see them as an exceptional problem. For example, she found written complaints to the Roman governor signed by “gentlemen” requesting the eviction of specific prostitutes from their streets.\(^{164}\) It was the most scandalous and the loudest that these men wanted out because they posed bad examples to their unmarried daughters and wives, “touching men’s shameful parts and doing other extremely dishonest acts” in the streets.\(^{165}\) Those who were well behaved – and who were actually listed by name – were welcome to stay provided that they continued to behave.

Working-poor neighbours who lived in the few Bolognese streets and alleyways that were heavily populated by prostitutes and who found the women’s relationships and work immoral or offensive or their noise and disorder overwhelming, could always move to one of the 100 or so other city streets that were not heavily populated by meretrici. As demonstrated earlier, even in 1604, the year when the most prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ registered with the Bollette, only sixteen streets had ten or more registrants living on them, and only eight had more than twenty. The fact that at least half of all Bolognese

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\(^{163}\) On the attraction of lawmen to streets known for prostitution, gambling, and drinking: Cohen, “To Pray, To Work, To Hear To Speak,” p. 303; Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, pp. 99-100.

\(^{164}\) Storey notes that the men referred to themselves as *honorati* and *gentilhuomini*, *curiali principali* and *artegiani buoni e da bene*. Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, p. 91, n. 103. She dates two of the letters, one from 1601 and one from 1624.

\(^{165}\) As quoted in Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, p. 91.
*donne di mala vita* lived in small numbers on streets explains why in the period lay men and women made no concerted effort to dispel them as a group from their streets.

On the level of individual relations, however, neighbours could certainly make prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ feel unwanted and attempt to drive them from their streets. The case of the Bolognese widow and washerwoman Giovanna discussed earlier demonstrates that lay neighbours could denounce individual women to the archbishop’s sbirri in hopes of having them arrested. As Giovanna remarked in her testimony, she suspected that it was either a woman who lived in her house who once had called her a woman of wicked life or the nuns of Santa Maria Maddalena who had complained about her to the sbirri. If they were lucky enough to live on one of the few streets from which prostitutes recently had been evicted, and if the sbirri held to the letter of the law, rather than taking a payment to look the other way, they might force the offensive woman to leave the street.

Not just the sbirri of the archbishop’s tribunal, but any sbirri could be talked into arresting a prostitute if he thought he would receive a substantial reward or payoff. Thus, neighbours could also report infractions which were handled at the city’s criminal court, the Torrone, such as prostitutes’ use of inns or taverns, their wearing of men’s clothing, or their throwing of parties. These infractions had to be in progress when they were discovered, however, making it difficult, though not impossible, to achieve their arrest. Moreover, if Bologna’s corps of low-level, arresting officers was as small as that of the Roman governor (about 80 men in total, and the largest in the city) then Bolognese prostitutes’ chances of bumping into them were slim.

Neighbours could also denounce women to the Bollette’s esecutori whom they bumped into as they made their rounds through the streets. While the punishment for being caught without a license was not expulsion, the fines and future fees could make women’s lives financially more difficult and might encourage them to move in an attempt to escape registration. However, in the late sixteenth-century, it became increasingly difficult to have such denunciations stick. A 1586 order from the vice legate to the Bollette’s officials suggests that neighbours were denouncing women out of personal malice rather than

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167 Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, p. 98.
because they were actually practicing prostitution unlicensed. The vice legate ordered that, henceforth, unless a woman was found in flagrante with a man, the testimonies of two neighbours of good repute and the local parish priest would be required in order to find her guilty.\footnote{For the vice legate’s order, as transcribed into the 1586 register: C de M 1586, [np], untitled, begins “Ill[ustrissim]us et R[everendissi]mus D[ominus] Bononorum Vicelegatus in eius Camera” (28 June 1586).} Neighbours could certainly use the Bollette as a tool to aid them in their quarrels and to help them police their streets, yet unless they could be sure the woman was currently in bed with a man, they could not be sure that their denunciation would be effective.

For many working-poor Bolognese men and women, living amongst prostitutes was a fact of life so, whether the respected them or not, they learned to live with them. Prostitutes and ‘dishonest women,’ like all other members of their communities, had their places in the local kinship, social, and economic networks of their neighbourhoods and the larger city. This is not to say, of course, that no one treated them with derision because of their work, or that those who treated them with courtesy fully respected them. Yet while some prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’ annoyed, overwhelmed, and frightened ‘respectable’ people with their noise, scandal, and violence, they were also the sisters, mothers, lovers, and friends of many others.

To what extent were prostitutes marginalised in Bologna’s communities and the wider city? Certainly, to religious authorities, like Gabriele Paleotti, they were immoral and disruptive, they posed bad examples, and were in need of separation and marginalisation. Yet civic authorities and most lay people appear to have held more nuanced attitudes towards them. The sources created by the Ufficio delle Bollette in the latter half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century reveal the networks of sociability, work, and family within which these women operated. They demonstrate a number of women who, on the whole, fit within these communities, if more uneasily at times than others, who both gave and received the resources of support, companionship and security that characterised the community-centred world of early modern Italy and, more widely, Europe.
4. Conclusion

In her article “Seen and Known: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late-Sixteenth Century Rome” (1998), Elizabeth S. Cohen examined the Papacy’s rapidly changing policy towards prostitution. In the public eye as the centre of Christendom, and facing a tumult of criticism from Protestant and Catholic reformers alike, the Papacy moved to restore order and improve its reputation for piety and morality. As one part of this wider project, a series of zealous popes set down new, restrictive regulations for Rome’s highly visible donne di mala vita that attempted to hide them from sight. Strategies included expulsion from the city, containment in specific urban areas, and laws that attempted to reduce the social and civic disorder caused by prostitutes, their clients, and their associates. Before the mid-sixteenth century, Roman legislation had been quite lenient: the city had never had a municipal brothel, nor had it required prostitutes to wear distinguishing signs. Prostitutes traditionally had paid various annual and occasional taxes to the city’s treasuries and tribunals as well as death duties to the local Convertite, but they were otherwise unencumbered by legislation.

Cohen demonstrated that fellow Romans, including clients, landlords, and shop keepers, were sympathetic to prostitutes and that they supported the women when they opposed or negotiated the new laws. Examining censuses and criminal trial testimonies from the turn of the seventeenth century, Cohen demonstrated that even after prostitutes had been more-or-less successfully confined to the Campo Marzio, working-poor men and women continued to live alongside them, sharing the same streets, stairways, and apartments. Cohen concluded that “[prostitute’s] presence corresponded to an intricate engagement in the social networks of daily life. In practice, if not in theory, the prostitutes occupied an ambiguous centrality.” In her study, Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome (2008), Tessa Storey echoed Cohen’s conclusion, arguing that the new, harsh legislation, especially residential confinement, elicited sympathy from Romans, who in general were not troubled by the immorality of prostitution. Storey ultimately argued that, over the long term,

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172 Ibid., p. 409.
lay people’s norms and values were resistant to the Papacy’s new legislation towards prostitutes.\textsuperscript{173}

Bologna was both similar and different from Rome, and this informed its regulation of prostitution and its general social and cultural approaches to prostitutes. Most importantly, Bologna’s economic health rested in large part on the students who came to study at its university and the men and women who laboured in its seasonal silk industry. Students and labourers demanded sexually available women, and women needed work during the winter when the silk industry was inactive. By regulating prostitution, the civic government could both control the disorder of the trade and cash in on it by collecting fees and fines. Additionally, Bologna did not suffer from the kind of international scrutiny that Rome did as the centre of Catholic Christendom. While Bolognese authorities and legislators were concerned with moral and social discipline, they did not struggle under the external pressure felt by the Roman authorities. Moreover, Bologna’s population was much smaller, about 65,000 people at the turn of the seventeenth century, as opposed to Rome’s 100,000.\textsuperscript{174} As a consequence, the general population as well as the population of prostitutes were smaller, and disorder was therefore less widespread. These factors explain why Bolognese authorities followed a more lenient, tolerant program of regulation that, instead of confining prostitutes in a specific area in the city, allowed them to live more-or-less freely throughout it.

Yet Bologna was also similar to Rome in that the two cities shared the same culture and social structures. Only a few days’ ride from each other, elites, diplomats, soldiers, travelling storytellers and salesmen, and migrant workers shared, received, and related news reports, printed broadsheets, cheap books, and literature that reported on and reinforced their shared cultural norms and social customs. Thus, we should not be surprised that residents in Bologna and Rome in general were tolerant of prostitutes and prostitution, nor that Milanese and Venetian residents were as well.\textsuperscript{175} Though Bolognese legislation was different from Roman, Venetian, or Milanese legislation, prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women were

incorporated, if uneasily at times, into local city neighbourhoods and communities as in the other cities.
Chapter Five
Seven Prostitutes’ Lives

The records of the Ufficio delle Bollette present a unique opportunity for understanding early modern Italian prostitution: the chance to track and analyse women’s lives over substantial periods of time. This chapter does so for seven women who registered with the Bollette from eleven to 30 consecutive years. It focuses on four main themes: residence, registration, relationships, and deregistration. Such an analysis reveals the patterns and varieties of these women’s experiences, adding new information and further nuance to the picture constructed by previous scholars of Italian and European prostitution. More specifically, it broadens our understanding of the boundaries and opportunities within which Bolognese prostitutes manoeuvred. As previously demonstrated, the city’s approach to regulation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was more tolerant than that of other, larger northern-Italian cities. Unlike in Rome, Florence, and Venice, prostitutes were not confined to residential zones, nor were they required to wear distinguishing signs. While women were prohibited from riding in carriages, from wearing men’s clothing, and, occasionally, from residing in specific streets, the only consistently enforced legislation was annual registration with the Bollette and the regular purchase of licences.

But how free were these women? What choices did they have, and what factors – legal, social, cultural, or personal – constrained them? How did they navigate between restrictions and why did they do so? This chapter provides answers to these questions through a chronological analysis of the information documented in the Bollette’s registers and other bureaucratic records to identify patterns and unique behaviours. It then places these findings within the various contexts of the women’s lives, considering what impact age and wealth may have had on their experiences. Finally, this chapter compares and contrasts the Bolognese evidence with the findings of other scholars of northern Italian prostitutes and women and with early modern popular literature. This chapter ultimately argues that a host of factors, including age, poverty, wealth, community inclusion and exclusion, and social capital dictated the constraints and choices of these women as much as their work and reputations as prostitutes.

1 While Rome, Florence, and Venice taxed prostitutes, the records from those regimes have not survived.
The women analysed in this chapter were selected according to specific criteria. Above all, each had to have registered for a long enough period of time that a substantial period of her life could be reconstructed. Of the women examined in this chapter, the shortest period of registration was eleven years, while the longest was 30 years. Another criterion was that some of the women had to have been poor, while some had to have been wealthy. For instance, Marta di Landi, alias la Carota (The Carrot), had an elite clientele who registered her and bought either six-month or one-year licences for her. Moreover, Marta lived on the same street during her entire 22 year registration period and in her own house for fifteen of those years. In contrast, Angelica Frassetti’s clients were working poor men, including a shoemaker and a clothes dealer, and she changed residence frequently, living in almost every city quarter.

A final criterion for selection was that each woman had to have had an experience, relationship, or behaviour that was extensively documented by the Bollette. For instance, Arsilia Zanetti had a three-year sexual relationship (“amicitia carnale”) with a man whom she sued for payment in the Bollette’s tribunal, while Angelica Frassetti entered a charitable institution partway through her registration period. These women were not unique because they had these experiences. Indeed, other prostitutes entered Bologna’s charitable institutions for ‘fallen women’ and brought clients before the Bollette’s tribunal to claim debts. However, by placing these experiences in the framework of their lives, by considering what had occurred both before after, we can better see the context-specific motivations, constraints, and opportunities that these women negotiated, providing a more nuanced picture of these women’s lives and their place in Bolognese society.

The longest-registering prostitute examined in this chapter is Angelica Frassetti, who purchased licences for 30 years (1583-1612). Angelica shared many characteristics with the other women examined in this chapter: she was poor, she lived mainly in areas populated by other prostitutes, she changed residence about every two years, and she often failed to purchase her licences on time. Angelica had at least two long-term relationships with men.

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2 Caterina dall’Olio registered for eleven years (1597-1607) and Angelica Frassetti registered for 30 (1583-1612).
4 The Bollette’s documentation from before 1583 do not survive in the Archivio di Stato’s archival fond, so it is unknown whether she, or the other prostitutes, registered before this date.
one a shoemaker (*calzolaio*), the other a clothes dealer (*strazarolus in giparanis*). Fourteen years after her first registration, Angelica entered the Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo, a charitable institution for poor repentant prostitutes and adulterous wives, but returned to prostitution just two months later. Her status as a licit prostitute ended in 1612 when she successfully petitioned the Bollette to be deregistered. Now in her late 40s, Angelica had been transitioning out of prostitution for the previous three years by confessing and taking communion regularly and building a good reputation amongst her neighbours. In 1612, she presented to the officials statements from her parish priest and four other men who testified to her good character and way of life. The Bollette allowed Angelica to remain unlicensed, but registered her. What ultimately happened to Angelica is unclear since though her name appears in the 1613, 1614, and 1615 registers, she did not purchase any licences.

Arsilia Zanetti registered as a prostitute for 28 years (1584-1615). Like Angelica, she was poor and lived in streets populated by other working-poor people and prostitutes. Though she resided only in the city’s northern quarter, she changed residence often, a total of eighteen times. Arsilia had a son, Giovanni Battista Zanetti, who bought her licences between 1593 and 1600, and again in 1603. The records also reveal her long-term relationship with Andrea di Pasulini, a notary of the archbishop’s tribunal, who in 1601 she brought before the Bollette’s tribunal for payment for their relationship. Twelve years later, Arsilia was in her late 40s, ailing, and increasingly impoverished, and so the Bollette allowed her to go unlicensed. In her final year of registration, 1615, Arsilia purchased two monthly licences, but then disappeared. Neither the prostitute register, the filza, nor the atti from 1616 survive in the Archivio di Stato’s archival fond, so it is unknown whether she had any interaction with the Bollette. She did not register in 1617 or 1618.

Camilla d’Ocelli was unique among the women examined in this chapter for her residential stability. During her seventeen-year period of registration (1587-1603), Camilla lived in only two streets: Torleone (1587-1592) and Campo di Bovi (1594-1603). While her residence was stable, her patterns of registration were not. Camilla generally bought her licenses by the month, and the Bollette’s esecutori often brought in her payments late.

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5 Shona Kelly Wray translates *strazarolus* as “a clothes dealer.” Shona Kelly Wray, *Communities and Crisis: Bologna during the Black Death* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 24. John Florio defines a ‘gippiatura’ and ‘giùbbba’ as “also a kind of worke or fashion that tailors use.” Florio, *Queen Anna’s new world of words*, pp. 537 and 211.

6 The only document held is the 1616 register of innkeepers and landlords.
suggesting that she had been caught by them. Camilla ended her registration – and presumably, her work in prostitution – on 2 April 1602 when she married Augusto Bargelisi in her parish church. By this time she was in her late 30s.

During her 26 years as a registered prostitute, Lucia Colieva moved eighteen times, and most of her moves took her significant distances across neighbourhoods and even the city. Lucia was among the wealthier women examined in this chapter: she had maidservants who bought her licences as well as a number of high-status. Lucia eventually married and, like Camilla, was in her late 30s when she did so.

Caterina dall’Olio registered as a prostitute for eleven years in a row (1597-1607). While Caterina moved often, she remained within the same parish, in six streets in the north-eastern corner of the city. She bought the majority of her licenses on time, though generally only two months at a time, and was sometimes in arrears with the Bollette. The documentation of the Bollette reveals a number of relationships that Caterina had with other registered prostitutes and men. On 23 October 1607, she died and was buried in her parish church, San Tommaso del Mercato.

Marta di Landi, nicknamed ‘The Carrot’, was the wealthiest of the seven women examined in this chapter. Registering continually for 22 years (1592-1613), she lived in one street for the entire period, Borgo degli Arienti, and in her own home for at least fifteen of these years. Marta never went to the Bollette herself, probably in order to protect her reputation. Instead, she had her maidservants do so, as well as a number of wealthy patricians, in particular Alessandro Fabretti, who purchased her licences for eleven years (1598-1608). Marta’s ultimate fate is unknown: her last registration was on 4 July 1613, though in 1614 another woman was registered as residing in her house.

The final woman examined in this chapter, Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani, registered with the Bollette for nineteen years (1601-1619). Like Marta, Pantaselia appears to have served wealthy and elite clients, many of whom purchased her licences. Unlike Marta, however, she moved ten times, once early in her career in order to escape a debt to

7 Marta’s first registration was in 1592. The nickname ‘The Carrot’ (la Carrotta, la Carotta, or la Carota) was first used in the 1597 register: “Martha Landi d[ett]a la Carrotta sta nel borgo del Argento.” In 1598, her name was recorded as “Marta Carotta sta nel borgo dell’argento in casa proprio.” The Bollette’s notaries included the nickname when recording her annual registrations from 1597 until 1614. Archivio di Statot di Bologna (henceforth ASB), Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796, Campione delle Meretrici [henceforth C de M] 1597, p. 126; C de M 1598, p. 102.
her landlord. Between 1604 and 1605 she entered Bologna’s convent for repentant prostitutes, Santi Giacomo e Filippo, also known as the Convertite, but her stay there was short: after twenty months she was caught practicing prostitution by the Bollette’s esecutore. Pantaselia was in her late 30s or early 40s when she stopped registering and buying licences.  

1. Residence

As discussed in previous chapters, unlike late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Roman, Florentine, and Venetian prostitutes, Bolognese prostitutes were not required to reside in specific streets or areas. In theory, they could live throughout the city and the Bollette’s documentation confirms their habitation in all of the city’s quarters. But how much residential choice did they actually have?

The evidence reveals that above all else, economics dictated where Bolognese prostitutes resided. Most lived amongst other working-poor in rented rooms in small streets and alleyways where rent was affordable. In late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Venice and Rome, prostitutes and the working-poor also cohabitated, although they did so in streets that were officially earmarked for the residence of the former. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, Bolognese prostitutes lived amongst their family and friends in such neighbourhoods. They also lived where there was an abundance of customers, especially students, soldiers, travellers, and servants, who would pay for their sexual and domestic services. Stefano D’Amico found a similar situation in contemporary Milan: after the civic brothel closed down in the mid-sixteenth century, prostitutes spread throughout the city, but clustered around the site where the Spanish garrison was stationed and where they could

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8 Pantaselia may have registered after 1619, unfortunately I did not examine the 1620, 1621, 1622, or 1623 campioni to see if she had. I intend to do so on my next research trip. Pantaselia did not register in 1624.

9 Some, but very few, prostitutes lived on streets bordering the city centre of piazza Maggiore. One such street was Simia, an alleyway located directly behind the Archiginnasio, the seat of the university since 1563, and just steps from the civic basilica San Petronio and the piazza Pavaglione, home to Bologna’s annual open-air silk market. Angelica Frassetti lived on Simia for six months between 1588 and 1589. C de M 1588, [np] ‘A’ section; 1589, [np] ‘A’ section. For more on the Archiginnasio, see Naomi Miller, Renaissance Bologna: A Study in Architectural Form and Content (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 124-131. For more on Bologna’s silk market, see Nicholas Terpstra, Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 172-174.

engage soldiers.\textsuperscript{11} Elizabeth S. Cohen found that even within the Campo Marzio, the district allocated for their residence, early seventeenth-century Roman prostitutes clustered in the streets where lodging was inexpensive and clients were easier to find.\textsuperscript{12}

In Bologna, one area that prostitutes were particularly attracted to was the city’s north-east corner (see Map 5.1). This neighbourhood boasted the highest concentration of student colleges in the city: Ancarano, located on Case Nove della Viola, Ferrero/della Viola, located on Borgo di San Martino, and Ungaro-Illirico, located on Centotrecento.\textsuperscript{13} Just inside the city wall and a few steps from the gates of San Donato and Mascarella, these streets were also home to the taverns and inns that catered to locals and visitors alike.\textsuperscript{14} In areas like this, not only was rent affordable, but clients were plentiful, and so prostitutes lived there in large numbers. Five of the women examined in this chapter lived in the area at least once.\textsuperscript{15} In 1594, Angelica Frassetti resided on Borgo di San Pietro with twelve other registered prostitutes.\textsuperscript{16} A further 22 more lived on the surrounding streets, including Lucia Colieva.\textsuperscript{17} Ten years later, in 1604, 47 registered prostitutes lived in the area.\textsuperscript{18} While these women represent only 9 and 6\% of the total prostitutes registered in those years, they

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\textsuperscript{13} Today Viola (which in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was also referred to as the casette della Viola) is called via delle Belle Arti, and Borgo di San Martino forms the western half of via Innerio.

\textsuperscript{14} In 1601 Arsilia Zanetti lived on Borgo di San Martino beside an inn (“l’hosteria”). C de M 1601, p. 2.


\textsuperscript{16} Angelica lived on Borgo di San Pietro for three consecutive years. C de M 1592, [np] ‘A’ section; 1593, [np] ‘A’ section; 1594, [np] ‘A’ section.

\textsuperscript{17} In 1594, eight prostitutes lived on Borgo di San Martino, eight on Centotrecento, three on Mascarella (including Lucia Colieva), and three on the bràina di strada San Donato. Lucia lived on Mascarella in 1593 and 1594. C de M 1593, [np] ‘L’ section; 1594, [np] ‘L’ section.

\textsuperscript{18} In 1604, eighteen prostitutes resided on Borgo di San Martino, fourteen on the bràina di strada San Donato, nine on Centotrecento (including Arsilia Zanetti and her renter, Cecilia Fontanina) and six on Case Nove della Viola. Cecilia registered as living “[…] in ca di M[adonna]rsilia”. C de M 1604, [np] ‘C’ section. In 1604 no registered prostitutes lived on Mascarella.

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Map 5.1: The north-eastern corner of Bologna

Colleges:
1) Ancarano, founded 1414
2) Ferrero/della Viola, founded 1540
3) Ungaro-Illirico, founded 1553

Canals and waterways:
A) Aveva
B) Canale di Reno
composed a large proportion of the area’s residents. An examination of Claude Duchet’s 1582 birds-eye view map of Bologna suggests that the zone was bordered to the north by fields, reducing the residential space to the two-storey buildings that were sandwiched between the grounds of the colleges.\(^{19}\) Moreover, these numbers do not include the unregistered meretrici who were similarly drawn to the area.

Women may have chosen to live in streets and neighbourhoods that were populated by a significant number of prostitutes. As Monica Chojnacka has pointed out, men were drawn to specific streets and areas in Venice that had a reputation for prostitution, and thus living in such zones made it easier for women to find clients.\(^{20}\) This was also true in Bologna. Moreover, while living amongst other prostitutes created competition for clients, it nevertheless also afforded the women a sense of community. Though Elizabeth S. Cohen has demonstrated the rivalries that close living produced, she also suggests that meretrici aided and protected one another from the violence and harassment of rejected suitors, arresting officers, and the groups of young men who roved the streets.\(^{21}\) Prostitutes could police their streets and the behaviour of those who frequented them by shouting from their doorways and windows at disrespectful boys and men, by gossiping amongst themselves about clients, and even by stepping into violent frays in defence of, or in opposition to, one another. Though living on streets with many other prostitutes meant there was more competition for business, it nevertheless promised more work opportunities and may have offered a degree of personal and professional security.

Economics also guided the residential choices of wealthier prostitutes who served an elite clientele. Such women sometimes clustered together in specific streets, making those streets more elegant through their habitation. Marta di Landi lived on Borgo degli Arienti during her entire 22 years of registration (1592-1613) and for at least fifteen of those years she lived in her own home (see Map 5.2).\(^{22}\) Chief amongst her long-term clients was


\(^{20}\) Chojnacka, Working Women, p. 54.


\(^{22}\) “In casa sua” or “in casa propria”. In 1597, 1598, 1604, 1605, and 1606 the Bollette’s notaries recorded Marta’s street as Borgo dell’Argento, but they used Arienti and Argento interchangeably. C de M 1597, p. 126; 1598, p. 102; 1604, [np] ‘M’ section; 1605, p. 178; 1606, p. 182.
Map 5.2: Residential streets of Marta di Landi, alias la Carota, and Camilla d'Ocelli

Canals and waterways:
A) Avesa
Alessandro Fabretti, member of a powerful local patrician family, who purchased her licences for ten years (1598-1608). Others included Domenico di Landi and Pompeo di Ghelli, an official of the Bollette. Marta also employed maidservants, one of whom purchased her licences in 1592. As a demonstration of her status and the wealth of her patrons, Marta never registered herself and her licences were always bought by the semester (six months in advance), rather than by the month.

Like her clients and her payment patterns, the street that Marta lived on also reflected her status. Borgo degli Arienti was a two-block street located just south of the city wall, behind the church of San Domenico, and west of Castiglione, one of Bologna’s main thoroughfares (see Map 5.2). The street was removed from the noise and commotion of the student colleges and was home to a handful of established, more-or-less refined meretrici, though none perhaps as established as Marta. In 1594, fourteen registered prostitutes lived on Arienti, in 1604 fifteen did, in 1609 nine, and in 1614 seven. Like Marta, some of these women lived on the street over the long term: Camilla Sorboli lived on Arienti for eleven years (1604-1614), as did Margareta di Loli and her mother Domenica. They also served an elite clientele: Camilla Sorboli counted the nobleman Francesco Roffeni amongst her patrons and Angela di Binachi had a relationship with the nobleman Ugocino di Ugocini Ariminensi. Marta occasionally had other meretrici living with her and they, too, had exalted clients: Vittoria Michelina was frequented by Carlino, scion of the great Bolognese Pepoli family.

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24 Di Ghelli purchased a one-year licence the year after he was an official of the Bollette. C de M 1601, p. 127. For di Ghelli as an official of the Bollette, see ASB, Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri, Statuti, sec. XV, codici miniati, ms. 64, fol. 30v; Filza 1623, [np] “Officiali alle Bollette p[er] l’an[n]o 1600,” (undated), fol. 1r. For di Landi’s payments, see C de M 1610, p. 176. Neither di Landi nor di Ghelli are listed in Dolfi’s catalogue of Bolognese noble families.

25 This was Caterina di Fontani “ancilla de Marta”. C de M 1592, [np] ‘M’ section.

26 For Camilla: C de M 1604, [np] ‘C’ section; 1609, p. 29; 1614, p. 38. For Margareta and Domenica di Loli: C de M 1604, [np] ‘M’ section; 1609, p. 171; 1614, p. 172.

27 On the Roffeni family, see Dolfi, Cronologia delle famiglie nobili, pp. 654-657. For Camilla: C de M 1614, p. 38. The Ariminensi family are not listed in Dolfi’s catalogue of Bolognese noble families. For Angela: C de M 1604, [np] ‘A’ section.

28 On the Pepoli, see Dolfi, Cronologia delle famiglie nobili, pp. 584-605. For Vittoria: C de M 1604, [np] ‘R’ section.
Although Marta lived in her own house and occasionally shared it with other prostitutes, she was not running a brothel. In 1604, fourteen registered prostitutes besides Marta lived on Arienti, but only Vittoria Michelina identified her as her landlord. Eight of these meretrici were registered in homes owned by others and five were registered without a landlord. By this year Marta had been living in Bologna and registering as a prostitute for thirteen years, so it would be unlikely that the Bollette’s notaries failed to record any women living in her home. Indeed, Marta was so well known in the community that prostitutes registered themselves in reference to her. For example, in 1604 Barbara di Rizzi was recorded as living on Arienti “near to the house of The Carrot,” while in 1609 Camilla Sorboli was registered as living “three doors from The Carrot.” In 1614, the year after Marta stopped registering, seven prostitutes lived on Arienti, but only one, Francesca di Marchionni, lived in Marta’s home. Five of the others were registered in the homes of other women and men, and one was registered without reference to a landlord. Marta clearly was not running a brothel. Indeed, if she had been, the other established prostitutes may have run her out of the street, fearing that she might reduce their refined reputations. Like poorer prostitutes, economics also informed these women’s residential choices: habitation on a street associated with wealthier and refined meretrici reflected and bolstered their construction of themselves to elite men who might be clients and to their neighbours and other prostitutes.

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29 “nella casa della Signora Marta.” C de M 1604, [np] ‘R’ section. Vittoria lived with Marta for only one year.
30 Caterina Senese lived in the house of Zia Piera (C de M 1604, ‘C’ section), Caterina di Cini da Bagno, alias Vaccari, lived in the house of Cesare Segantino (‘C’ section), Francesca and Margareta di Loli lived in the “casa” of Signor Ghelli (‘F’ section and ‘M’ section), Lucia Poltronieri di Pedrazzi lived in the house of Domenica (‘T’ section), Barbara di Rizzi lived in the house of Vanua near to Marta’s house (“nel Borgo dell’Ariento presso la casa della Carota”) (‘B’ section), Anna Terraboschi spagnola lived in the house of Calcina (‘A’ section), and Angelica di Bianchi in the house called “Il convento” (‘A’ section, Angela di Bianchi). “Il convento” was never used in reference to Marta or her home. The other four registered prostitutes who lived on Borgo degli Arienti this year were not identified in relation to any homes (‘C’ section, Camilla di Sorbi, ‘D’ section, Diamante de Arsenata, ‘D’ section, Diana di Vecchi da Modena, ‘F’ section, Francesca di Masi, ‘I’ section, Giacoma dal Lino, ‘R’ section, Violante Giraldbini).
31 “nel Borgo dell’Ariento presso la casa della Carota” and “Borgo del Ariente alla Carotta tre ussi”. C de M 1604, [np] ‘B’ section; 1609, p. 29.
32 C de M 1614, p. 87. Francesca lived with Marta for only one year.
33 One lived in the home of her father (p. 117), one in the “casa” of Anna Milanesa (p. 273), two in the “casa” of Certano (pp. 145 and 172), and one in the “casa” of the Ratta family (p. 38). One was registered without reference to any one’s casa at all (p. 128).
Marti di Landi and prostitutes of her ilk were unique for their long-term residential stability. Most Bolognese meretrici were far more mobile. For example, Angelica Frassetti moved sixteen times in 30 years, while Lucia Colieva moved sixteen times in 25 years (see Maps 5.3 and 5.4). Early seventeenth-century Roman prostitutes were similarly mobile, even within the residential district assigned to them. Examining censuses from five of the district’s parishes taken between 1601 and 1615, Tessa Storey calculated that 81% (765 of 941) of the women moved to different parishes at least once.  

Why early modern prostitutes moved so often has been debated by scholars. For some, the answer lies in the women’s poverty and their social and legal marginalisation. Finding that prostitutes moved from their birthplaces to cities in order to escape legal prosecution and the gossip of neighbours, some extend the same reasoning to explain frequent residential change within cities. For example, Lucia Ferrante asserted that Bolognese prostitutes were constantly on the lookout for new lodgings in case they had to flee the sbirri or the wrath of their neighbours. As she put it, “whether they had one specific, distinct ‘friend’ (amico) or many occasional clients, it was advantageous that they not dwell for long in the same place.” Examining the Bollette’s 1583 register of prostitutes, Luisa Ciammitti stated that Bolognese prostitutes moved extremely often, rarely living in their homes for more than a year, and that they often abandoned their residences after only one week.  

A song by the Bolognese balladeer Giulio Cesare Croce (1550–1609) about prostitutes support these scholars’ views. In “To the Courtesans Who Go Masked during Carnival,” (“Per le cortegiane che vanno in Maschera il Carnevale”) (1605), Croce identified poverty and debt as the source of prostitutes’ mobility. Addressing women who during

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34 Storey, Carnal Commerce, p. 189.  
37 Ibid. My translation.  
39 Giulio Cesare Croce, “Per le cortegiane che vanno in Maschera il Carnevale. Opera non più veduta dell’Humorista Academico secreto. Dedicata all’Archipotentissimo Monarca del Mare Nettune, & honorabissimo decoro della Piazza di Bologna, il Gigante. In Bologna per il Moscatelli, 1605. Con licenza de’ Sup[eriori].” BUB, ms. 3878 opuscoli sciolti/16, fol. 1v. I thank Valerie Hoagland for her assistance in
Carnival dressed themselves as ‘courtesans’, that is, as refined prostitutes, for financial gain, Croce urged them quit now and to return to spinning and weaving so that they could avoid the poverty and disease that inevitably befell prostitutes. As his song began:

*Cortegiane* have you noticed
that Carnival has finished?
poor little girls, don’t you know,
that the hospitals await you?

Quickly take up (poor girls)
the distaff and the spindle;
return (wretched ones)
to spinning (as is your custom).

In order to have permission
would you pay a *ducatone*?
I speak to you frankly, and with
neither flattery nor adulation.

Croce urged these women to save their money so that they would be able to secure new lodgings on the day of San Michele, 8 May, when new property leases began in Bologna. Moving would allow them to escape the unpaid bills that they had accumulated while working as prostitutes. As he continued:

Save your *ducatone*
I advise you, for come May,
(heed my words)
it will prove of great advantage.

For there will be much to do come San Michele,
when you must carry your rags elsewhere,
and in order to escape the legal suits and complaints,

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40 “la licenza”, which I have translated here as permission, is surely a double entendre, since it means permission as well as licentiousness and unruliness. Given the Bolognese context, “la licenza” may also refer to registration with the Ufficio delle Bollette. John Florio translates ‘licitia’ as “licence, leave, sufferance, permission. Also boldness, licenciousness, unrulinesse.” Florio, Queen Anna’s new worlde of words, p. 283.

41 “*Cortegiane v’accorgete, / Ch’e finito il Carnevale? / Poverine, non sapete, / Che v’aspetta l’Hospitale? / Ripigliate (poverelle) / La Conocchia tosto, e’ l fuso; / Ritornate (cattivelle) / a’ filar (com’è vostr’ uso.) / Per havere la licenza / Pagarest un ducatone? / Io vi parlo schietto, e senza / O’ lunsighe, ò adulatone.” Croce, “Per le cortegiane,” fol. 1v. The *ducatone* may refer to the Florentine coin which from 1568-1571 was worth seven lire. Angelo Martini, Manuale di metrologia, ossia misure, pesi e monete in uso attualmente e anticamente presso tutti i popoli (Turin: Loescher, 1883), p. 209. It could also be the Milanese silver coin by the same name. Carlo M. Cipolla, Money in Sixteenth-Century Florence (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 21 and 34.

42 On the day of San Michele, see Giacomo Rinieri, Cronaca di Giacomo Rinieri 1535-1549, ed. Armando Antonelli and Riccardo Pedrini (Bologna: Costa Editore, 1998), pp. 176-177.
you should remember the when, and the where.\textsuperscript{43}

Though Croce did not state it, the “legal suits and complaints” are most likely due to unpaid bills for lodging, food, and drink. Although these women might rent expensive clothing and feast and celebrate luxuriously during Carnival, Croce warns that it is only temporary. Eventually, the rent on their clothes and rooms will come due and the men who had previously financed them will be nowhere to be found:

The rent for your little room
I advise you to pay at the end,
if your purse might be empty;
 alas, what sorrows, alas, such pains.

Take your rags through the streets,
because here comes a mazziero,\textsuperscript{44}
who runs the streets,
and the neighbourhoods of that quarter.

And now you won’t find the bertone,\textsuperscript{45}
who acted as your security
to pay the rent,
because he was overly charitable.\textsuperscript{46}

Croce’s song demonstrates a cultural stereotype of the time: that prostitutes lived above their stations and thus were constantly in debt. The Bolognese evidence confirms that some prostitutes did move because of poverty. In one case, two meretrici moved across town in order to avoid paying their landlord. In January 1601, Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani, and Benedetta Salani (possibly her sister or mother) rented a room from Cherubina di Grassi on pugliole di San Bernardino (see Map 5.3). By April, however, the two had moved across town to Senzanome without paying Cherubina the four lire they owed her, so the latter

\textsuperscript{43}“Riserbate il ducatone, / vi dò aviso, che vien Maggio / intendete il mio sermone / C’havrete gran vantaggio. / C’ hà da fare il San Michele, / e portare i stracci altrove, / Per fuggir lite, e querele / si ricordi il quando, e dove.” Croce, “Per le cortigiane,” fol. 3r.

\textsuperscript{44}Florio translates ‘mazziére, Mazziéro’ as “a Mace-bearer, a Serieant of the Mace, a Verger, a Pole-axe-man, a Princes Pencioner.” Florio, \textit{Queen Anna’s new worlde of words}, p. 305.

\textsuperscript{45}Florio translates a ‘bertone’ as “A married man, or wedded woman’s secret lover, leman, or adulterer.” \textit{Queen Anna’s new worlde of words}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{46}“La pigion del Caminetto / di pagarla al fin conviene, / se sia vuoto il borselletto; / Ahi, che doglie, ahi quante pene. / Eccò i stracci per le strade, / Perche vien qualche Mazziero, / Che fà correr le contrade, / E i vicini di quel quartiero. / Non trovate allor Bertone, / Che vi faccia sicurare / di pagar questa pigione / Perch’è troppo caritate.” Croce, “Per le cortegiane,” fol. 3v.
Map 5.3: Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani's streets of residence 1601-1619*

Streets in order of residence:

1) Pugiole di San Bernardino (1601-1602)
2) Casette da San Benedetto (1603)
3) Not registered, 1604-1605, apparently in the Convertite
4) Borgo delle Casse (1606)
5) By the gate of San Felice (1607-1608)
6) Torresotto di San Francesco (1609)
7) Pratello (1610)
8) Nosadella (1611-1615)
9) Case Nuove di San Martino (1617)
10) Avesella (1618-1619)

* The 1616 register does not survive in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna's fond on the Bollette.
started a case against them at the Bollette’s tribunal.\textsuperscript{47} The Bollette did find Pantaselia at her new home and forced her to pawn goods in order to pay her debt.\textsuperscript{48} In her case, moving did not allow her to escape financial obligations.

Other Bolognese prostitutes were vulnerable to the complaints of neighbours because of the scandal, noise, and violence that attended them. For instance, the widow and washerwoman Giovanna di Bertuzzi Romagnola was driven out of her neighbourhood by the nuns of Santa Maria Maddalena, who were disturbed by the “many wicked things” (“tanta mala”) that she did in their proximity. As the Bollette’s notary later recorded it,

This year in the month of May [Giovanna] was staying in the little street behind the sisters of Santa Maddalena of Galiera, and she was causing so much wickedness nearby that the sisters reached out to My Lord the Archbishop with the result that they drove her out of the neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{49}

Later that same year, Giovanna was interviewed by the Bollette on suspicion of unlicensed prostitution.\textsuperscript{50} She admitted that she had been arrested and held by the archbishop’s sbirri for being a “donna inhonesta.” When the sbirri released her, she said, they cleared her of the charge but forbade her to return home to the little street behind the convent. It was her neighbours who had denounced her, they said, and they requested that she not be permitted to return. When the Bollette inquired as to whom these neighbours might have been, Giovanna said she was not sure, but guessed that it was either a female neighbour who once had called her a woman of wicked life (“donna di mala vita”) or the nuns of Santa Maria Maddalena.\textsuperscript{51} A poor widow with no family, Giovanna was particularly vulnerable to the law; she claimed that her husband and all three of her daughters had died and that she had never remarried. By the time of her questioning by the Bollette, five months had passed since her arrest by the archbishop’s sbirri, and Giovanna had moved to Borgo Polese, a street three blocks west of the convent.


\textsuperscript{48} U de B, Filza 1601, [np] “Cherubina de Grassis” (12 April 1601).


Proclamations that targeted groups of prostitutes, rather than specific individuals, also forced prostitutes to move. For instance, in 1589 Vice Legate Camillo Borghese published a decree ordering all meretrici and dishonourable people to move out of Borgo di San Martino by 8 May. In January of that year, 22 registered prostitutes lived on Borgo di San Martino. By the end of the year, fifteen had moved, most likely in compliance with the proclamation. Still, seven remained on the street past 8 May. The seven all appear to have been wealthy, established prostitutes. Lucia Mazona, for example, was patronised by the Most Illustrious (“Illustrissimo”) Giulio Bentivoglio. The evidence thus suggests that proclamations like Borghese’s were applied selectively. They certainly were in other northern Italian cities: Tessa Storey found examples of complaints written by neighbours to the Roman governor requesting the eviction of specific prostitutes from their streets. It was the most scandalous and the loudest that these men wanted out; those who were well behaved – and who were actually listed by name – were welcome to stay. Wealthier prostitutes may simply have ignored prohibitions, which the local law men were unable to enforce because of the women’s status and that of their patrons. As Storey has shown, the governor of Rome’s sbirri often complained of the fact that they could not stop and charge prostitutes riding in coaches because of the social status of their wealthy clients. Finally, it is also possible that wealthier prostitutes bought exemptions from such evictions, whether officially approved or not. Prostitutes had been able to purchase exemptions from Bologna’s brothel area in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; the practice may have continued in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Though local governors had the power to evict prostitutes from particular streets and areas, their ability to enforce such evictions – and perhaps their desire to do so – were complicated by the status and the power of the prostitutes themselves.

Indeed, an analysis of registered prostitutes’ residences over successive years demonstrates that not all meretrici moved frequently. As discussed earlier, some wealthier prostitutes lived on the same streets for many years. Such women had relatively stable incomes that allowed them to pay fines, buy exemptions, or bribe the sbirri rather than flee them. They also had elite patrons whose prestige kept the sbirri from harassing them in the

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52 Bentivoglio bought her licences on 11 February and 3 July 1589. C de M 1589, [np] ‘L’ section.
54 Ibid., pp. 111-112.
first place. Many established prostitutes also had as much, if not more, social capital and power than their neighbours, and this was partially due to their lifestyles. As Elizabeth Cohen has shown, when the pope ordered a number of courtesans to leave Rome in 1566, landlords and shopkeepers protested the measure because they worried about their resulting loss of income. 55 Economically important to their neighbours and socially powerful, established meretrici were less vulnerable to the complaints of neighbours and the harassment of law men than other prostitutes.

Poorer prostitutes also lived on the same streets for a number of years. Angelica Frassetti resided on Borgo di San Pietro for three years (1592-1593) and on Belvedere di Saragozza for three and a half years (1601-1604) (see Map 5.4). 56 Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani, lived on Nosadella for four years (1611-1615) while Lucia Colieva lived on Senzanome for four years (1597-1600) (see Map 5.3 and Map 5.5). 57 There certainly were periods when these women moved a number of times in quick succession, but usually they were followed by residence in one street for another substantial period of time. For instance, for two years and six months Angelica Frassetti lived on Androna di San Leonardo by the eastern city wall (see Map 5.4). In mid-1588, she moved to Simia, a small alleyway located in the centre of the city, by the civic basilica of San Petronio and the Archiginnasio. She stayed there for only six months, however. In 1589, Angelica moved to Fiaccacollo, in the south-eastern part of the city, and then to the old Jewish ghetto, a few blocks north-east of the city centre, where she stayed for just over a year. Sometime in 1592, she moved to Borgo di San Pietro, in the northern part of the city, by three student colleges. She stayed there for three years. 58 These women were not constantly on the run from debts, the law, and angry neighbours.

56 C de M 1592, [np] ‘A’ section; 1593, [np] ‘A’ section; 1594, [np] ‘A’ section; 1601, p. 2; 1602, p. 4; 1603, p. 2; 1604, [np] ‘A’ section.
57 For Pantaselia: C de M 1611, p. 230; 1612, p. 236; 1613, p. 180; 1614, p. 219; 1615, p. 241. For Lucia: C de M 1597, p. 86; 1598, p. 95, 1599, p. 77; 1600, p. 139.
Map 5.4: Angelica Frassetti’s streets of residence 1583-1612

Streets in order of residence:

1) Torleone (1583)  
2) Borgo degli Arienti (1584)  
3) Androna di San Leonardo (1586-early/mid 1588)  
4) Simia (mid/late 1588)  
5) Fiaceacollo (early/mid 1589)  
6) Jewish Ghetto (mid/late 1589-1591)  
7) Borgo di San Pietro (1592-1594)  
8) Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo, on Broccaindosso (November, and perhaps December, 1596)**  
9) Pugliole di San Benedetto (1597)  
10) Casette del Mercato (early/mid 1599)  
11) Nosadella (mid/late 1599-early/mid 1601)  
12) Belvedere di Saragozza (mid/late 1601-1604)  
13) Bocca di Lupo (1605-early/mid 1606)  
14) Paglietta (mid/late 1606-1608)  
15) Mirasole grande (1609)  
16) Torleone (1610-1612)

* In 1598, Angelica Frassetti’s residence was not identified in the Bollette’s register.  
Map 5.5: Lucia Colieva's streets of residence 1583-1608

Streets in order of residence:

1) Borgo di San Martino (early 1583)
2) Borgo di San Giacomo (mid/late 1583)
3) Torrone (1584)
4) "By the gate" ("al porto") [unknown] (1586)
5) Borgo di San Martino (early/mid-1587)
6) Gattu Marza (mid-/late 1587-early/mid-1588)
7) Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza (mid-/late 1588-early/mid-1589)
8) Carrara (mid-/late 1589-early/mid-1590)
9) Borgo di Santa Caterina di Saragozza (mid-/late 1590)
10) Porta dei Galuzzi (1591-1592)
11) Borgo di San Giacomo (early/mid-1593)
12) Mascarella (mid-/late 1593-1594)
13) Borgo di San Martino (early/mid-1597)
14) Senzanome (mid-/late 1597-early/mid-1600)
15) San Bernardino (mid-/late 1600-1601)
16) Case Nove della Viola (1602)
17) Stra Collegio di Spagna (1603-early/mid-1605)
18) Prato di Sant' Antonio (4 July 1605-1608)
The residential stability of poorer prostitutes is even more surprising, perhaps, when we consider that some of these streets had very few prostitutes living in them, that they were not red-light districts in which prostitutes could band together against any scandalised, ‘honest’ neighbours. For instance, when Pantaselia lived on Nosadella in 1614, only one other registered prostitute lived on the street.\(^{59}\) When Angelica lived on Belvedere di Saragozza in 1604, her neighbours included only three other registered meretrici.\(^{60}\) In the previous year, Bologna’s vice legate had banned all prostitutes, procurers, and dishonest women from living on Belvedere and two nearby streets, Bocca di Lupo and Capramozza. The local convent of Sant’Agnese and the oratory of the confraternity of the Collegio laicale di Messer Gesù Cristo had complained about the noise and scandal caused by prostitutes’ daily and nightly revelling (\textit{bagordi}), their “dishonest” words, and their bad examples.\(^{61}\) However, Angelica lived on Belvedere both before the proclamation’s publication and for two years after.\(^{62}\) Angelica’s neighbours may have reported her to the vice legate’s sbirri, but she neither moved out of the street nor received the whipping ordered in the proclamation. Angelica may have been able to bribe the sbirri to look the other way, but she may also have been so socially integrated into Belvedere that her neighbours did not report her.

While both wealthy and poor prostitutes experienced significant periods of residential stability, many did move often. Scholars who regard prostitutes’ social marginalisation as inconsistent have identified a number of reasons for moving that did not result from the animosity of their neighbours or because they were expelled by civic or religious authorities. For instance, Tessa Storey has drawn attention to the findings of historians of early modern Milan and Dijon who demonstrate that frequent mobility was common amongst the urban working poor.\(^{63}\) These historians argue that such men and women moved in order to escape creditors and enemies, but also in an attempt to find

\(^{59}\) This was Alessandra Benazzi who lived in the house of Alberto the shoemaker. C de M 1614, p. 4.
\(^{60}\) These were Francesca di Panzacchia da Scanello, Vittoria Pellicioni, and Giacoma di Prosperi. C de M 1604, [np] ‘F’ section, ‘O’ section, and ‘I’ section respectively.
\(^{61}\) BCB, \textit{Bandi Merlani}, V, fol. 106r (24 March 1603). “Non essendo conveniente che presso il Monasterii di Monache sia tolerato l’habitarvi donne Meretrici, che con l’occasione de bagordi che si fanno il giorno, & la notte in quelle contrade con le parole dishoneste che vi si sentono, & con l’esempio della mala vita di tali donne, sono à detti luoghi sacri di grandissimo disturbo & scandalo.”
\(^{62}\) C de M 1601, p. 2; 1602, p. 4; 1603, p. 2; 1604, [np] ‘A’ section.
cheaper and better accommodations and to live near their places of employment. Similarly, Maura Palazzi has demonstrated that in the late-eighteenth century, the Bolognese working-poor generally stayed in their homes for about three to four years before moving. High mobility was thus common amongst both prostitutes and other urban working-poor people. Searching for a room or apartment with low rent but that nevertheless was in a geographically beneficial area for work, for sociability, and for retaining familial ties would have motivated meretrici to move, just as it did their neighbours.

Moreover, while Bolognese prostitutes moved often, sometimes they did not go very far. Five of the seven Bolognese prostitutes examined in this chapter moved at least once to different apartments on the same street, or moved just a block or two away. For six and a half years Caterina dall’Olio lived on Paia di San Bartolomeo di Reno, located a block south of the Reno canal and just west of Galiera, one of Bologna’s main thoroughfares. During that time, she lived in at least three different residences: in the “casa” of Sdepositezana in the “casa” of Domine Francesco, and in the “casa” of Messer Carlo Englia. Similarly, Camilla d’Ocelli lived on Campo di Bovi for ten years, during which time she lived in at least two buildings, that of Messer Eredi Bolognesi and that of Giovanni Battista Fabretti (see Map 5.2). Tessa Storey found a similar situation in early seventeenth-century Rome. From the parish censuses referred to earlier, Storey found that of the 176 prostitutes who continued to live in the same parishes within the Campo Marzio, many had moved to different buildings on the same street. The fact that prostitutes often moved only down the street suggests that rather than being ostracised from the neighbourhood or running from creditors, they may have been looking for cheaper or better accommodations.

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65 ‘Sdepositezana’ appears to have been the derogatory nickname of a female landlord who was possibly also a prostitute: Florio defines ‘sdeposititata’ as “an over-ridden bottomlesse prostitute, a stilion rampish strumpet,” a ‘sdeposititata puttana’ as “a foundred prostitute,” and ‘sdepositare’ as “to breake out the bottome, to sinke or split a ship.” Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, p. 495. No woman named ‘Sdepositezana’ registered as a prostitute in 1601, nor were any other women registered as renting from her.
66 Because Domine Francesco was recorded without a surname, it may be that the Bollette’s notary was referring to Francesco di Battista Pedrini, who was one of the Bollette’s officials in that year. See C de M 1601, p. 1; Filza 1623, [np] “Officiali alle Bollette p[er] l’an[n]o 1600,” fol. 1r.
67 C de M 1601, p. 28; 1603, p. 36; 1606, p. 47.
68 Camila lived in Bolognesi’s place in in 1598, and in Fabretti’s place from 1601-1603. C de M 1598, p. 25; 1601, p. 26; 1602, p. 25; 1603, p. 41.
69 Storey, Carnal Commerce, p. 189. Storey does not give an exact number.
Other prostitutes moved out of their streets but remained in the same neighbourhood. Between 1588 and 1594, Arsilia Zanetti bounced between four streets in the north-western corner of the city, two of which she lived in twice. Beginning in 1588, she moved from the gate of Galliera to Urbaga, back to the gate of Galliera, to Carrara, and finally to Crocetta (see Map 5.6). Angelica Frassetti spent ten years living in the south-western corner of Bologna, going only a few blocks with each move. From 1599-1609 she lived on Nosadella, then moved four blocks east to Belvedere di Saragozza, then a block west to Bocca di Lupo, then three blocks east to Paglietta, and then a half of a block south to Mirasole grande (see Map 5.4). Arsilia and Angelica were not running to escape creditors: moving a block or two meant they still lived, worked, ate, and socialised in the same streets and squares. Instead, these women were probably looking for cheaper or better accommodations.

Finally, the evidence demonstrates that some meretrici moved because their lives had significantly improved. For five years, Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani bounced around the city: in 1606 she lived on Borgo delle Casse, in 1607 and 1608 by the gate of San Felice, in 1609 by San Francesco, and in 1610 on Pratello. In 1610, Pantaselia struck up a relationship with the nobleman Niccolo Panzacchi, who appears to have begun to support her financially. In January 1610, Panzacchi bought her a licence for the entire year, and in 1611 and 1612 he bought her two six-month licences. Pantaselia also began employing a maidservant, named Margareta Barona, who over the next five years purchased her licences when Panzacchi did not. In January 1611, a year after Pantaselia began seeing Panzacchi, she moved to Nosadella, where she remained for the next five years. An elite amico fermo, or ‘firm friend’ as such men were known in Rome, Panzacchi bought Pantaselia’s licences, provided her with a constant income, and probably paid the rent for the new, more lavish

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70 Where Arsilia lived in 1595 and 1594 is unknown, since the Bollette’s annual registers from these years are not housed in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna’s archival deposit on the Bollette. C de M 1588, [np] ‘A’ section; 1589, [np] ‘A’ section; 1590, [np] ‘A’ section; 1591, [np] ‘A’ section; 1592, [np] ‘A’ section; 1593, [np] ‘A’ section; 1594, [np] ‘A’ section.
71 C de M 1599, p. 2; 1600, p. 3; 1601, p. 2; 1602, p. 4; 1603, p. 2; 1604, [np] ‘A’ section; 1605, p. 5; 1606, p. 8; 1607, p. 9; 1608, p. 8; 1609, p. 4.
72 C de M 1606, p. 209; 1607, p. 208; 1608, p. 185; 1609, p. 211; 1610, p. 219.
73 The Panzacchi are not listed in Dolfi’s 1670 catalogue of elite Bolognese families.
74 Panzacchi bought her a licence for the first semester of 1610, and for the second semester in 1611. C de M 1610, p. 219; 1611, p. 230.
75 C de M 1611, p. 230; 1612, p. 236; 1613, p. 219; 1614, p. 219; 1615, p. 241.
Map 5.6: Arsilia Zanetti's streets of residence 1588-1594

Streets in order of residence:

1) The gate of Galliera (1588-early 1589)
2) Urbaga (late 1589)
3) The gate of Galliera (early 1590)
4) Carrara (late 1590-1591)
5) Crocetta (1592-early 1594)
6) Urbaga (late 1594)
apartment on Nosadella. In fact, it was probably he who urged her to move there. For Pantaselia, this move did not signal anxiety, debt, or poverty, but rather economic stability and, perhaps, even luxury.

2. Registration

While all prostitutes were required to register with the Ufficio delle Bollette and to buy licences regularly, it is clear that these women navigated between their own needs and desires, the law’s requirements, and the Bollette’s own flexibility. An examination of the registrations and purchases of the seven women examined in this chapter supports this conclusion by demonstrating that they variously accepted, rejected, and manipulated the system to their own advantage. While some women attempted to avoid registration and the purchasing of licences because they were financial burdens and/or because doing so threatened to damage their reputations, others registration and licence buying as a tool to construct their reputations as prostitutes and even to build honour. Moreover, these women manipulated the flexibility of the Bollette’s staff, who themselves negotiated between the law and their ability to enforce it, their own desires for honour and profit, and the specific situations of each woman.

Recent scholars have pointed out not only the complex nature of registration and its enforcement by administrators, but also the myriad of issues that women grappled with when deciding whether to register as prostitutes. Alessandra Camerano has shown that in Rome tax-paying prostitutes were considered to be a legal group who were both bound by legal obligations and granted privileges. In exchange for annual and occasional tax payments, Roman meretrici oneste (honourable prostitutes) could own property within the area allocated for their residence, could buy and sell moveable and non-movable goods, and could testate freely as long as they gave one-fifth of their income and goods to the city’s Convertite. Alternatively, Roman meretrici disoneste (dishonourable prostitutes), those who did not identify themselves by paying taxes, were excluded from these legal privileges. If a woman had not paid taxes but was suspected of having been a prostitute, upon her death

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77 Annual taxes were paid to the Tribunale di Corte Savella, while occasional taxes were paid for other public works. The amounts of these taxes are unknown. Rome’s convertite house, Santa Maria Maddalena al corso, was founded in 1520. Alessandra Camerano, “Donne oneste o meretrici? Incertezza dell’identità fra testamenti e diritto di proprietà a Roma,” Quaderni storici 33, no. 3 (1998), pp. 637-638.
the Convertite could confiscate all of her income and goods, as ordered in Pope Pius V’s 1569 bull. As Camerano has demonstrated, Roman women struggled with the difficult choice of identifying themselves as prostitutes: if they did, they could ensure their family received most of their income and goods, but they had to accept the identity of ‘prostitute’; if they did not, they could be free of the identity and of taxation, but upon their death all of their income and goods could be confiscated by the Convertite.

Like Roman women, Bolognese women who registered as prostitutes became part of a legal group with obligations and privileges. In exchange for their annual registration and the regular purchase of licences, they too could testate freely as long as they gave one-fifth of their income and goods to the Convertite. In addition, registration also granted Bolognese prostitutes the right to bring indebted clients to the Bollette’s tribunal for compensation.

While some women made use of these legal privileges, it is unlikely that they registered as prostitutes in order to gain them. Lucia Ferrante found that in the early seventeenth century few women brought men before the Bollette’s tribunal for debt: between 1600 and 1630 she estimated that just over 300 women did so. The majority of these cases pertained to brief and occasional exchanges, those that lasted for a night or a week, rather than over longer terms. The highest number of complaints she found in any year was 57 in 1611, approximately 10 to 16% of the total women registered. Even if these women specifically registered for the purpose of taking men to court, they formed a very small portion of the total number of annual registrants.

It is similarly unlikely that many Bolognese prostitutes registered in order to ensure the rights of their heirs. As Camerano points out, many Roman meretrici were so poor they

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78 Ibid., p. 638 and p. 664, n.9.
79 On inheritance, see the bull of Pius V, BCB, Fondo Gozzadini, 406, 7, “Sommario dell’indulto di N[ostro] S[ignore] per le suore Convertite, che succedono nell’beni delle meretrice,” (6 June 1569), which was reprinted in Gabriele Paleotti’s Episcopale bononisiensis civitatis et dioecesis. Raccolta di varie cose, che in diversi tempi sono state ordinate da Monsignor Illustrissimo & Reverendissimo Cardinale Paleotti Vescovo di Bologna (Bologna: Alessandro Benacci, 1586), p. 212r. Further research is needed to identify whether Bolognese registered prostitutes could buy and sell freely their movable and immovable goods.
80 Ferrante, “Pro mercede carnale,” pp. 48 and 50.
81 This percentage is based on my own calculation. In 1609, 542 women registered, while in 1614, 350 women did so. Given the decline in registrations throughout these decades less that 542 but more than 350 prostitutes probably registered in 1611. See Appendix 3.1.
had little to leave.\textsuperscript{82} Tessa Storey confirms this: examining wills of 50 Roman prostitutes made between 1594 and 1609, she states that 38\% of these women left no monetary bequests, and 22\% left a bequest of between one and six scudi (five-thirty lire).\textsuperscript{83} For wealthier, more established prostitutes, the ability to testate freely may have been of greater interest. Evidence from Rome, however, suggests that such women were often reluctant to identify themselves as prostitutes in their wills. As Camerano has shown, some Roman meretrici did so only when they were gravely ill or on their deathbeds.\textsuperscript{84} While more work on Bolognese prostitute’s testamentary practices needs to be done, Lucia Ferrante has cited cases brought before the Bolognese archbishop’s tribunal by heirs attempting to claim their inheritances from the Convertite.\textsuperscript{85} Presumably, their mothers, sisters, aunts, and daughters had not made use of the privilege offered to them as ‘meretrici oneste’, and had died intestate.

The surviving evidence demonstrates that many, and perhaps most, Bolognese prostitutes did not want to register and buy licences. This is especially clear in the first years that they registered. For example, Arsilia Zanetti did not register initially by choice, but rather was caught by the Bollette’s esecutore, Antonio Pazaglia, and forced to do so. On 28 February 1584, she was inscribed in the register and bought a licence for six months.\textsuperscript{86} Arsilia then disappeared and went unregistered for the next three and a half years.\textsuperscript{87} In November 1587, she was caught again by Antonio Pazaglia. Though she was not inscribed in the register, she was fined and paid it by pawning a “big, black, old grosso,” a coin worth

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{82} Camerano, “Donne oneste o meretrici?,” p. 650.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{83} The remaining 18\% left a monetary bequest between ten and 30 scudi (50-150 lire), 14\% a bequest between 31 and 50 scudi (155-250 lire), and 8\% a bequest between 51 and 90 scudi (255-450 lire). Storey states that a month’s rent in a cheap accommodation cost between one half and one scudo. Storey, \textit{Carnal Commerce}, p. 177. In this period, one scudo was worth five lire. Martini, \textit{Manuale di metrologia}, p. 92.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{84} Camerano, “Donne oneste o meretrici?,” pp. 640-641.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{85} Lucia Ferrante, “‘Malmaritate’ tra assistenza e punizione (Bologna, secc. XVI-XVII),” in \textit{Forme e soggetti dell’intervento assistenziale in una città di antico regime}, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1986), pp. 75. Ferrante cites AAB, “Miscellaneous vecchie,” b. 267, 14, Nota degli spogli fatti per le Madri Convertite.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{86} The notary was careful to record that the payment was for the first semester; if she was also fined, he did not record the fact. C de M 1584, [np] ‘E’ section. In 1584, Arsilia was registered as living on Quartirolo. The next time she appeared in the Bollette’s records, she was living by the gate of Galliera.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{87} Though the 1585 register has not survived in the Archivio di Stato’s fond on the Bollette, it is unlikely that she registered in that year since she did not pay taxes again in 1584, did not register in 1586, and was eventually caught and forced to register in November 1587.}
\end{footnotes}
about seven lire.\textsuperscript{88} Two months later, in January 1588, Arsilia (perhaps obediently) registered and bought a six-month licence, but then paid only once more that year, one lire, four soldi, at an unspecified date, which suggests she had been caught yet again.\textsuperscript{89} Arsilia subsequently disappeared for over a year, but eventually was caught by the esecutore in July 1589.\textsuperscript{90} Arsilia’s resistance to registration continued in 1590, and only in 1591, almost a decade after her first registration, did she begin to register and buy her licences more or less regularly.\textsuperscript{91} During the earliest years that she was known to the Bollette, however, Arsilia attempted to avoid registration as a prostitute.

Many women resisted registration because they did not see themselves as prostitutes. As historians of early modern European women have demonstrated, many, especially the young and never-married, viewed sex outside of marriage not as prostitution, but rather as a common step on the path towards marriage.\textsuperscript{92} Other women judged their sexual activity, whether with only one partner or with multiple ones, to be fornication rather than prostitution. Studying Roman women’s court testimonies, Tessa Storey demonstrated that women “implicitly or explicitly rejected the identity of the prostitute on the grounds that they had sex just occasionally, had one or very few partners, or that it was not their main source of income.”\textsuperscript{93} These women instead identified themselves as donne libere, “free

\textsuperscript{88} “Arsilia Zanetti nella porta d[i] Galiera pignoranda un gran grosso negro vecchio penes An[tonio].” The pawn was recorded on a page in an untitled, undated folio included in the annual register of 1587. Though Arsilia was not listed in the 1587 register, I was able to match other women who appear in that year’s register and in the unbound folio, and thus to conclude that the folio is from 1587. C de M 1587, [np] untitled, begins “17 N[ovem]bris Arsilia Zanetti.” On the worth of a grosso, see Cipolla, Money in Sixteenth-Century Florence, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{89} C de M 1588, [np] ‘A’ section.

\textsuperscript{90} On 24 July 1589 she paid one lire, four soldi. C de M 1589, [np] ‘A’ section.

\textsuperscript{91} On 26 May 1590 Arsilia paid taxes for the first six months of the year (one lire, ten soldi), and on 3 July she paid for the second six months (one lire, six soldi). Though the second payment does not total the price of six months’ worth of taxes at five soldi each, the notary indicated that the payment concluded her taxes for the entire year. C de M 1590, [np] ‘A’ section. For the next 25 years (1591-1615), Arsilia paid her taxes a few times a year, though she missed months which she paid later in the year.


\textsuperscript{93} Storey, Carnal Commerce, pp. 119-122.
women."\(^9^4\) Lucia Ferrante has identified a late seventeenth-century Bolognese woman who, while admitting to the archbishop’s court that she was unmarried and “at times in order to get by subjected [herself] to men,” described herself as a “free woman”, rather than as a prostitute.\(^9^5\) Both Ferrante and Storey argue that such women felt that they did not have to account for their sexual activities since they lacked husbands and children.\(^9^6\) Ferrante also has demonstrated that Bologna’s Ufficio delle Bollette often let young, never-married women go unregistered if they promised to live honourably in the future. She suggests that the staff did so because they, too, did not see these women as prostitutes.\(^9^7\)

Other women viewed their relationships as concubinage, which, again, they did not see as prostitution. As Ruth Mazo Karras has pointed out, the medieval conception of prostitution was based on the multiplicity of sexual partners that a woman had and that she was sexually available to all men.\(^9^8\) This was also true in the early modern period and so unmarried women who had sex with one man alone may have seen themselves as concubines, rather than as prostitutes.\(^9^9\) In an interesting twist, in fact, Lucia Ferrante demonstrated that in order to have their cases heard by the Bollette’s tribunal some women presented their relationships with men as prostitution, rather than as concubinage. They highlighted the sexual acts they had with men, rather than the fact that they had monogamous sexual relationships with them, had lived with them, and had performed domestic services for them.\(^1^0^0\) Though the distinction between concubinage and prostitution could be blurry, Ferrante demonstrates that they were identities that women either accepted or rejected based on their own self-conceptualisation and their pragmatic needs.

Still other women may not have identified as meretrici because they engaged in a plethora of income generating activities such as laundry, domestic service, textile piece

\(^9^5\) “alle volte per campare mi sogetto agl’uomini, perché non sono né putta, né vedova, né maritata, ma donna libera.” The 1692 testimony of Maria Poggi, cited in Ferrante, “Il valore del corpo”, p. 219.
\(^9^7\) Ferrante, “Il valore del corpo,” p. 213.
\(^1^0^0\) Ibid., especially p. 126.
work, regating food, and selling used clothing, rather than just prostitution. Still others engaged in prostitution only occasionally or seasonally, when other work was scarce.\textsuperscript{101} This was especially true for the thousands of women who were employed in Bologna’s booming silk trade. Nicholas Terpstra has estimated that in 1587, 21,000 females were employed in the industry, half of whom were adults.\textsuperscript{102} However, this work was seasonal, occurring mostly during the summer when the cocoons of the silk worms were ready to be turned into thread.\textsuperscript{103} For the rest of the year, women had to rely on their other activities for their primary incomes.

Contemporary popular songs and pamphlets identified Carnival as a time when women temporarily engaged in prostitution. Beginning in early February and culminating on Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, Carnival occurred in the depth of winter, when food was increasingly scarce and expensive.\textsuperscript{104} It also occurred before the forty-day period of Lent, when Christians were supposed to abstain from meat and sex, amongst other things. It is thus not surprising that Carnival festivities included parades, plays, competitions, and banquets that celebrated the materiality of everyday life and the body, and included indulgence in food and sex. As discussed earlier, the late sixteenth-century Bolognese balladeer Giulio Cesare Croce addressed one of his songs to poor women who prostituted themselves during Carnival in order to take advantage of the ribald festivities and men’s willingness to engage them. Such women may not have seen themselves as meretrici who should register and purchase monthly licences because of the seasonal nature of their sex work.

Still other women avoided registration because they feared it would damage their chances for marriage or engagement in other kinds of work, like domestic service. In 1604 Lucrezia Raffaelli had a newborn and was unmarried, yet begged the Bollette not to register her so that she could marry more easily. She swore that she would put her child in the local orphanage (the Bastardini or the Ospedale degli Esposti), would pay the Bollette’s fine, and

\textsuperscript{101} For examples of Roman women who claimed this, see Storey, \textit{Carnal Commerce}, pp. 119-120.
\textsuperscript{102} Terpstra, \textit{Cultures of Charity}, pp. 172 and 174. Terpstra calculated that in 1587 over 21,000 of the 24,900 labourers in Bologna’s silk industry were female.
\textsuperscript{103} For more on women’s work in the Bolognese silk industry, see Terpstra, \textit{Cultures of Charity}, especially pp. 166-183.
would live ‘honestly’ in the future. Similarly, in 1604 Giovanna Busoni told the Bollette that while she had sexual exchanges with multiple men, she had not registered as a prostitute because she was afraid it would jeopardize her ability to get work serving “gentlemen and other respectable people.” Both women admitted under pressure that they had sex with men to whom they were not married, yet both also appealed to the official’s sympathies, claiming that they had not registered out of concern for their future ability to marry or to find work. In both cases, the officials granted their request to remain unregistered, believing the women’s promises to live honourably in the future.

Finally, some women could not or did not register and buy licences because it was an expense they could not afford. At three lire annually, the cost was very low: in the 1570s and 1580s, the average Bolognese labourer made 100-150 lire a year, and room and board at the Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo, the institution that took in poor repentant prostitutes, cost three lire a month. In contemporary Florence, prostitutes paid between fifteen and twenty lire every three months, depending on their perceived wealth, which amounted to 60 or 80 lire annually. Nevertheless, Bolognese prostitutes struggled to buy licences. Each year, women’s payments were waived due to poverty or illness, and still more were given extra time by the Bollette to gather the necessary funds. Moreover, while fines were often geared to the amount these could pay (few prostitutes ever paid the full ten lire fine for not registering) the amounts could range from an extra two to ten lire. Finally, once registered, it

106 “Signor si che ho avuto a far con altri et ho fatto doi figli che sono morti […] no[n] ci so[no] venuta p[er] che no[n] si sapesse e p[er] poter stare in Casa de Gentilhuomini e delle p[er]sone da bene per serva.” The officials ordered her to pay the fine, but said that if she could find service with honest people within eight days they would not register her. On 9 August Giovanna did pay a six lire fine, half of which went to the esecutore Ludovico Pizzoli, and the rest of which went to the office. She also entered service, in the household of the notary who had questioned her. She was not listed in the annual register. Filza 1604, [np] “Con[tra] Jo[vann]am Busona[m] (6 August 1604), fols. 1r-2r. The case is also discussed by Ferrante, “Il valore del corpo”, p. 220. In 1604, the Bollette’s notaries were Messer Giulio Belvisi and Messer Lorenzo Catanei. C de M 1604, [np] fol. 1r.
108 Nicholas Terpstra, “Sex and the Sacred: Negotiating Boundaries in Renaissance Florence.” Paper given at the Friday Workshop Series held by the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto. 3 December 2010. John K. Brackett also notes the sliding scale of taxation amounts, though he records the cost of only one of the levels, that of “rich” prostitutes, who in the 1560s paid one scudo. In 1614, women could be exempted from registration if they paid a one-time tax of twenty scudi to the Convertite. In 1625, they could obtain exemptions by making quarterly payments which amounted to an annual rate of six scudi and seven lire. Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà and the Control of Prostitution, 1403-1680,” Sixteenth Century Journal 24, no. 2 (1993), pp. 292, 297, and 298.
was difficult to get unregistered: women needed the supporting testimonies of their parish priest and two respectable male neighbours to prove that they had reformed their lives. They also had to convince the Bollette’s staff and the Syndicate of the Convertite. Knowing the price of licences and the difficulty of getting unregistered may have led women to avoid registration in the first place.

It was not only the never-registered who failed to register and purchase licences. The already-registered, those who had been on the books for many years, did as well. Indeed, women’s consistent, timely registration and payments were the exception rather than the rule. Most bought their licences late. A common pattern was to register in January and pay for the first, and sometimes the second, month’s licences, but then not to pay again until June or July. For example, in 1591 Arsilia Zanetti registered and purchased her January licence on time, but paid late in February, and then failed to pay in March, April, and May until she was caught by the Bollette’s esecutore in May. The Bollette worked on a two semester system - June was the last month of the first semester and July was the first of the second semester. When these women paid in June or July, they usually paid for the current month as well as for the months that they had missed. So, for instance, after making her May payment, Arsilia disappeared until 1 July, when she bought her May, June, and July licences. Arsilia made two other payments in 1591: on 29 October she paid ten soldi, and on 6 December she paid fifteen soldi. It appears that the Bollette’s esecutore had caught her in December, since the entry states that he was given an unspecified amount of her payment. This was not uncommon: many women were forced to settle their debt to the Bollette in December, before the calendar year ended and a new one began.

Wealthier prostitutes, like Marta di Landi, the Carrot, generally registered and bought their licences on time. Unlike poorer prostitutes and ‘dishonest women’, women like Marta had better access to liquid capital, or to men with it, and thus the monthly rate of five soldi was both easier to secure and had less effect on their overall finances. As we shall see further on, purchasing licences regularly and on time was also a way for wealthier prostitutes to demonstrate to the Bollette's officials, notaries, and esecutori their connections.

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109 For the vice legate’s order, as transcribed into the 1586 registration book of prostitutes, see C de M 1586, [np], untiled, begins “Ill[ustrissim]us et R[everendissi]mus D[ominus] Bononorum Vicelegatus in eius Camera” (28 June 1586).
110 C de M 1591, [np] ‘A’ section.
to wealthy men, thereby increasing their reputations and hopefully encouraging better treatment.

For women who registered for a number of years, attempting to escape the attention of the Bollette’s esecutori could be risky. Because of their interactions with the esecutori at the magistracy’s office and in the streets, long-registering prostitutes were easy targets for the men as they made their rounds. In 1605, Ludovico Pizzoli reported that he had seen Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani, walking by the cathedral of San Pietro trying to attract customers. Although Pizzoli said that although she had been off the streets and in the Convertite for the last twenty months, he recognized her because she had registered in 1601, 1602, and 1603. He also knew her because Aloisio di Rossi, cavaleggiere, had given the money for Pantaselia’s licences directly to him, which he had then given to the Bollette on his behalf.111 The familiarity between these women and the Bollette’s esecutori was one of the reasons why the latter held their positions year after year - their knowledge of these women was an asset since they meant they could identify unregistered prostitutes on the streets and bring them in for investigation and fining.

Regardless, the records demonstrate that long-registering prostitutes went weeks and months without purchasing licences or being caught by the esecutori. For instance, after Pizzoli’s sighting of Pantaselia in 1605, the Bollette summoned her to the office. However, she either ignored the summons or left the city. The Bollette summoned her again on 23 February 1606, but Pantaselia still did not appear. She was finally caught on 5 July 1606. The Bollette’s register mentions neither where she had been, nor why she had failed to register, nor whether she was fined. Instead, it simply records that Pantaselia had purchased a licence for the final six months of the year. Perhaps she was fined, but it was not recorded. Perhaps, as other women did, she had pleaded with the Bollette to free her from purchasing licences because she did not have the money to do so, or because she had been sick. Whatever the case, Pantaselia was ultimately unable to escape the Bollette’s attention and was forced to register. She would do so for another thirteen years.

111 ASB, Filza 1606, “Cont[ra] Pantaselia Donina[m] al[ia]s de Salanis” (19 August 1605), fol. 1r.
3. Relationships

As discussed in previous chapters, the Bollette’s biannual proclamations specifically prohibited other people from buying prostitutes’ licences unless they had obtained advance permission to do so. Though most prostitutes did not get these permissions, the practice was nevertheless extremely common. It was in the magistracy’s interest to accept payments made by third-parties; here again we see the pragmatism and flexibility of its operation. Experience showed that many women preferred to have other people represent them at the Bollette; allowing them to do so brought funds into the office without the hassle of searching for, citing, and questioning those who otherwise might not pay.

There were many reasons that women preferred to have other people take their fees to the magistracy for them. In practical terms, it saved them the time it took to walk to the office, which was located in the city centre, just to the west of Piazza Maggiore. Most prostitutes lived on the outskirts of town, by the city walls. For many, travelling to and from the Bollette could take anywhere from one or two hours. Having another person go to the office for them could therefore save them a substantial amount of time, time which could be put to other activities, such as work. It also meant that prostitutes could avoid chance meetings with creditors or the local sbirri, saving them from being arrested and/or forced to pay debts they could not afford.

Family members often purchased prostitute’s licences for them as a practical measure. Close kin, especially those they lived with, benefitted from the profits of prostitution and were free and accessible helpers. As shown in Chapter Four, it was not uncommon for mothers to pay their daughters’ fees. Though more rarely, children did as well. For seven years Arsilia Zanetti’s son, Giovanni Battista di Zanetti, bought her licences.

112 See, for example, Filza 1602, [np] “Bando sopra l’Officio delle Bollette, & presentationi de Forastieri, Cameranti, Hosti, Tavernieri, e Meretrici,” (28 and 29 June 1602).

113 For cases of families in other northern Italian cities who survived on the profits of their mothers’ and daughters’ involvement in prostitution, see D’Amico, “Shameful Mother”; Cohen, “Back Talk,” pp. 103-104; Storey, Carnal Commerce, especially Chapter Six: “Becoming a Prostitute”.

114 This was in 1593, 1594, 1597-1600, and 1603. The 1595 and 1596 annual registers are not included in the Archivio di Stato’s deposit on the Bollette. Given the pattern, it is probably that he paid her taxes in those years. Giovanni Battista paid his mother’s taxes in two six-month blocks in 1593, made four of her five payments in 1594, one of her four in 1597, one of her three in 1598, two of her three in 1599, one of her four in 1600, and one of her four in 1603. C de M 1593, [np] ‘A’ section; 1594, [np] ‘A’ section; 1597, p. 58; 1598, p. 48; 1599, p. 3; 1600, p. 4; 1603, p. 5.
not record the mediator’s relationship to the prostitute, in Arsilia and Giovanni Battista’s case, they clearly noted that he was her son (“filius [dictam] Arsiliam”). Though his age was never recorded, in 1597 he was described as “the boy Giovanni Battista, her son” (“Giovanni Battista puer eius filius”), suggesting his youth. Prostitution was often an important source of income for families, especially for single-parent families like Arsilia’s. Children and parents thus were employed to preserve what little financial resources the family had by registering and buying licences for women in an effort to avoid fines and to keep good relations with the Bollette’s staff.

Women also employed other prostitutes and local women to represent them at the Bollette’s office. Some of these women were friends who were looking to earn a little extra income or to trade favours, while others were local go-betweens. In 1587 two women, Giacoma, the wife of Giovanni Matteo the shoemaker, and Maria Blassi, a silk worker (bavelina), travelled to the Bollette and purchased Lucia Colieva’s licences. The widow Lucrezia di Bonvicini purchased Angelica Frassetti’s licences six times over two years. None of these women themselves registered as prostitutes. In 1602 Arsilia Zanetti and Anastasia Galassina both lived in the ‘casa’ of Orlando Orlandi on Casette del Mercato. It is unclear whether Arsilia was Anastasia’s landlord, but she was certainly her elder: before that year Anastasia had never registered, while Arsilia had been registering for over fifteen years. As a reflection of their unequal relationship, which placed Arsilia above the younger woman because of her experience, it was Anastasia who travelled to the Bollette and registered both of them. Having other women represent them was practical and helped to knit these women into their neighbourhoods through financial and convivial relationships.

Pragmatism was not the only reason that women had others represent them at the Bollette. They also sought to build their honour by demonstrating their wealth and their connections to men, especially stable, elite clients, and their wealth. In contemporary Rome, prostitutes referred to such long-term clients as amici fermi, or “firm friends.” For the amici, such relationships allowed them to embellish their status by demonstrating that they could

115 This is with the exception of 1598 and 1600, when he was identified by the surname di Zanetti.
116 C de M 1597, p. 59.
117 For Giacoma and Maria Blassi, see C de M 1587, [np] ‘L’ section. Florio defines a ‘bavellaro’ as “a picker of raw silk”. Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, p. 57.
118 C de M 1599, p. 2; 1600, p. 3.
119 C de M 1602, p. 5 for both women. Anastasia’s first registration was also her last; an undated note under her name reports her death (“si e a[n]data con dio”).
keep a refined prostitute, which entailed sheltering, dressing, and maintaining her. For prostitutes, both wealthy and of more meagre status, this arrangement provided a measure of economic security, sometimes even luxury, social capital, and companionship. While early modern women’s honour was based primarily on chastity or sexual fidelity, recent scholarship has shown that it was not based solely on these things. Social rank, wealth, and occupation added or diminished from women’s honour as it did for men, though to different degrees. So too did the social and economic relationships they maintained in their neighbourhoods and with honourable, wealthy men. Proclaiming respectability was especially important for prostitutes since they were seen as less honourable than most women due to their sexual activity out of marriage and, often, with multiple men.

Honour and reputation were built or reduced through public, visible performances. As Elizabeth Cohen has shown, Roman prostitutes could, and did, defend their honour by taking to court men and women who burned or left slanderous graffiti on their doors.Prostitutes in Bologna also made visible their wealth and status, and thus their respectability and honour, by having their long-term clients or – as is more likely in the case of elites – their retainers or servants visit the Bollette to purchase their licences. The Bollette’s office was a public place where a multitude of people went each day – and repeatedly over the months – to register themselves or others as foreigners, as innkeepers, or as prostitutes. Registration and payments were public acts: men and women were seen entering the Bollette’s office, we can imagine them standing in line, greeting and trading gossip with friends, associates, and neighbours, staring at the retainers or servants of elite men who also stood in line, and listening in on conversations between women, men, and the Bollette’s notaries. By having a long-term, wealthy client purchase her licence at the Bollette, even through a servant, a woman associated herself with his power and financial stability, and


122 Cohen, “Honor and Gender.”
could thereby increase or sustain her social capital within her neighbourhood, encourage better treatment from the Bollette’s men, or even attract other wealthier, higher-status clients.

During her 22 years of registration, the wealthiest and most established of the women examined in this chapter, Marta di Landi, the Carrot, was never once recorded as going to the Bollette. Instead, she had her elite patrons do so, though most likely it was the patron’s servant or retainer who made the payment at the Bollette in the name of the patron. Chief amongst such elite patrons was Magnificent Lord (“Magnifico Domine”) Alessandro Fabretti. In the early seventeenth century, members of the Fabretti family served on two of Bologna’s oldest magistracies, the Tribunes of the People (Tribunale delle Plebe) and the Masters of the Guilds (Massari delle Arte). For ten years Fabretti was recorded as purchasing Marta’s licences by the semester. On one occasion, Fabretti had the Bollette’s esecutore, Ludovico Pizzoli, bring in Marta’s fees for him. In January 1601, Pompeo di Ghelli, one of the Bollette’s officials from the previous year, bought Marta a licence for the entire year. It is possible that he did so because he had a relationship of his own with Marta, yet given that Fabretti had been buying her licences for the previous three years and would do so for the next six, it is more likely that the official was doing a favour for the powerful patrician.

Like wealthier prostitutes, mid- and low-status ones also had long-term relationships with men, though they were of the working poor. Although they could not benefit from the

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123 Though by the turn of the seventeenth century these positions were more honorific than actually powerful, they nevertheless reflect the high status of the Fabretti family. In 1607, Flaminio Fabretti served on the Tribunale delle Plebe for the Stiera quarter, while in 1610 Domenico Fabretti represented the goldsmith’s guild on the Massari delle Arte and in 1612 Giovanni Fabretti did so for the parchment maker’s guild. Nomi, cognomi e stemmi dei Signori di Collegio (Tribuni della Plebe e Massari delle Arti) dall’ultimo quadrimestre 1583 al primo quadrimestre del 1618. BCB, ms. B 4266, http://badigit.comune.bologna.it/books/B4266/scorri.asp. Pp. 168, 198, and 215 respectively. The Fabretti are not listed in Pompeo Scipione Dolfi’s 1670 catalogue of Bolognese noble families. Dolfi, Cronologia delle famiglie nobili di Bologna.

124 C de M 1598, p. 102; 1599, p. 86; 1600, p. 149; 1601, p. 149; 1602, p. 132; 1603, p. 145; 1604, [np] ‘M’ section; 1605, p. 178; 1606, p. 182; 1607, p. 181; 1608, p. 169.


protection and wealth that elite amici brought, these relationships offered them increased financial stability, perhaps some affection, and even honour through monogamy. Lucia Ferrante uncovered the case of Isabetta Negri who in 1606 brought Giovanni Battista Agucchi before the Bollette’s tribunal for compensation in the form of a pair of stockings. The pair had a two-year relationship during which she claimed that Agucchi had lived in her house and had carnal commerce (“commercio carnale”) with her to the exclusion of other men. Agucchi denied Isabetta’s claim because he said that, amongst other gifts, he had purchased licences for her from the Bollette. An examination of the 1605 register reveals that Agucchi had in fact purchased two two-month licences for Isabetta, on 13 July and 24 September 1605, though he did not buy any for her in 1604 or in 1606. For these two, part of their arrangement included Agucchi going to the office and buying her licences.

Pantaselia Donina alias di Salani’s relationship with Messer Aloisio di Rossi, cavaleggiero, also included him buying her licences, though their relationship may not have been monogamous. In 1604, Pantselasia had entered the city’s Convertite, however, the Bollette’s esecutore Ludovico Pizzoli recognized Pantselasia in the street in 1604. He recognized her, he said, because for three years Aloisio di Rossi had purchased her licences directly from him. Pizzoli said that di Rossi had done so because he was having a continuous sexual relationship with her (“perche egli haveva la sua amicitia”), even while she was having sex with other men. The Bollette’s 1602 register confirms that di Rossi paid for her licences in person as well as giving them to Pizzoli to pay on his behalf. Di Rossi had also acted as Pantselasia’s procurator in her 1601 case against her landlord, Cherubina di Grassi, who claimed that she owed her money for rent, and it was he who ultimately paid her

128 Whether their relationship was monogamous is unclear, since other men registered her and bought her licences throughout their relationship: in 1604 and 1605 Lord Antonio Maria Pavarelli bought her a six-month licence and two two-month licences (in January and September 1604 and in January 1605. Lorenzo Trimbocco, a shoemaker, bought her a one-month licence in March 1605. In 1606 Vicenzo Ferro bought Isabetta two six-month licences, in January and in July. C de M 1604, [np] ‘I’ section; 1605, p. 122; 1606, p. 119.
129 Ibid.
130 “perche egli haveva la sua amicitia, et lei haveva anco[ra] amicitia di piu altre persone.”ASB, Filza 1606, “Cont[ra] Pantasela Donina[m] al[ias] de Salanis” (19 August 1605), fol. 1r. Florio defines ‘amicitia’ as “amity, freindship [sic], good will.” In the documentation of the Bollette, the word was often used to indicate a sexual relationship. John Florio defines ‘amico’ as “a freind, also a lover.” Florio, Queen Anna’s new world of words, p. 24.
131 C de M 1601, p. 160; 1602, p. 154; 1603, p. 170.
Given their close relationship, it may have been Aloisio di Rossi who helped Pantaselia enter the Convertite at the beginning of 1604, where Pizzoli claimed she had been before his recent sighting of her. For Pantaselia, the relationship with di Rossi brought some financial stability as well as legal support.

Arsilia Zanetti had a three year relationship with Andrea di Pasulini, notary of the archbishop’s tribunal, which involved both gifts and money. In November 1601 Arsilia brought him in front of the Bollette’s tribunal on the claim that between 1598 and Easter 1601 they had a lasting sexual relationship (“amicitia carnale”), both during the day and the night, and that in all that time he had given her only three pairs of shoes, a pair of low-heeled dress slippers, and a few coins (a ducatone, half a scudo, and a piastra, a Spanish coin). Arsilia wanted what she considered to be her just compensation: that he be made to give her 50 lire “for the goods sold during their liaison and for negotiation [sex] over three years.” Upon questioning, Andrea admitted that he and Arsilia had had an ongoing relationship, but he refused to pay the 50 lire. An examination of the Bollette’s annual registers demonstrates that Andrea di Pasulini did indeed buy Arsilia’s licences at the beginning and the end of their relationship. Since the Bollette could judge only cases in which the debt was below 25 lire, Arsilia’s case was moved to another court.

Finally, Angelica Frassetti had a long-term relationship with Domenico de Ecclesia, a clothes dealer (“Domenicus ab Ecclesia strazarolus in giparanis”). Their relationship

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133 I have not been able to find a record of Pantaselia’s entry into the Convertite.
136 Filza 1601, [np], untitled, begins “Comparvit Andreas Pasullinus,” (15 November 1601).
137 Di Pasulini bought her two six month licences in July 1598 and January 1601. Arsilia’s son, Giovanni Battista, paid for the other months. C de M 1598, p. 48; 1599, p. 3; 1600, p. 4; 1601, p. 4.
138 Filza 1601, [np], untitled, begins “+ In [christi] no[m][i][n]e amen h[a]ec sunt qu[a]eda acta civilia actitata [...] inter d[omin[a] Arsilia[m] de Zanetu[s],” fol. 3r. (20 November 1601).
139 For Domenico’s occupation, see C de M 1589, [np] ‘A’ section. Shona Kelly Wray translates strazarolus as “a clothes dealer.” Wray, Communities and Crisis, p. 24. Florio defines a ‘gippiatura’ (also
demonstrates the financial benefits and stability that prostitutes could earn through such liaisons. For ten years, Domenico registered and bought Angelica’s licences without fail.\footnote{140} While the nature of their relationship was never identified in the registries, it is clear that they were very close.\footnote{141} During their documented relationships, Angelica lived on seven different streets located in different parts of the city, and still Domenico continued buy her licences (see Map 5.4). He clearly was an adult, since the notaries listed his occupation. It is possible that Domenico was Angelica’s lover, procurer, or both. Whatever the case, he appears to have been financially stable, since he always bought Angelica’s licences by the semester.

When Angelica’s relationship with Domenico came to an end in 1592, a new man began buying her licences: “Messer” Achille Frassetti.\footnote{142} The annual registers provide neither an occupation nor a residence for Achille, but he may have been her son or other kin: like Arsilia Zanetti’s son, Giovanni Battista, Achille was recorded with the same surname as Angelica. For two years Angelica continued to live on Borgo di San Pietro and Achille bought her licences by the semester, suggesting that she retained some wealth, or that he had some.\footnote{143} We can only guess as to what happened during 1595 and 1596 since the registers are not included in the Archivio di Stato’s fond on the Bollette. However, on 10 November 1596, Angelica entered the Casa del San Paolo del Soccorso, a charitable enclosure for poor, repentant prostitutes and abused wives.\footnote{144} Without the financial stability and support that Domenico had given her, and perhaps with only the help of Achille, Angelica’s fortunes had probably run out, forcing her to enter San Paolo out of poverty.

Though meretrici like Isabetta, Arsilia, Pantaselia, and Angelica could not claim honour because of their connections to elite men, their long-term relationships provided

called ‘giubba’) as “also a kind of worke or fashion that tailors use.” Florio, \textit{Queen Anna’s new world of words}, p. 211. Domenico’s name was usually rendered in Latin in the annual registers as “Domenicus ab ecclesia,” but I have translated it into the vernacular Italian so that it parallels the names of the other people discussed.\footnote{140} C de M 1583, [np] ‘A’ section; 1584, [np] ‘A’ section; 1586, [np] ‘A’ section; 1587, [np] ‘A’ section; 1588, [np] ‘A’ section; 1589, [np] ‘A’ section; 1590, [np] ‘A’ section; 1591, [np] ‘A’ section; 1592, [np] ‘A’ section.

\footnote{141} Besides the annual registers, none of the Bollette’s other records from before 1601 survive in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna’s fond, and so they cannot be mined for further information about Domenico.\footnote{142} Domenico last paid for Angelica’s licences on 29 January 1594. C de M 1594, [np] ‘A’ section.

\footnote{143} C de M 1593, [np] ‘A’ section; 1594, [np] ‘A’ section. The 1595 and 1596 registers do not survive in the Archivio di Stato’s fond on the Bollette, so they can not be used to uncover information during this time.\footnote{144} ASB, \textit{Demaniale}, Compagnia di SS. Giacomo e Filippo, 99/6918, “Libro dove si scrivono le donne quale entrano in S. Paolo del Soccorso,” pp. 7-8.
them with some financial stability and may have provided them with a measure of respectability because of their resemblance to marriage, especially if the couple were both unmarried and were monogamous. As previously discussed, there is evidence that the Bollette treated such women differently than other donne inhonesté, sometimes allowing them to go unregistered, since their relationships might ultimately lead to marriage.\textsuperscript{145} Lucia Ferrante also has demonstrated that by the late seventeenth century, such women were treated leniently in the archbishop’s tribunal for the same reason.\textsuperscript{146} By demonstrating that they had a stable lover or client, therefore, poorer women may have been able to gain more respect, and perhaps even some honour, from the Bollette than prostitutes who primarily had brief and occasional relationships with strangers. Neighbours and other prostitutes may have also considered women with long-term clients and ‘firm friends’ as more honourable for these same reasons. Women also entered these relationship because they promised a measure of financial stability, the chance of marriage, and sometimes, as we shall see, the fees necessary to enter a charitable enclosure.

4. Deregistration
Early modern Italian broadsheets and pamphlets often depicted prostitutes’ ultimate declines as rapid and shameful, brought on by the disorder of prostitution, the fading of the women’s beauty, and their inevitable contraction of syphilis. In these works, prostitutes fall from the heights of luxury and wealth to desperate poverty, are forced to procure or beg in order to survive, and ultimately suffer miserable deaths, riddled with the cankers and scabs of syphilis in civic hospitals or alone in the streets.\textsuperscript{147} The Bolognese Giulio Cesare Croce ended his song, “To the Courtesans Who Go Masked during Carnival,” (1605), exactly in this way:

\textsuperscript{145} Lucia Ferrante also argues this. See her “Pro mercede carnali,” especially pp. 54-57, and “Il valore del corpo,” especially pp. 220 and 224.
\textsuperscript{146} “La sessualità come risorsa,” especially p. 1014.
At your age the most beautiful bloom
withers in a flash,
beauty fades and dies
from your pretty face and from your pretty bosom.
After which you will make yourselves matrons,
messengers of Cupid,
you will become procurers
of every wicked entertainment and bed.
Finally ‘on the straw’
in order not to say ‘in the shit’
death will cut (oh worthless lowlife)
the thread of the sick life.
Great boon if the hospital
can get you a little cot
in time, often the wickedness
of your work denies you a bed.\textsuperscript{148}

The multi-vignette broadsheet by the Bolognese engraver Giuseppe Maria Mitelli “The Unhappy Life of the Prostitute Compared to the Twelve Months of the Year” (1692) tells a similar story.\textsuperscript{149} After being lured by a procuress into a relationship with a genteel young man, a young woman quickly takes several other men as lovers because of her desire for luxury and gambling. Her greed ultimately leads to her downfall: she is arrested and jailed when two of her lovers have a violent altercation in the street, is slashed in the face with a knife by one of them after her release, and ends up begging in the street, harassed by ex-lovers, until she finally dies surrounded by strangers in a pauper’s hospital. Though extreme, the idea that prostitutes would eventually get their ‘just desserts’ appealed to audiences who were affronted by the women’s immorality or jealous of the wealth and social power gained by some meretrici. It also served as a warning to prostitutes and their families of the poverty and shame that might befall them.

In such stories, prostitutes are chained to this destiny: once they became meretrici, there was no way out. As this study has shown, however, this was not always true. Early modern Bolognese prostitutes and other ‘disreputable women’ did not simply become

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\textsuperscript{148}“De vostr’anni il piu bel fiore / Passa in guisa d’un Baleno / La bellezza langue, e more / Del bel volto, e del bel seno. / Di matrone poi vi fate / Messaggerie di Cupido; / Ruffianazze diventate / D’ogni mal ricetto, e nido. / Finalmente sù la paglia / (Per non dire sul letame) / Morte tronca (ò vil canaglia) / De la vita egra lo stame. / Gran favor se l’Hospitale, / Di mandarvi il cataletto / Può haver tempo; spesso il male / Vos’opra vi niega il letto.” Croce, “Per le cortegiane che vanno” (1605) fol. 5r-v.
\textsuperscript{149}Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, “La vita infelice della meretrice compartita ne dodeci mesi dell’anno lunario che non falla dato in luce da Veridico astrologo” (1692). Museo della Città di Bologna, 2470 (rep. 1/425) http://collezioni.genusbononiae.it/products/dettaglio/8075
\end{flushleft}
They manoeuvred between social and legal constraints and made use of the opportunities available to them: negotiating with the Bollette’s staff, constructing stable relationships with clients, forming alliances with neighbours, constructing honourable reputations for themselves, and leaving prostitution by making marriages, entering service, or leaving the city completely.

Yet what about long-registering prostitutes, those who registered and purchased licences for ten, twenty, or thirty years? Did they face increased social and legal constraints because of their time in the profession, because of their reputations with their neighbours and the Bollette’s staff? How might their age have helped or hindered them? Might options have been available to them that were not available to younger women, especially those who had just immigrated to the city or who had just started registering?

Though it was relatively easy to get into the Bollette’s register, it was much more difficult to get out of it, and this was especially true for long-registering prostitutes. Because they had lived and worked in the city for so long, it was harder for them to hide from the Bollette’s staff who, as in the case of Pantaselia Donina, alias di Salani, could identify the women by sight or tap into the local gossip networks to glean information about their whereabouts. The notaries and the esecutori were always suspicious of women who ceased to buy licences, but may have been even more so of long-registering prostitutes. Such women had, after all, sustained themselves through sex work for many years and they had built up relationships with local men, other prostitutes, go-betweens, and inn-keepers during this time. The Bollette’s suspicions were also motivated by economic concerns: fewer registrants meant the collection of fewer fees and fines and thus smaller wages. The Convertite was similarly keen that women should continue to register and buy licences, since the nuns received a portion of fines and stood to inherit a portion of whatever the women had at the time of their deaths. In fact, the signature of the Convertite’s procurator was required before women could be removed from the books, and failure to do so could

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150 Lucia Ferrante also makes this argument based upon evidence from the Bolognese Archbishop’s court and the Ufficio delle Bollette in the seventeenth century. However, she does not consider the boundaries and opportunities faced by women who registered with the Bollette for many years. Ferrante, “Il valore,” pp. 208-209.
bring a fine of 200 gold scudi to the Bollette’s notary. For the women, this meant increased attention from the Bollette, making it more difficult to escape registration.

Even in the case of death, the Bollette’s staff was careful to investigate, confirm, and document the passing. When Caterina dall’Olio died in 1607, for instance, the notary recorded in the annual register where she was buried (San Tommaso del Mercato, her parish church), the fact that the Convertite had received her goods, and the date. On 14 November 1604, Ludovico Pizzoli, the Bollette’s esecutore, reported Giovanna di Beccari Romagnola’s death. The notary recorded in the annual register that she was buried on 15 November in her parish church, Santa Maria Maggiore, located just north-west of the city centre, by the Reno canal. Investigating, and then documenting deaths not only put their own minds to rest, but also helped them avoid disputes with the Convertite.

One option that was open to women who had registered for many years was marriage. Prostitutes who made marriages were to be automatically deregistered since any sex that they had outside of marriage constituted the sin of adultery. The Bollette, and the civic government by extension, could not allow wives to be licit prostitutes. As discussed in previous chapters, it was not uncommon for prostitutes to marry. In 1604, the marriages of 32 women were recorded in the annual register, while in 1614, eleven were recorded. Certainly, these are not large numbers, but they represent only the marriages that were reported. Women who had registered for only a year or two may have been able to evade the Bollette’s notice by blending into their neighbourhoods as married women, while others may have left the city. Lucia Colieva had registered for 26 years when she married in 1608. Camilla d’Ocelli had done so for sixteen years when she married Augusto Bargelisi in

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151 Filza 1608, [np], “Monialium Convertitam Bononiae,” (22 January 1608); Filza 1623, [np] begins “Comandiamo à voi SS. Vificiale è Notarij dell’Officio delle Bolette di questa Città di Bologna” (20 February 1623). A copy of the latter order also exists in the 1625 filza.
153 “Die 14 Novembr[is] obit Die 15 tumulatur in eccl[es]ia S[anc]te Marie maioris ut Lud[ovicu]s exe[q][u][to][r][e] dixit. +.” C de M 1604, [np] ‘G’ section. Six months previously, Giovanna had moved to Crocetta, and so Santa Maria Maggiore was her parish church. Giovanna registered in 1600, 1601, and 1603. She was not registered in 1602. C de M 1600, p. 84; 1601, p. 68; 1603, p. 198 (as “Zana Beccari”)
154 An undated document in the Bollette’s 1614 filza states that women who did not live with their husbands could be inscribed in the registers if they were caught with a lover at night by the esecutore. However, they could not be licenced. Though undated, the document cites another law from 1609, so it was composed after that year. Filza 1614, [np] begins “Ex statuto Bollettarum sub Rub[rica] De lupanari[bus] meretricib[us] et lenonib[us] fol[io] 8,” fol. 2r.
155 The name of Lucia’s husband was not noted in the register. Further research in the 1608 filza may locate a record that names her husband. C de M 1608, p. 137.
Both Lucrezia Selva and Francesca Liprandi married after eighteen years of registration. Though they had spent lengthy periods in prostitution, they were still marriageable, at least to some men: of these four women, only the occupation of Lucrezia Selva’s groom, Bartolomeo Fattino, was noted in the annual register; he worked with sulphur (solfanario), a very low status occupation. The husbands of the other women may have been similarly low in status. While Lucrezia and Camilla, the women whose husband’s names were recorded, may have had relationships with the men before their marriages, neither was recorded as purchasing their licences before their marriages.

Not only had these women been involved in prostitution for a long time, they were also older than many new brides. The Bollette did not note the women’s ages in the annual registers, and it began to document the ages of those it questioned only in the 1610s, so we cannot be sure exactly how old the women were. However, evidence from seventeenth-century Rome and Amsterdam indicates that most prostitutes were in their early twenties, and that they were, on average, 21 when they entered the sex trade. If we accept that most Bolognese women were around the age of twenty when they began registering, then Lucia married around age 46, Camilla around 36, and Lucrezia and Francesca around 28. In northern Italian cities, working poor women generally married for the first time in their late teens and early twenties, giving them time to accumulate enough money and goods for a dowry. These women were thus much older than many newly married women. However, it was not uncommon for older women to marry. Mortality rates meant that men and women often found themselves widowed and thus marrying a second or even a third time later in life, even if the women were past their fertility, as these women probably were.

Why were these women attractive to suitors? Economics surely played a role. With two incomes, however tenuous, a couple would have had more economic security than a

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156 Bargelisi’s occupation was not documented. Filza 1603, [np], untitled, begins “Io infrascritto Curato d[i] S[an] Leonardo faccio fede come 2 Aprile 1603” (undated).

157 Lucrezia married in her parish church, Santa Caterina di Strada Maggiore. C de M 1607, p. 159; 1603, p. 70 respectively.

158 Cornelio Duzola bought Lucrezia’s licences for the first semester of 1606, and Michaele Filippi di Cursini paid her taxes for the remainder of 1606 and for 1607. Her marriage to Bartolomeo was noted on 12 December 1607. C de M 1606, p. 156; 1607, p. 159. In the years before Camilla married Augusto, she was the only one to pay her taxes. C de M 1600, p. 24; 1601, p. 26; 1602, p. 25; 1603, p. 41. Her marriage occurred on 2 April 1603.

159 Storey’s analysis was based on parish censuses, while van de Pol’s was based on arrest records. Storey, Carnal Commerce, p. 127; van de Pol, The Burgher and the Whore, p. 142.

160 For Venice, see Chojnacka, Working Women, p. 145, n. 2.
single person. Moreover, these women brought dowries with them, composed either of money they had saved, money given to them by their amanti, or a mixture. Stefano D’Amico reveals the case of a young Milanese prostitute named Margareta Visconti who became the concubine of an elite man after he gave her jewels and promised that he would find her a husband. Margareta’s lover made good on his promise to find her a man, a wine seller, though she refused to marry him.\(^{161}\) The elite or wealthy clients of Bolognese prostitutes like Lucia Colieva may have promised dowries as part of their arrangements, or provided them when the women faced crises or when they became troublesome.\(^ {162}\) Whatever the case, these dowries surely would have attracted working poor men ready to take on wives with a long history in prostitution. Moreover, working-poor men may have seen marrying the meretrici of noble or wealthy men as adding to their own honour, since (at least in theory) they now had permanent and isolated access to a woman who had been selected by elite men and who had kept herself only for their use. While long-registering prostitutes had to navigate the constrictions placed on them because of their work and their age, and perhaps had to accept grooms who were of lesser status than the men they had generally had relationships with, they nevertheless were able to make marriages that brought them more economic security than if they remained alone, especially as they aged and were less able to compete with younger prostitutes.

A second option open to women who had registered for many years was entrance into one of the city’s charitable institutions. For wealthier prostitutes, there was the Carmelite convent of Santi Giacomo e Filippo. The Convertite, as it was known, was founded in 1559 to shelter repentant prostitutes who were willing to leave the world, accept enclosure, and devote their lives to prayer.\(^ {163}\) The dowry required to enter the convent was very high: in 1663, the average required dowry was 1, 400 lire.\(^ {164}\) Lucia Ferrante states that at the time, the average dowry in Bologna was 600-650 lire.\(^ {165}\) The possibility of becoming a


\(^{162}\) Lucia’s groom is not named in the note on her entry. Two years before her marriage, two elites, Lord Pietro Machiavelli and Lord Ottavio Sangatti purchased her licences, while one year previously a man named Giovanni Vergnani had done so. Any of these men may have provided her with a dowry.

\(^{163}\) For more on Bologna’s Convertite, see Chapter Three. See also Gabriella Zarri, “I monasteri femminili a Bologna tra il XIII e il XVII secolo,” Atti e memorie della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Province di Romagna n.s. 24 (1973): 141 and 180; Ferrante, “Honor Regained,” pp. 47 and 65. On the increasingly punitive nature of the Convertite, see Terpstra, Cultures of Charity, pp. 256-257.


\(^{165}\) Ibid., pp. 60-62.
professed nun at the Convertite was thus open only to women with very wealthy amanti or very generous benefactors. On 23 March 1601, Bricida Campiola entered the Convertite on the promise that she would pay sixteen lire a month for her expenses.\textsuperscript{166} Her patron was Count Cattelano Castelli, a member of one of Bologna’s oldest families, whose kin sat on Bologna’s senate, its Council of the Elders, and belonged to the Order of the Knights of Santo Stefano in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{167} In April, Castelli paid twenty ducatoni to the convent on her behalf. A year later, Bricida’s dowry was paid because she made her profession as a nun, taking the name of Sister Ersifil Corona.\textsuperscript{168}

Most women were not lucky enough to have benefactors like Castelli, yet they too could seek shelter and reform at charitable institutions designed for poorer women. Three such homes were opened in Bologna in the 1570s, 1580s, and 1590s in an effort to respond directly to the poverty that faced adult working-poor women. These homes were founded, financed, and administered by individuals and small pious groups. The Pia Casa delle Malmaritate (the Pious House of Badly-Married Women), later called Santa Maria della Casa Pia (St. Mary of the Pious House), catered to badly married women, Santa Croce (the Holy Cross) to young girls in danger of falling into prostitution, and the Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo to repentant, but poor, prostitutes and dishonest women.\textsuperscript{169} In 1596, after fourteen years of registration, Angelica Frassetti entered Bologna’s Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo.\textsuperscript{170} Founded in 1589 by Bishop Gabriele Paleotti, the devout silk merchant

\textsuperscript{166} Bricida’s earliest registration was in 1597, though she may have registered earlier: the 1595 and 1596 campioni are not included in the Archivio di Stato’s fond for the Bollette. Castelli was never recorded as paying Bricida’s taxes. Still, it is possible that the two had a sexual relationship before she entered the convent: a high-status man like Castelli may have seen it as beneath him to appear at the Bollette in person. For Bricida’s registrations, see C de M 1597, p. 24; 1598, p. 9; 1599, p. 18; 1600, p. 22; 1601, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{167} On the Castelli, see Dolfi, “Cronologia delle famiglie nobili,” pp. 253-265.

\textsuperscript{168} For her entry, see ASB, Demaniale, SS. Giacomo e Filippo, 3/6822, “+ 1601”, [np] fol. 5r. For Castelli’s payment, see Ibid., 11r. For Bricida’s profession, see ASB, Demaniale, SS. Giacomo e Filippo, 8/6827, “Libro per le Professione del suor Converti Professe 1595 sino al 1626,” [np] fol. 8r.

\textsuperscript{169} For more on these homes, see Ferrante, “‘Malmaritate’”; Ferrante, “Honor Regained”; Terpstra, \textit{Cultures of Charity}, especially Chapter Five.

\textsuperscript{170} ASB, Demaniale, Compagnia di SS. Giacomo e Filippo, 99/6918, “Libro dove si scrivono le donne quale entrano in S.to Paolo,” pp. 7-8. The 1596 register of prostitutes is not extant in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna’s deposit on the Bollette, so her registration information is not available for the period immediately before she entered the Soccorso. According to Giuseppe Guidicini, between 1590 and 1602 the Casa del Soccorso was located on Broccaindosso; this is confirmed by the Bollette’s 1604 register of prostitutes, in which Lucia da Scanello was registered as living “in Broccaindosso a muro la casa che era di S. Paolo.” Giuseppe Guidicini, \textit{Cose notabili della Città di Bologna, ossia, storia, cronologica de` suoi stabili sacri, pubblici e privati} (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1982), vol. II, p. 191. For Lucia’s registration: C de M 1604, [np] ‘L’ section. In 1602 the house was relocated to Galliera, perhaps because Broccaindosso was located a block
Bonifacio Dalle Balle, and the patrician widow Pazienza Barbieri, the house was meant to provide shelter and succour for prostitutes, dishonourable women, and adulterous wives who could not afford to enter the Convertite. Women paid about three lire a month to stay at San Paolo, a very small sum in comparison to the Convertite, where Bricida Campiola paid sixteen lire a month. After spending a period of time in the Casa during which the women ‘cleansed’ themselves and their honour, they were then released either back out into the world as wives or servants. A few also entered the Convertite.

To the Bollette, time spent in these charitable institutions was not a guarantee of reform, and they had good reason to be suspicious. Nicholas Terpstra found that most women stayed in San Paolo for only a few months and that very few stayed for more than a year. Two months after entering San Paolo, Angelica Frassetti had left, and on 4 January 1597 registered and bought a two-month licence from the Bollette. She continued to register for fifteen more years, until she disappeared in 1612. Perhaps Angelica had run away from the house, disliking its enclosed and disciplined nature, or missing her friends and family on the outside. She certainly would not have been the first or the last to run away: there were several escapes as well as petitions by women to be released. On the other hand, Angelica may have been expelled for bad behaviour. This may explain why she reregistered with the Bollette so quickly: perhaps the governors of San Paolo notified the Bollette that she had left.

The Bollette’s records reveal how three of the women examined in this chapter became deregistered: Lucia Colieva and Camilla d’Ocelli both married, and Caterina dall’Olio died. They do not, however, record why Marta di Landi, the Carrot west of Torleone, one of the streets most populated by prostitutes in the city. For the move, see Ferrante, “Honor Regained,” p. 51, n. 43. 

172 On the rate at S. Paolo, see Terpstra, Cultures of Charity, p. 213.
174 Ibid., p. 213.
175 C de M 1597, p. 3. The fact that her exit went unrecorded was not unique: analysing the entrance register of the San Paolo from 1589-1662, Lucia Ferrante found that 115 women’s exits were not recorded. Ferrante, “Honor Regained,” p. 48, table 1.
176 Ferrante, “Honor Regained,” p. 50; Terpstra, Cultures of Charity, pp. 213-214.
Zanetti, or Angelica Frassetti stopped registering. Instead, the paper trail simply stops, and like many other Bolognese women, these three disappear from the records. However, these women had been known to the Bollette for decades. Marta had registered for 22 years by the year of her final payment to the Bollette in 1613, while Arsilia Zanetti had done so for 28 years by the time of her final payment in 1615. Similarly, Angelica Frassetti had purchased licences for 30 years by the time of her final registration in 1612. If they had all been twenty years old they first registered, they would have been 42, 48, and 50 when they ceased to do so.

While it was not unheard of for early modern women over the age of 30 to engage in prostitution, research from other Italian cities suggests that it was uncommon. For example, analysing a 1656 census of the Campo Marzio, the district in Rome assigned for prostitutes’ residence, Tessa Storey calculated that 30% were younger than twenty, 47% were between 21 and 30, and 21% were aged 31 or older. Prostitutes as old as Angelica, Arsilia, Pantaselia, and Marta, then, would have been in the minority. Though they may not have been riddled with disease, as much contemporary popular literature would have it, it may have been more difficult for them to compete with other, younger registered prostitutes because their “beauty had faded,” to use Croce’s words, and thus they may have stopped attracting clients. They may instead have turned to procuring. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, some women who did such work were inscribed in the Bollette’s register and required to buy licences. It is possible, then, that even before they ceased to register, these four women had moved to finding work for other prostitutes.

There is evidence that Marta di Landi may have done so at the end of her registration period. In 1613, she failed to register herself, something that she had never done before. The Bollette’s officials sent the esecutori out looking for her, and on 4 July 1613, she appeared at the Bollette and bought a six-month licence. That the payment was only for half of the

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177 Pantaselia may have registered after 1619, unfortunately I did not examine the 1620, 1621, 1622, or 1623 campioni to see if she had. I intend to do so on my next research trip. Pantaselia did not register in 1624.
180 C de M 1613, p. 163.
year suggests that either Marta had argued that she should not have to purchase licences any longer, or that she did not have enough money to do so for an entire year. Her change in status seems also to be reflected by the fact that she went to the Bollette in person: in all of Marta’s years of registration she had never done so. The next year, 1614, Marta’s name was inscribed in the register, but she did not purchase any licences. The entry is simply blank. However, she seems to have still been around: Francesca di Marchioni claimed to live in Marta’s house on Arienti. By this time, Marta may primarily have been grooming young women in her home on Borgo degli Arienti, introducing them to her elite clients, and surviving on the profits.

Age also brought ill health to Arsilia Zanetti. In 1613, 1614, and 1615, the officials waived her payments because she was infirm and impoverished (“infirmitate et paupertate”). By 1615, Arsilia’s final year of registration, she had been purchasing licences for 28 years and was probably around 48. After a long life of poverty, we should thus not be surprised that she was ailing. The Bollette’s annual register from 1616 did not survive in the Archivio di Stato’s fond, but Arsilia did not register in 1617 or 1618. Perhaps the Bollette’s staff took pity on her because of her age and her illness and allowed her to fade into the general populace. They did so for other women: in 1604, they deregistered Virginia di Pii because she was visibly old, infirm, and destitute (“senex, infirma et pauperissima”). In 1606, they allowed Giovanna di Bertuzzi Romagnola to go unregistered because she was old and ugly (“in etate senili constituta et aspectu est turpis”). Arsilia may also have entered one of the city’s hospitals, like Caterina di Rossi who entered, and later died, in the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Vita or Giacoma Corradini, who entered the syphilitic hospital of San Giobbe.

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181 For Marta: C de M 1614, p. 190. Marta’s name is not listed in the 1615 campione.
182 For Francesca: C de M 1614, p. 87. Francesca lived with Marta for only one year.
183 In 1613, her licences were waived twice, on 25 January and on 8 July. In 1614, they were waived three times, on 8 January, on 20 March, and on 24 July. In January 1615 Arsilia registered and bought a one-month licence, but then failed to do so for the rest of the semester. The Bollette found her in June, but waived her payments and her fine. Arsilia’s last registration was on 7 July 1615, when she bought a one month licence. C de M 1613, p. 6; 1614, p. 7; 1615, p. 7.
184 C de M 1604, [np] ‘R’ section.
186 Caterina was also known as Sabadina de Tursi. C de M 1604, [np] ‘C’ section and C de M 1614, p. 130 respectively.
The longest registering prostitute examined in this chapter, Angelica Frassetti, took active measures to be deregistered. After 29 years of prostitution, during Easter 1612 she confessed and took communion at her parish church, Santa Caterina di Strada Maggiore. Rather than tell the Bollette immediately, however, Angelica simply stopped buying licences. After two months, the staff went in search of her. On 1 May, Angelica’s parish priest provided her with a letter confirming that she had confessed and taken communion that Easter. Angelica also had five men testify to her status as a good woman on the same letter: her landlord, Carlo Molini, wrote that Angelica was a “good woman” (“donna da bene”) and a good neighbour, and four male neighbours also affirmed this in writing: Luca di Dona and Paolo Rivera wrote their names, and the illiterate Scandiano Coradini and Carlo (who had no last name) drew crosses. Ever suspicious, the Bollette’s officials made Angelica get a second note from the same priest, which she did four days later. In his second letter, her parish priest made an even more startling revelation: he said that she had taken communion each of the three years that she had lived in his parish, all of which were recorded in the Book of Confession, and that for the three years he had known her, she had never led a wicked life (“non ha mai fatto male della vita sua”). Three years earlier, in 1609, Angelica had moved from Mirasole Grande, by the southern city wall, to Torleone, located beside the eastern wall and just around the corner from the parish church of Santa Maria di Strada Maggiore (see Map 5.4). Though she had continued to register and buy licences in the intervening years, she had slowly begun to change her life, making good impressions on her new neighbours and the parish priest.

Since Angelica had the testimonies of her parish priest and five male neighbours required for women to prove they had left her ‘dishonest life’, the Bollette was forced to allow her to go unlicensed. They continued to register her, however: ever suspicious, it was the Bollette’s practice to continue to inscribe women who had found witnesses to testify
to their good behaviour. Indeed, they were so suspicious that her name appears in 1613, 1614, and 1615 books. Perhaps they had good reason to: in 1613, the Bollette’s notary the esecutore Giovanni Nanini had looked for her, but not been able to locate her. If the Bollette ever discovered what happened to Angelica, they did not indicate it in the annual registers.

A life-long prostitute like Angelica Frassetti navigated many boundaries and constraints both during her life and at its end. In her late 40s or early 50s, poor, unmarried, and female, many of the typical avenues of economic security were either closed to her or were difficult to obtain. She could have married, like Camilla d’Ocelli or Lucia Colieva, though they were at least ten years younger than her when they wed. She could have entered one of the city’s charitable institutions for women, perhaps working for the cost of her room and board. Perhaps she fell ill and entered one of the city’s hospitals. Whatever actually happened to Angelica, the point is clear: though constrained by the fact that she had been a prostitute in the same city for 30 years, and thus was known to both the Bollette and in the neighbourhoods in which she had lived and worked for so long, and though she was old, poor, and female, there was still room to for her to manoeuvre and take up religiously and culturally approved options to improve, or at least sustain, her life.

5. Conclusion
The seven women examined in this chapter negotiated the restraints and freedoms of civic legislation, the practices of the Bollette, wider social customs, their families, friends, neighbours, and men, and their own personal needs and desires. Moreover, this analysis has demonstrated that their experiences were shaped by their social status, their economic circumstances, their age, and their social and familial networks as much as, if not more than, their involvement in the sex trade. For some women, prostitution was a life-long form of work, spanning two or three decades, while for others it was an occasional or short-term way to make ends meet or to raise a dowry. Nor did long-term prostitution necessarily impede their chances for marriage, assuming other forms of work, or leaving the trade. A rapid

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191 Filza 1614, [np] begins “Ex statuto Bollettarum sub Rub[rica] De lupanari[bus] meretricib[us] et lenonibi[us] folio] 8,” fol. 2r. Though undated, the document cites another law from 1609, so it was composed after that year.
192 “Riferisce Giovanni Nanino che la soprad[ett]a non si trova.” C de M 1613, p. 10 (undated).
decline and miserable death or life-long enclosure in a convent clearly were not the inevitable fate of all prostitutes. While prostitution was certainly not a social, religious, or cultural ideal, Bolognese society, like Bolognese legislation, accepted the fact that women engaged in prostitution for economic reasons and many people did not necessarily see these acts as leading to spiritual, social, or economic dead ends. Registered prostitutes could access a range of opportunities both while they were working in the trade and when they wanted to, or had to, leave it, opportunities that may have eased their navigation of the broader gendered and economic restrictions they faced as women in early modern northern-Italian society and culture.
Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated the civic regulation of prostitution and the broader social reception and life experiences of prostitutes in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bologna. Over the past 30 years, historical research on contemporary northern-Italian cities has revealed that regulation was typified by restrictive legislation, though often tempered to some extent by prostitutes’ social inclusion and agency.¹ Scholars have pointed to the impact of specific local political, religious, and economic factors on legislation and social attitudes, and this study is no exception. It finds that Bologna’s unique economics, political traditions, and social customs dovetailed in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century legislation, with the result that legislation approached prostitution primarily as an economic issue and that prostitutes had greater opportunities for agency than broader cultural, religious, and social ideologies would lead us to expect.

Chapter One set the stage for the analysis by examining the development of Bolognese civic regulation on prostitution from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century. Analysing city statutes and the regulation agency known as the Ufficio delle Bollette, it demonstrated that over this period Bologna’s civic government shifted from a moral, exclusionary approach to the commercial, inclusionary approach that would characterize regulation throughout the early modern period. While in 1250 prostitutes were prohibited from living within the city walls, by 1462 they were resident, regulated, fee-paying Bolognese workers subject to their own civic magistracy. This chapter identified Bologna’s unique economic and political interest in its university as one of the key factors in this shift in attitude. The city’s financial health derived in great part from the money brought by foreign university students and the university’s success was a key element in Bologna’s civic identity and pride. In order to keep students in Bologna and to keep them from

disturbing honourable women, the commune increased their access to prostitutes by
municipalising prostitution. Regulation in this period was also shaped by the political
concerns of particular Bolognese governing bodies, by the example of changes in the
regulation of prostitution in other northern-Italian cities, and by Bologna’s own experiments
with regulation.

After laying out the concerns and contours of late medieval regulation, the second
chapter examined legislation published during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries,
the temporal focus of this dissertation. It argued that during this period, the civic
government continued to regulate prostitution primarily as a commercial issue and to treat
prostitutes primarily as workers within the civic economy. In addition to the brothel area, by
1519 the civic government had assigned two new streets for prostitutes’ residence – one
between three of the city’s four student colleges and one near the centre of its growing silk
industry – in order to improve the access of students and itinerant workers to commercial
sex. The continuing treatment of prostitution as a primarily commercial issue is also evident
in the increasing reliance on cash fines rather than physical violence as punishment for
noncompliant women, and the eventual abandonment of prostitutes’ restriction to assigned
residential zones. By the 1540s the civic government focussed on regulating individual
prostitutes through universal annual registration and licensing, rather than on separating,
containing, or policing prostitutes as a group.

The short-lived and ultimately failed attempt by Bishop Gabriele Paleotti from 1567-
1568 to radically reform Bologna’s system along harsher moralistic lines reveals just how
ingrained the civic government’s view had become by the mid-sixteenth century. The unique
local politics of Bologna also played their part in the civic oligarchy’s jealous protection of
their local rights, privileges, and traditions from interference of clerical authorities.
Ultimately, the Bolognese government proved unwilling to alter radically its approach and
in the late sixteenth century rejected Paleotti’s harsh regulatory regime in favour of a return
to its own system which mixed economic pragmatism and morality more equally. It fact, this
approach expanded in the period: women were required to register annually and to purchase
licences regularly, but legislators no longer ordered their visual identification through
distinguishing signs. They also provided prostitutes the opportunity to bring their
commercial disputes with indebted clients to the Bollette’s tribunal. The continuing
expansion of the university’s student body, the foundation of new colleges across the city, and the rapid growth of the silk industry meant that there were students and workers now living in great numbers all over the city. In order to meet these men’s desires, the civic government continued to allow women to live throughout the city, though it occasionally forbade them from living near specific convents and churches who complained about their noise and lack of decorum. Indeed, sumptuary, residential, and spatial restrictions in the period aimed not so much to protect the ‘honest’ and pious from the immorality of prostitution as to reduce the social disorder of individual women who dressed above their stations or the public nuisance occasionally created by noisy and sometimes violent clients.

The third chapter engaged in an in-depth analysis of the Ufficio delle Bollette’s work in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in order to discern what legislation was enforced in practice, who enforced it, and how. An analysis of the office’s annual registers and day-to-day bureaucratic records reveals that by the 1580s, if not earlier, the civic government had focussed the Bollette’s jurisdiction entirely on registering and licensing prostitutes, innkeepers, landlords, and foreigners; the office no longer enforced sumptuary and spatial restrictions on prostitutes. It is not clear whether jurisdiction over these issues was transferred to one or more of the city’s other tribunals or magistracies. However, the fact that the Bollette no longer enforced sumptuary and spatial legislation, coupled with the general decline of the enforcement of similar restrictions in contemporary northern-Italian cities, suggests that by the late sixteenth century Bolognese legislators no longer considered such regulations pressing or necessary.

The third chapter also argues that the Bollette’s officers shared the civic government’s pragmatic, commercial view of prostitution and that they primarily treated prostitutes as fee- and fine-paying workers. It also reveals that the staff’s work and attitudes were shaped by their face-to-face interactions with the women, and that this familiarity led them to negotiate on a contextual basis between the dictates of legislation, the requests of individual prostitutes, and their own desires for profit and honour. They granted privileges and exemptions to women with wealthy and socially powerful clients and could be persuaded to let young, never-registered women go unregistered on the guarantee that they would put themselves under the watchful eye of a male family member or a ‘respectable’ woman. The Bollette’s officials also let long-registering prostitutes go unlicensed, though
not unregistered, due to poverty or illness. The majority of the women that the Bollette registered were the poorest of prostitutes, and the officials knew that if the women could not work they could not afford to pay their fees. At the same time, because their own salaries came directly from fees and fines, the Bollette’s notaries and ‘esecutori’ could be quite harsh with women who habitually avoided registration or were indebted to the office for large sums of money.

If late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Bolognese legislation was mainly concerned with the commercial aspects of prostitution, how did Bolognese lay and clerical residents react to prostitutes? Chapter Four argues that residents’ attitudes were contextually-based on individual women’s inclusion in local social and economic networks, their relationships with men, and their public behaviour. Mapping where prostitutes lived demonstrates that they resided throughout the city’s outskirts and that about half lived in unofficial red-light districts while the other half lived in streets dominated by ‘honest’ men and women. The chapter argues that prostitutes moved house about as often as their working-poor neighbours, and that for the most part their moves were not prompted by the need to escape the gossip of neighbours, but rather by the desire to increase their access to clients and other work, to find better or more affordable lodgings, or to live near friends and family. Indeed, Chapter Four demonstrates the local networks of support that registered prostitutes created and maintained with family, long-term amici, other prostitutes, and neighbours. Civic proclamations and complaints made to the Bollette and the archbishop’s court demonstrate that lay and clerical residents were sometimes concerned with the specific instances of social and public disorder caused by prostitutes, ‘dishonest’ women, their clients and amici, rather than with prostitution per se. In Bologna, wider social attitudes towards prostitutes where generally in step with civic legislation.

Finally, Chapter Five uses the Bollette's bureaucratic records to track the lives of seven individual women who registered over long periods in order to reveal the social, cultural, personal, and legal freedoms and constraints they faced and how they navigated them. It demonstrates that women made use of the choices and loopholes laid open to them by civic legislation, the flexibility and pragmatism of the Bollette’s functionaries, and their general acceptance in their local communities. It argues that prostitutes’ and ‘dishonest’ women’s lives were shaped by their social status, their poverty or wealth, their age, and their
social and familial networks and as much as, if not more than, their involvement in prostitution. For some women, prostitution was a life-long form of work, spanning two or three decades, while for others it was a short-term way to make ends meet or to raise a dowry. As this chapter shows, neither short- nor long-term prostitution necessarily impeded women’s chances of marrying, taking up other forms of work, or leaving the trade altogether. Indeed, Bolognese society in general, and individual women in particular, accepted the fact that women engaged in fornication and prostitution for economic reasons and many did not necessarily see these acts as leading to spiritual, social, or economic dead ends. There was even room for prostitutes to build and maintain social honour through residential stability, lasting and supportive relationships with neighbours, and public demonstrations of their stable relationships with men, especially wealthy and powerful ones. While prostitution was certainly not a social, religious, or cultural ideal, Bolognese society, like Bolognese legislation, understood the economic benefits of prostitution for women. This led to a range of opportunities for prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women, and perhaps made it a little bit easier for them to navigate the gendered and economic restrictions they faced.

As with all research, this project raises many productive questions. This dissertation has shown that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Ufficio delle Bollette did not enforce legislation on prostitutes’ appearance, residence, or public conduct. Further work is now needed to establish whether jurisdiction over such legislation was transferred to any of Bologna’s other courts and to what extent legislation was enforced. Evidence demonstrates that after the period of this study, the city’s criminal court, the Tribunale del Torrone, at least occasionally processed prostitutes for such offences: in 1630, two prostitutes were charged by the Torrone, one for wearing men’s hose and walking the streets with two men at night and another for frequenting an inn while donning men’s clothing and a dagger. Twenty years later, in 1650, the Torrone charged two prostitutes, whom the sbirri found in bed with three men, for frequenting an inn. Preliminary discussion with scholars of the court suggests that in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Torrone did not

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3 ASB, *Tribunale del Torrone*, Testimoni e Esami, b. 6540 (20 May 1650), pp. 142-145. I thank Colin Rose for sharing his pictures of this case with me.
consistently or systematically enforce such legislation.\textsuperscript{4} Other evidence drawn from the Bollette’s interviews with prostitutes, which was discussed in this dissertation, suggests that the archbishop’s court may have enforced residential legislation during the period. Sustained research into the arrest registers and examination and trial records of these courts will shed light on whether - and to what extent – they enforced sumptuary, residential, and behavioural legislation for prostitutes, and thereby contribute further to our understanding of Bolognese legislative and social attitudes towards prostitutes and the freedoms and restrictions that such women faced.

Another question that remains to be explored is how Bolognese legislation and the Bollette’s work changed beyond the scope of this study, both immediately after the 1630 pandemic reduced Bologna’s population by one quarter and then throughout the next two centuries as the city slowly recovered.\textsuperscript{5} Romano Conosa and Isabella Colonnello state that after 1640 the numbers of women who registered with the Bollette rose and fell dramatically from decade to decade, from 281 women in 1640, to twenty in 1652, to 79 in 1663, and to 69 in 1673.\textsuperscript{6} Even though the population was expanding, annual registrations never again reached the heights of the 1600s and 1610s. At the same time, Lucia Ferrante has hypothesized that in the late seventeenth century the archbishop’s tribunal increasingly prosecuted nubile girls and married women who engaged in fornication, adultery, or occasional prostitution, and left the regulation of established, long-term prostitutes to the Bollette.\textsuperscript{7} Though based on evidence drawn from two different tribunals, these studies both suggest that the Bollette’s jurisdiction narrowed further in the late seventeenth century. Research into the office’s records and into civic legislation from the period is needed in order to uncover whether Bolognese civic regulation of prostitution contracted still further or if, instead, it became more repressive, perhaps even criminalizing prostitution as we see in mid-seventeenth-century Florence and Milan.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{4} Personal correspondence with Giancarlo Angelozzi and Colin Rose.
\textsuperscript{5} Athos Bellettini, La popolazione di Bologna dal secolo XV all’unificazione italiana (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1961), Table One, pp. 25-28.
\textsuperscript{6} Romano Canosa and Isabella Colonnello, Storia della prostituzione in Italia dal quattrocento alla fine del settecento (Rome: Sapere, 2000), pp. 90-91.
\textsuperscript{8} Brackett, “The Florentine Onestà,” pp. 298-299; D’Amico, “Shameful Mother.”
Finally, this dissertation encourages further research into the lives of other middling- and lower-status Bolognese women to uncover whether they, like prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women, had greater opportunities for agency. Indeed, a growing group of scholars now argue that early modern Bolognese society generally responded positively to the emerging needs, and even the desires, of patrician and working-poor women, and that consequently in Bologna women were able to follow different life opportunities than elsewhere. Further research on other Bolognese women – those from professional and mercantile families as well as those of lower status families whose main work did not, or very rarely, included prostitution – is now needed to round out this picture. What other commercial or economic roles were women able to assume? What specific legal, social, and commercial opportunities and restrictions did they face and how were they able to navigate them? How did marriage, widowhood, or singlehood affect their ability to exert agency? Given the findings of this dissertation and of other Bolognese scholars, sustained and comparative research into these women’s lives will most likely reveal that they operated in a flexible, negotiable, and open legal, social, and economic framework similar to that of Bolognese prostitutes and ‘dishonest’ women.

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## Appendix 1: Officials of the Ufficio delle Bollette, 1524-1630

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>Substitute Official</th>
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<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>Jacopo Garzoni</td>
<td>Giovanni de Venenti</td>
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<td>1535</td>
<td>Giuliano Bolognini</td>
<td>Vittorio Dosi</td>
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<td>1538</td>
<td>Count Angelo Bentivoglio</td>
<td>Ludovico Manzoli</td>
<td>Jacopo (no surname given)</td>
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<td>Marco Giulio Senesi</td>
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<td>Antonio Almeri</td>
<td>Allamano Zanchini</td>
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Sources: All names and positions are from ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette e Presentazioni dei Forestieri*, Statuti, sec. XV, Codici miniati, m.s. 64. Exceptions: 1586, 1607, 1615, 1620, 1622, 1623, 1625, and 1630 are from the corresponding annual registers (ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796*, Campione delle Meretrici); 1600, 1601, 1602, 1603, 1605, 1606, and 1608 are from the corresponding annual filze (ASB, *Ufficio delle Bollette 1549-1796*, Filze).
Appendix 2: Numbers of Women Who Registered and Purchased Licences from the Ufficio delle Bollette to Practice Prostitution, by Sample Year

Note: The 1629 register is not extant and thus could not be included in this comparison.
These numbers represent women who bought a licence for one or more months during the course of the year. They include only those women who actually paid for a licence. After 1614, the notaries made entries in the registers for women who had registered in previous years in order to track those who had not registered by February of the current year. I have not included such entries in this count. For a comparison of these rates, see Appendix 3. I have also taken care to omit errors and double entries. Finally, these numbers represent only the entries that appear in the registers; they do not include women who escaped registration or were not inscribed in the registers.
### Appendix 3: Long-term Registering Women, 1583-1630

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years registered</th>
<th>Number of years</th>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Amadesi, “la Zoppina”</td>
<td>1601-1614</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angelica Frassetti</td>
<td>1583-1612</td>
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<td>Antonia Chesina</td>
<td>1583-1606</td>
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<td>Arsilia Zanetti</td>
<td>1584-1615</td>
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<td>Bartolomea Spigha</td>
<td>1606-1630</td>
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<td>Camilla Biloni</td>
<td>1583-1594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camilla di Nobili</td>
<td>1617-1627</td>
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<td>Camilla d’Ocelli</td>
<td>1587-1603</td>
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<td>Caterina dall’Olio</td>
<td>1597-1607</td>
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<td>Domenica Cavedagna</td>
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<td>Domenica Mariscotti</td>
<td>1583-1602</td>
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<td>Doratea Verardi</td>
<td>1583-1604</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francesca Giachina</td>
<td>1619-1630</td>
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<td>Ginevra di Grandi</td>
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<td>Gersomina Bargellina</td>
<td>1583-1591</td>
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<td>Giulia di Billi</td>
<td>1583-1597</td>
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<td>Isabetta Zampa</td>
<td>1598-1618</td>
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<td>1617-1630</td>
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<td>Lucrezia di Selva</td>
<td>1590-1607</td>
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<td>Maddalena Arcangeli</td>
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<td>1607-1619</td>
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<td>Marta di Landi, “la Carota”</td>
<td>1592-1613</td>
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<td>Valeria Ceriola</td>
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Appendix 4: Entries in the Registers as Compared to the Number of Actual Registrations, by Sample Year