

Justice in the Contado: Rural Vendetta and Urban Authority in Bologna, 1600

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Abstract:

A feud among petty factions in the mountains south of Bologna allows us to see the city's powerful criminal court, the *Tribunale del Torrone*, expanding its criminal jurisdiction into the farthest reaches of the Papal State. Following a year of disorder and conflict, the *Torrone* has called the principal feuders to a peace conference in the city, but it is derailed when a young scion of the Ronchetti faction breaks the truce and murders his rival in the Tozzi clan. The multiple *processi* dealing with violence between these clans illuminates the complex social hierarchies that govern feuds and apply some limits to their violence. They are also representative of a long campaign by the papal governors to reduce the judicial privileges of the hereditary elite. In the resolution, or lack thereof, of this feud we see the complicated goals of early modern justice.

Key-words: Bologna; Violence; Early modern; Vendetta; Justice

The seventeenth century dawned on Bologna as a significant source of disorder and bandit violence in the city's hinterlands had been, in theory, reduced or even eliminated as a problem for travelers. Though homicide rates remained high (about 25/100,000) in both city and *Contado*, following a turbulent sixteenth century the papacy had achieved control over the city and a judicial monopoly over criminal matters, and the wave of violence and executions that accompanied the anti-bandit campaigns tailed off in the early 1600s. Despite significant advances in the judicial machinery of princely states, vendetta was alive and well in Northern Italy at the turn of the seventeenth century (Angelozzi - Casanova, 2003: chap. 1). In particular, as Angelozzi argued in 2003, Bologna continued to be plagued by high levels of noble feuding. Powerful clans such as the Malvezzi, the Barbazza and the Pepoli continued to practice private justice in their quarrels with other noble families¹. In studies of vengeance and vendetta, the focus is often on the upper classes and nobility, whose quarrels are easier to access than those of the working classes, through family archives, chronicle evidence and a larger degree of judicial material dedicated to noble feuding (Carroll, 2006; Di Simplicio, 1994). Poor families, too, held violent grudges that enveloped generations and required the interference of central authorities to resolve.

One of the more fascinating and detail-rich cases of peasant vendetta preserved in the archives of the *Tribunale del Torrone*, the powerful criminal court in Bologna, is the feud between the Ronchetti and the Tozzi clans of Aiano, a small hamlet in the Appennine passes south of the city. The quarrel, of unknown origin, reached a boiling point in 1600 and the faction leaders on both sides turned to the *Torrone* for mediation. Five *processi* drawn from the *Torrone* in 1600, detailing ten months of the feud, point to the significance of both kinship structures and the development of judicial authority for the control of vindictory violence. The violence of these months shows how these kinship structures depended on local territory and context for stability and it sheds light on the goals of a judicial system that would rather forge peace between feuding parties than execute the perpetrators of violence. The peace conference called in 1600 to end this feud was an attempt to reduce the incidence of violence in the furthest reaches of the Bolognese State, part of what Guido Ruggiero has recently termed the «modest bureaucratic efforts» of Italian States to extend their effective jurisdictions in the late Renaissance (Ruggiero, 2015: 17). In Bologna, these efforts had a long history rooted in conflict between the local nobility and their papal overlords. In both urban and rural

¹ Spierenburg argues that by the seventeenth century, «the age of great vendettas was over, except in marginal zones» (Spierenburg, 2008: 66), yet Bologna was a central fulcrum on the major highways criss-crossing the Italian peninsula, which controlled the primary mountain passes from Venice and Milan to Tuscany. It was the capital of the northern papal state and an important territory indeed.

contexts, the control of violence required both an effective judicial structure and a population willing to participate in its judicial program. The rural Ronchetti-Tozzi feud and its failed peace conference demonstrate how urban authorities attempted to extend their control over the rural areas of Bologna, solidifying the authority of papal governors and the judicial monopoly of the urban criminal court.

On 19th October 1600, the patriarch Francesco 'Righo' della Ronchetta, was taken from his prison cell and brought to the palace of *Signore* Galeazzo Paleotti. There Galeazzo, a member of a prominent Senatorial family who was sponsoring a peace conference between the feuding clans from Aiano, was waiting with a notary. The notary told Francesco to give an account of all the men in his kin group and their last known whereabouts. He had seen his cousin Taddeo Tanetti just the evening before, when Taddeo had visited him in prison and been sent to find a good lawyer. The notary and the *Signore* Paleotti fixated on Battista, Francesco's nephew through his brother Niccolò, and the oldest member of the clan's younger generation. When Francesco last saw his nephew three months before, their parting words had been ominous: Battista had said, «I have been shamed and I hold myself one who does not want peace»².

This was a problem, because on 18th October, Giovanni Pellegrino Tozzi was shot dead within city walls, and Battista spoke his parting words as he stormed out of the peace conference bringing together our feuding shepherds. Francesco supplied the tantalizing hints of a backstory: «The peace we were making was between the Tozzi and the Righi and we the Ronchetti, and the hatred is old between the Ronchetta and Tozzi and Righi houses, for which many men have died». During the talks, Paleotti had employed Battista in his household and had expelled him from the peace upon his refusal to abide by its terms. Battista was now presumed to have killed Giovanni Pellegrino while pursuing his unsatisfied vendetta (Muir, 1993: 110-133)³.

For the sixth time in a year, the Ronchetti and the Tozzi had disturbed regional peace enough to warrant *Torrone* attention. The August peace conference was called to conclude at least eight months of public conflict that began in the foothills south of the city. On 14 December 1599, a Ronchetti gang of some dozen men on horseback and armed with clubs was seen by celebrators at the feast of Santa Lucia in Roffino, a Tozzi power base⁴. Though they caused no damage, their passage was taken as a warning by the community of Roffino, who understood them to be bandits wearing Ronchetti colours.

The Tozzi responded with threats of their own: on 21 February 1600, Righo della Ronchetta, later to be imprisoned, complained to the *Massaro* of Aiano that Giovanni Pellegrino Tozzi had fired a gun at Righo's partisan Giovanni da Monte Tortone⁵. Shortly thereafter the conflict escalated. On March 7th, Righo and a band of partisans rode out again in force to the village of Spedalino⁶. On March 13th, the day after the elder Niccolò della Ronchetta was seen conversing with bandits⁷ in Aiano, a young labourer from Ruffino was butchered by the Ronchetti⁸. After a Ronchetti *socio* was accused, convicted and sentenced to hang for this murder, Francesco Ronchetta secured his pardon on pledges of peace. Peace was short lived, and on 11 August Antonio Tozzi and two companions ambushed Simone di Aiano, a labourer for the Ronchetti, on the road through Ronchetti lands⁹. This killing prompted the court to bring the feuding clans together under the mediation of *Signore* Galeazzo Paleotti, with the intention of bringing the violence to a close. Talks were still proceeding when young Battista della Ronchetta declared his hatred of peace, left Paleotti's supervision and murdered Giovanni Pellegrino Tozzi, bringing this remote mountain feud to the urban core of the northern Papal State.

The Ronchetti-Tozzi feud involved at least 50 people. Francesco 'Righo' della Ronchetta had stayed in prison on surety during the peace talks, and seems to have been the senior member of the Ronchetti faction not under a ban, so upon the murder of Giovanni Pellegrino the notary of the *Torrone* went first to him for information. The notary dispensed with the formalities of interrogation and went straight to the nub: give us the names. Righo listed twenty-seven men including six children who were considered junior members of the Ronchetti faction. He was then asked if he could name the members of the Tozzi faction, and gave twenty names of adult men, leaving juveniles and children unnamed.

² Archivio di Stato di Bologna (hereafter ASBo), *Torrone, Atti e Processi* (hereafter *Torrone*), 3246, f. 178r.

³ These are not the wealthy noble factions of sixteenth-century Friuli, though the case looks similar in many ways. The Ronchetti and Tozzi were minor landowners, holders of local power in their mountain pass but with no wider influence or power. These are small mountain folk with vital hatreds of their own.

⁴ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3173, f. 147r.

⁵ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3185, f. 162r.

⁶ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3185, f. 311r-312v.

⁷ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3184, f. 298r.

⁸ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3184, f. 302r.

⁹ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3224, f. 275r.

The muster roll of the feud is intriguing, for it demonstrates some of the logic of vendetta and group conflict. Francesco listed participants on both sides of the vendetta according to a defined hierarchy. For all forty seven individuals that he named to the notary, he also named their degree of relation to him or to Antonio Tozzi, his counterpart. Francesco's listing is a simple accounting, but it also presents the feuding parties in a particular order, with the most active and principal feuders – those to whom the conflict was an obligation – appearing first and names being given in order of descending involvement in the feud. Francesco presented the feuding parties in order of importance – and he left off those, such as his own father Niccolò, who were already under ban and no longer legally in the State of Bologna. He carried a clear sense of the participants, their various roles, and the degree to which he considered them active or passive members of the factions. Their involvement in the feud tracked loosely to their degree of kinship to the principal feuders (Blok, 2001: chaps. 5, 6, 7)¹⁰.

Not only was this listing of participants in the feud done hierarchically in order to emphasize the rank and involvement of the members of each faction, it also indicated the wide social and geographic breadth of the factions. Francesco even claimed that the Massaro of Aiano was «not part of our family but nevertheless [was] an enemy of the Tozzi»¹¹. Listed immediately following this local representative of Bolognese power was a shadowy figure, possibly a bandit, named only as 'Il Cruccula', who lived across the border in the territory of Modena. The Ronchetti counted both the powerful and the sinister, but first and foremost the local, among their numbers. The Tozzi were comparatively spread out, and Francesco named Tozzi partisans from Reggio, Volpara, Sassomolaro, Modena, and Bombiana¹². Though they were geographically dispersed, Francesco still listed these names in descending order of their kinship to the patriarch of the Tozzi clan, Antonio Tozzi. These two clans of petty rural landowners between them had partisans situated in most parts of Emilia, counted both local officials and undesirables, and could call upon a significant degree of manpower to defend their claims. For these reasons, the city authorities of Bologna became involved in resolving the conflict among these widespread feuders.

The involvement of the *Torrone* may, paradoxically, have exacerbated the violence in the short term. The Ronchetti feud shows how factional hierarchies limited the practice of vendetta but were unstable and vulnerable, and illustrates their dependence on local context and leadership. The first three assaults of 1600 were aimed at lesser members of the factions. Indeed, in its rural context, the murderous feud between the Ronchetti and the Tozzi left the principals mostly unharmed. The mountainous area whence came the clans made avoidance relatively easy, and leading feuders did not put themselves in positions to be ambushed or attacked unawares on home ground. However, when the parties were removed to the city and the peace process crumbled, whatever rules governed the choice of victim were discarded and the young Ronchetti scion, Battista, took the opportunity to eliminate Giovanni Pellegrino, son of the patriarch Antonio Tozzi, within the walls of Bologna. In its home context, the tightly-knit kin networks that prosecuted this feud protected the principal members of each faction, minimizing their exposure to risk. When the feud moved out of the mountains and into the city, the feud claimed as its only urban victim a leading member of the Tozzi faction.

Leaving the mountains changed the nature of the feud and destroyed the stability of local hierarchies. When resident in Aiano, Francesco Ronchetta secured a pardon for the *socio* he had ordered to kill a Tozzi labourer, and relied upon his own authority to ensure that faction members abided by the pardon's terms. When he and Antonio Tozzi each pledged themselves to the city in August, Francesco's physical absence from his kin group diminished his authority, much as his own father's banishment had removed him from the membership roll. Absent Francesco, Battista's blood ran hot and he pursued his own violent plans. The central authorities of Bologna brought faction leaders to the city to dampen the tensions between the warring clans; ironically, these principals had restrained the actions of their kin groups, and when they were confined to the city, their authority dissolved. Without the restraining yoke of familial authority present, Battista looked to himself and his own rage and broke the peace (Muir, 1993).

¹⁰ Anton Blok's anthropology is helpful here to understand how violence functions in rural and semi-urban societies (Blok, 2001).

¹¹ ASBo, *Torrone*, 3246, f. 178r.

¹² ASBo, *Torrone*, 3246, f. 178v.

Removing the feud to the city also compromised the hierarchies' ability to protect leading members of the clans. The murder of Giovanni Pellegrino Tozzi on October 18th reveals that anger and revenge are a young man's game where unspoken rules and taboos are broken¹³. The Ronchetti and Tozzi patriarchs, following a period of violence that saw each clan murder a labourer of the other, tried to tamp down on the conflict by co-operating with and contributing to Paleotti and the *Torrone's* peace. Dissatisfied with peace as an option, and freed of the controlling influence of their fathers, Battista, Francesco's nephew and the eldest Ronchetta of his generation, murdered Giovanni Pellegrino Tozzi, the eldest son of Antonio Tozzi. In the urban setting, the violence struck higher up the totem pole.

All this violence took place shortly after Bologna, the northern capital of the Papal States, had concluded a campaign with other cities of the papacy and north-central Italy to cleanse banditry from the Papal States and the Romagna (Terpstra, 2008). In order to cement the good success of that campaign, which saw the problem of banditry in the Papal States significantly reduced, though not eliminated, the legates of Bologna required more effective control over the *Contado* of Bologna both in the mountains south of the city and in the densely-packed Lombard plain to the north¹⁴. The Ronchetti-Tozzi feud took place in this ambience. The officials of the *Torrone* and urban authorities were eager to insert themselves into this rural conflict, and the patriarchs accepted mediation as a means to achieve a dignified peace.

In 1600, the *Torrone* prosecuted 51 homicides, 16 of them within city walls and 35 in the *Contado*. The more than twice-as-many killers prosecuted from the countryside reveal that the court was actively seeking jurisdiction over the entirety of its territory and that it was achieving it to a large degree. It was helped by a sophisticated judicial machinery that allowed for efficient communication between distant areas of the State and, according to its own constitution, sought to provide an impartial justice for all inhabitants regardless of social station or rank¹⁵. Critical to the success of the *Torrone* in the *Contado* was a local agent in each town, a known quantity to both town and county, who acted as a local bailiff or court representative. This agent was an official called, variously, a *massaro*, a *mestrале*, or a *ministrале*. Each commune in the Bolognese State was overseen for the city by this bailiff, who was generally a local native, well known and in good standing with the broad community, though as we saw in Francesco's muster roll, they were not above the fray of local politics. They could be partisans in local conflicts, but they had obligations nonetheless. It was important for the *Torrone* that these men be local to their jurisdiction, because they were responsible for the daily maintenance of harmony in the villages, the first-response action and reporting in the case of crime, and witness round-up when it came time to bring in the court. They had to be men trusted by their local communities and also trustworthy to central authorities.

The *massaro* was a lever pulled by both the court and the feuders. Righo Ronchetta took his complaint, of a gunshot fired at a partisan, to the *Massaro* of Aiano before he planned the Ronchetti revenge. This combination of legal complaint and private attack is not unusual: Daniel Smail has noted how medieval Marseillaise turned to official courts as one of many strategies of conflict, and how litigation or criminal charges in one arena may be brought in order to put pressure on conflicting parties to resolve, or to escalate, or to submit (Smail, 2003: 89-100). The same has been noted by Stuart Carroll in seventeenth century France, and in a different context, Michael Rocke has demonstrated how Florentines used court complaints strategically to smear their enemies and destroy the reputations of their neighbours (Carroll, 2006; Rocke, 1996). Early modern Bolognese were no different. Peasants from the hills south of the mountain wanted their enemies punished and their losses recovered, as did burghers from the city and nobles with extensive lands. The court that provided this justice became, in the eyes of the court's users and subjects, the legitimate face of authority. People tended to bring their conflicts to the court, through the *Massaro*, when they became too much to bear alone, or when, as in the Ronchetti-Tozzi feud, they threatened the stability of whole communities.

The *Torrone* in Bologna exploited this tendency as much as possible, happily accepting any and all denunciations for the most minor of quarrels in order to get

¹³ On the near-universal preponderance of young men in feuding violence cf. Spierenburg, 2008: chap. 3; Spierenburg, 1998. On youth violence among kin groups in early modern Italy, cf. Niccoli, 1995.

¹⁴ Irene Fosi argues that the late-sixteenth century campaign of repression by Sixtus V was ineffective against banditry (Fosi, 1993), while Hanlon argues that by the mid-seventeenth banditry had disappeared and local militias were no longer necessary (Hanlon, 2004: 1019). Fosi extended this analysis to the criminal courts of Rome by arguing that papal justice remained ineffective and symbolic (Fosi, 2007).

¹⁵ ASBo, *Assunteria del Torrone, Costituzione e bolle del Torrone, 1488-1623, Ordini da Osservarsi dalli Notari del Torrone, così intorno alle Cause, come anco alle Mercedi loro*, 24th July 1607.

their hands on the major incidents of violence that truly interested them. By offering a visible and effective means of redress for insults, the *Torrone* was able to gain control over the *Contado* such that it was able to coerce the principal feuders of the Ronchetta-Tozzi feud to attend a months-long peace conference in Bologna; by the very same mechanism, the feuders themselves wielded the court as a weapon in their conflict, to cause trouble and expense for their enemies, and to create an archive of offenses which could be called upon to buttress their efforts in negotiating a favourable peace. The *Torrone*'s greatest weapon was neutrality, not force; it offered a resolution without bias in exchange for token submissions of loyalty.

The *Torrone* acted in concert with Bologna's political elite to extend state influence into the *contado* through a 'carrot and stick' approach. Under the threat of execution and with the power of life and death, the *Torrone* called the feuding parties to the table. The mediator himself, Paleotti, was not a member of the *Torrone* but acted as the official representative of civic authority. Paleotti was intimately involved in the negotiations, employing Battista in his household in order to keep a close watch on him, and holding Antonio Tozzi's surety while allowing him to remain free during the negotiations. This combination of court power and elite influence reveals the Bolognese priorities of mediation of conflicts and reintegration of offenders.

Bologna's political elite was not neutral in this process. By no means was the relationship between the *Tribunale del Torrone* and the nobility of Bologna a peaceful one (Angelozzi - Casanova, 2003: chaps. I, III). Bologna was, after all, a papal city violently conquered in 1506 by Julius II. Dominated until that time by a fractious and violent oligarchy, Bologna was now the capital of the northern Papal State and an important strategic outpost of papal sovereignty. Its nobility, having had several centuries of independent rule over the city, practiced traditional feudal justice in their rural land holdings, punishing misdeeds and arbitrating conflicts under their own authority¹⁶. Under early papal rule, civil and criminal justice became battlegrounds between the popes and those nobility who were not exiled following the conquest and 1509's failed uprising against the papacy.

The *Torrone*, of course, was the pope's tool in this work, a wholly original court that sought to replace all other avenues of criminal justice and to achieve a monopoly over the prosecution, by inquisition, of a growing litany of transgressions¹⁷. Upon the conquest of Bologna, and particularly following the repression of 1509, the newly installed papal government began dismantling the medieval privileges of the nobility, especially that of rural justice. The operation of a feudal court was seen as a challenge to the papal government, and the 30 years from 1509-1540 were punctuated by waves of repression and executions of recalcitrant nobles, under the medieval vestige of the *podestà* (Terpstra, 2008: 121). While the exact date of the *Torrone*'s origin is unknown, it appears in legislation as early as 1541 and, according to Angelozzi and Casanova, in correspondence by 1525 (Angelozzi - Casanova, 2003: 33-34)¹⁸. Its appearance during this critical and turbulent time of transition from medieval oligarchy to early modern papal territory, and the flurry of legislation that defined its role, its functions, its jurisdictions, and its accessibility to all Bolognesi indicate that the *Torrone* was, from its inception, intimately associated with the plan to diminish the influence and power of the hereditary nobility on Bologna¹⁹. Of course, in a judicial marketplace such as this, plaintiffs might choose either their local *signore*, capricious but physically proximate, or the more distant *Torrone*, with its offers of impartial justice for all but its long mental and physical distance from home and community. The *Torrone* needed to wield a stick against the nobility who continued to operate private courts, and present a carrot to those users who would transfer their pursuit of justice to the *Torrone*'s notaries.

Continuing a medieval tradition, the *Torrone* made local justice very much a community concern, employing the old local office of the *massaro* in a regional context, responsible for transporting information, communication and delinquents throughout the province. It also sought to make community action the first resort of justice and to ensure that *massari* were reporting all crimes²⁰. By 1563 it was able to confidently declare its authority over all crimes in the province of Bologna and to demand that all inhabitants assiduously report these crimes to their local representative of the *Torrone* for *ex officio* investigation and prosecution²¹. It is often clear that the targets of *Torrone* decrees were local nobility and their followers,

¹⁶ On the pre-conquest podestarial and communal judiciaries, see Blanshei, 2010: 239-306.

¹⁷ A good example is the *Bando Generale* of 1610, a rubric that gives the prescribed penalties for hundreds of misdeeds, in alphabetical order. *Bando Generale dell' Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Legato di Bologna. Pubblicato alli 23 Giugno e Reiterato alli 23 Luglio 1610*, Bologna, Vittorio Benacci, Stampator Generale, 1610.

¹⁸ ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 3, f. 95r, *bando* of 14 February 1541, *Reformationes Turroni Bononiae*.

¹⁹ ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 3, f. 108r, *bando* of 12 January 1542 reforming salaries and emoluments to judges and notaries; ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 3, f. 102v, *bando* of 25 June 1541 revoking safe passage for foreign bandits in Bolognese territory; ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 3, f. 113v, *bando* of 15 April 1542 reiterating weapons restrictions in public areas.

²⁰ ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 3, unnumbered *bando* of 21 June 1548 exhorting *contadini* to assist their *massaro* in chasing and apprehending evildoers and to take up arms against bandits.

²¹ ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 4, unnumbered *bando* of 26 February 1563.

such as in the repeated legislation, dating from the late sixteenth century, against loitering in groups of 6 or more and against the wearing of factional colours and livery²². Thus, the *Torrone* established itself and its judicial monopoly by providing a more institutional justice to the subjects of both the city and the *Contado*, at the expense of the local nobility who lost the privileges of justice in their feudal holdings.

The court achieved the cooperation of local communities in large part because it went to them rather than forcing complainants to make the trek to the city. Upon hearing report of a serious crime such as a homicide, brought to the city by the *massaro*, the judges of the *Torrone* dispatched a notary to the village where it occurred to begin collecting witness statements and establish the basic facts of a case. Only when his initial report was compiled and returned to the judge in Bologna would citations be sent to potential witnesses and suspects, who were then required to travel to Bologna to assist in the process. The notaries tended to record the local story as closely as possible, allowing local communities to shape the narratives of their conflicts in ways that favoured the restoration of peace over the irrevocable breaking of community bonds. By giving communities significant leeway in the presentation and definition of local conflicts, the *Torrone* was able to bring them into its judicial fold. In a similar way, the *Torrone's* patterns of punishment point to a desire for the re-establishment of social equilibrium over the meting out of vengeful punishments.

The resolution of the Ronchetti-Tozzi feud must be understood in the context of this long battle between the *Torrone* and the nobility for the hearts and minds of rural Bolognesi. In the six complaints brought to the *Torrone* concerning the Ronchetti and the Tozzi, four of them for murder or its attempt, and two for armed excursions on horseback, nobody was punished – no fines except Antonio's surety to remain in Bologna, no executions carried out, and indeed only one death sentence leveled before being rescinded upon the granting of a pardon. Why would the *Torrone* not execute the killers who left a young labourer in Roffino dead from 33 stab wounds? If not to punish criminals and remove offending elements from society, what was the purpose of criminal justice for the *Tribunale del Torrone*? For early moderns, violence was one form of conflict resolution among many; it was not something that one person did to another, but more likely constituted a reciprocal pattern. Particularly in cases of feud, the court was not above the conflict and it had to be careful to preserve the image of neutrality. The *Torrone* did not kill the participants in this vendetta, because doing so would make the *Torrone* a feuding party, destroying its mediating power and making enemies of at least one side of the faction. It was more conducive to peace that none be punished than all. Focusing on the reestablishment of peace gave communities good reasons to participate in the *Torrone's* justice, rather than appeal to the strong arm of local nobility to take a side in the conflict, overall a much riskier proposition.

Thus the feuders were brought into the city under the protection of Galeazzo Paleotti, a member of a prominent Bolognese family who had sided with the popes and had provided the most recent Archbishop of Bologna, Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597). The elder members of the clan attempted to forge a peace under the supervision of Bologna's governing elite, but the plan was derailed by the violence of youth. The Ronchetti and the Tozzi made another peace by 1603, when Battista's trial *in absentia* for the murder of Giovanni Pellegrino trails off with a series of statements by faction members pledging peace and good behaviour. In the same way that bringing the feud into the city initially drove it beyond the control of its elder partisans, keeping the faction leaders away from their local contexts and dispersing their adherents eventually created the space in which hatred could ease, and be replaced by some form of peace. How long this peace held is unknown for now.

The Ronchetti-Tozzi conflict demonstrates how early modern feuding operated through networks of hierarchy and elder authority, and how the dissolution of these hierarchies could take conflict beyond that space (often physical) where a 'peace in the feud' seemed within reach. Further, it gives insight into how central authority and the secular criminal court gained access to rural affairs such as a mountain feud. Finally, its resolution – a general peace with no recrimination – shows the complicated goals of early modern justice, which, while needing to buttress and underline the authority of the State, also needed to bind *Bolognesi* to that

²² For example, ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 4, unnumbered *bando* of 30 June 1574 banning groups of 6 or more; ASBo, *Bandi e Notificazioni*, Serie I, n. 6, unnumbered *bando* of 25 October 1591 banning the wearing of factional livery.

State with a justice that included mercy – the sponsoring of peace conferences, the replacement of execution with temporary exile, and the pardoning of crimes in exchange for vows of loyalty and shows of submission. The expansion of justice into the *Contado* of Bologna is a process that is inseparable from the subjection of the local nobility to papal authority, a goal that was by no means complete as of 1600 and would only be resolved towards the end of the seventeenth century. In 1600, however, petty vendetta persisted in the rural peripheries of Northern Italy. Urban authorities realized that a soft touch intended to restore equilibrium would give them more influence in the *Contado* than hard policies of execution ever would. Eroding the judicial privileges of the hereditary elite allowed the *Torrone* to exert control over the quarrels of peasants and potentates alike. The quarrels of minor landowners in the mountains could destabilize the *Torrone*'s attempts to pacify the major landowners. Jurisdiction over the *Contado* became an important demonstration of the validity of the *Torrone*'s, and thus the papal government's, authority in Bologna.

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