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## Sommario/riassunto

This book belongs to the rapidly growing field of historical pragmatics. More specifically, it aims to lend definition to the area of historical sociopragmatics. It seeks to enhance our understanding of the language of the historical courtroom by documenting changes to the discursive roles of the most active participant groups of the English courtroom (e.g. the judges, lawyers, witnesses and defendants) in the period 1640-1760. Although the primary focus is on questions and

answers, this book also analyses the use of eliciting and non-eliciting devices (e.g. requests and commands) as a means of demonstrating similarities and differences over time. Particular strengths of this work include the study of different types of trial, making the results potentially more representative of the courtroom in general, and the innovative discourse analytic approach, which blends corpus methodology and sociopragmatic analysis, thereby enabling the quantitative analysis of functional phenomena.

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