Starting in January 1920, the United States became a dry country. Prohibition banned the manufacture and sale of alcohol in an attempt to civilize unruly Americans (and some other reasons). The experiment had many unintended consequences, but most dangerously, it fostered the rise of organized crime and the American Mafia. History of the Mafia is a tour de force bringing Salvatore Lupo's virtually unequaled expertise about the Mafia, Sicilian history, and Italian politics into play. The book is essential reading for anyone who hopes to be well informed about the Mafia. - - Nelson Moe, Columbia University, and author of The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question. The book would be an excellent starting point for researching the history of the Italian mafia. It provides outstanding sourcing (36 pages of notes for 275 pages of prose) and a good index. Columbia University Press deserves commendation for producing a physically attractive volume, with particularly legible typeface. In sum, "History of the Mafia" is a better research aid than a narrative history. Read more.