

Murder in Renaissance Italy

This invaluable collection explores the many faces of murder, and its cultural presences, across the Italian peninsula between 1350 and 1650. These shape the content in different ways: the faces of homicide range from the ordinary to the sensational, from the professional to the accidental, from the domestic to the public; while the cultural presence of homicide is revealed through new studies of sculpture, paintings, and popular literature. Dealing with a range of murders, and informed by the latest criminological research on homicide, it brings together new research by an international team of specialists on a broad range of themes: different kinds of killers (by gender, occupation, and situation); different kinds of victim (by ethnicity, gender, and status); and different kinds of evidence (legal, judicial, literary, and pictorial). It will be an indispensable resource for students of Renaissance Italy, late medieval/early modern crime and violence, and homicide studies.

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-13664-9 – Murder in Renaissance Italy
Edited by Trevor Dean, K. J. P. Lowe
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107136649

DOI: 10.1017/9781316480045

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First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Dean, Trevor, editor. | Lowe, K. J. P., editor.

Title: Murder in Renaissance Italy / edited by Trevor Dean, University of Roehampton, London; K. J. P. Lowe, Queen Mary University of London.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017004505 | ISBN 9781107136649 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Murder – Italy – History. | Italy – History – 1268–1492. | Italy – History – 1492–1870.

Classification: LCC HV6535.I8 M87 2017 | DDC 364.152/3094509024–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017004505>

ISBN 978-1-107-13664-9 Hardback

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Contents

<i>Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Contributors</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
Introducing Renaissance Killers	1
TREVOR DEAN AND KATE LOWE	
Part I Domestic Murder	
1 The First Murder: The Representation of Cain and Abel in Bologna, Florence and Bergamo	15
SCOTT NETHERSOLE	
2 Knives and Poisons: Stereotypes of Male Vendetta and Female Perfidy in Late Medieval Sicily, 1293–1460	41
HENRI BRESCE	
3 A Daughter-Killing Digested, and Accepted, in a Village of Rome, 1563–1566	62
THOMAS V. COHEN	
Part II Ordinary Murder	
4 Eight Varieties of Homicide: Bologna in the 1340s and 1440s	83
TREVOR DEAN	
5 Homicide in a Culture of Hatred: Bologna 1352–1420	106
SARAH RUBIN BLANSHEI	

Part III Sensational Murder

- 6 Truths and Lies of a Renaissance Murder: Duke
 Alessandro de' Medici's Death between History,
 Narrative and Memory 125
 STEFANO DALL'AGLIO
- 7 'O Facinus Inauditum' (O Horrendous Crime):
 Anthropophagy in Renaissance Milan 144
 SILVIO LEYDI
- 8 Murder Ballads: Singing, Hearing, Writing and
 Reading about Murder in Renaissance Italy 164
 ROSA SALZBERG AND MASSIMO ROSPOCHER

Part IV Unclassifiable Murder

- 9 Redrawing the Line between Murder and Suicide
 in Renaissance Italy 189
 KATE LOWE
- 10 Violent Conflicts and Murder Involving Jews in
 Renaissance Italy 211
 ANNA ESPOSITO
- 11 Poison and Poisoning in Renaissance Italy 228
 ALESSANDRO PASTORE

Part V Professional Murder

- 12 Mass Murder in Sacks during the Italian Wars, 1494–1559 249
 STEPHEN BOWD
- 13 Legal Homicide: The Death Penalty in the
 Italian Renaissance 269
 ENRICA GUERRA
- 14 Butchers as Murderers in Renaissance Italy 289
 C. D. DICKERSON III

Index 309

Illustrations

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 1.1 | Jacopo della Quercia, <i>The Murder of Abel</i> , 1425–38, marble, San Petronio, Bologna.
Photo: Author | page 16 |
| 1.2 | Lorenzo Ghiberti, <i>Cain and Abel</i> , 1425–52, gilded bronze, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence. © 2016. Photo: SCALA Florence | 17 |
| 1.3 | Antonio Amadeo, <i>The Murder of Abel</i> , 1472–76, marble, Colleoni Chapel, Bergamo. Photo: Author | 18 |
| 1.4 | Photomontage of Mariotto Albertinelli, <i>Cain and Abel</i> , 1510–15, oil on panel, now divided between Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum (<i>The Offerings of Cain and Abel</i> , Gift of Edward W. Forbes, 1906.5), and Accademia Carrara, Bergamo (<i>The Murder of Abel</i>). Photos: © President and Fellows of Harvard College. © 2016. SCALA Florence | 21 |
| 1.5 | Jacopo della Quercia, The Portal of San Petronio, 1425–38, marble, Piazza Maggiore, Bologna.
Photo: Author | 24 |
| 1.6 | Jacopo della Quercia, <i>The Labour of Adam and Eve with Cain and Abel as Children</i> , 1425–38, marble, San Petronio, Bologna. Photo: Author | 25 |
| 1.7 | Jacopo della Quercia, <i>The Offerings of Cain and Abel</i> , 1425–38, marble, San Petronio, Bologna. Photo: Author | 26 |
| 1.8 | Antonio Amadeo, The Façade of the Colleoni Chapel, 1472–76, Piazza del Duomo, Bergamo.
Photo: Author | 33 |
| 1.9 | Antonio Amadeo, <i>The Murder of Cain by Lamech</i> , 1472–76, marble, Colleoni Chapel, Bergamo.
Photo: Author | 34 |

viii *Illustrations*

- 1.10 Antonio Amadeo, *The Murder of the Boy by Lamech*, 1472–76, marble, Colleoni Chapel, Bergamo. Photo: Author 35
- 6.1 Death of Alessandro de' Medici. In 'Tradimento di Lorenzino de' Medici contro al duca Alexandro de' Medici'. Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte Strozziiane-Appendice 1, ins. 6, fol. 19r. By permission of Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo 134
- 7.1 *In Helysabetam Foeminam feritatis incomparabilis Elegum Carmen*, Triv. H 1001, fol. 1r, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan: copyright © Comune di Milano – Tutti i diritti di legge riservati 145
- 8.1 Lorenzo dalla Rota, *Questo e il Lamento del Duca Galeazo Duca di Milano quando fu morto in Sancto Stephano da Gionanadrea [sic] da rampognano* (Florence: Bernardo Zucchetta and Piero Pacini da Pescia, 1505), Triv. H 314-1, fol. 1r, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan 169
- 8.2 *Lamento del duca Galeazo da Milano composto per Lorenzo dala Rota. Firentino [sic]* (Venice: [post 1511]), t-G 1 e 35, fol. 1r, Biblioteca Comunale, Trento 170
- 12.1 Alessandro Bonvicino Moretto, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1530–31, oil on panel transferred onto canvas in the nineteenth century, Brescia, San Giovanni Evangelista. © Alinari Archives, Florence 256
- 12.2 Agostino Busti, *Battle of Brescia*, 1515–21/22, cast of relief for tomb monument of Gaston de Foix, Victoria and Albert Museum © Victoria and Albert Museum, London 257
- 12.3 Anonymous, *La presa, el Lamento de Roma: Con el Credo delli Romani, Con un Successo de Pasquino. Novamente stampato* (Venice?, c. 1527) © The British Library Board. Shelfmark: C.20.c.22. (49) 258
- 12.4 Giulio da Urbino, *Allegory of the Sack of Rome*, 1534, lusted dish. © Trustees of the British Museum 259
- 14.1 Paolo Veronese, *The Feast in the House of Levi*, 1563, oil on canvas, 6.66 × 9.90 m., Musée du Louvre, Paris, 142. Wikipedia Commons 290
- 14.2 Annibale Carracci, *The Butcher's Shop*, early 1580s, oil on canvas, 23 1/2 × 27 15/16 in. (59.7 × 71 cm.), AP 1980.08. © Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas 297

Illustrations	ix
14.3 Annibale Carracci, <i>The Butcher's Shop</i> , c. 1582–83, oil on canvas, 190 × 272 cm., Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford	299
14.4 After Raphael, <i>The Sacrifice of Noah</i> , Vatican Loggia, engraving by Cesare Fantetti from <i>Imagines veteris ac Novi Testamenti</i> , 1674, pl. 12	300
14.5 Michelangelo Buonarroti, <i>The Sacrifice of Noah</i> , 1508–12, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican Museums, Città del Vaticano	301
14.6 <i>The Lamentation of Christ</i> , c. 1500, bronze, 7.9 × 5.5 cm., Bode-Museum, Berlin, 1072	302

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Acknowledgements

We had our first conversation about the possibility of doing this book in June 2008. Both of us were deep in other projects, so we decided to delay, but to collect material on the side. We returned to it in earnest in December 2012, at which point we had many ideas and a list of potential contributors, but little else. We did, however, know the drill. We agreed on a long lead-in, allowing us to commission contributors who would have the time to produce original, new work. We approached Cambridge University Press with the proposal in May 2013 and sent them sample chapters in May 2014; they graciously gave us a contract in February 2015. We set up two panels at the RSA Conference in New York in March 2014, at which six of our contributors spoke: Blanshei, Bowd, Cohen, Dean, Dickerson, and Guerra. We would like to thank all our contributors for their calm belief in our ability to create this book; not a single one refused our invitation to join the project, even though there was no contract, which we feel is a sure indication that historians of Renaissance Italy have the right priorities.

Given the long gestation of this book, it is hardly surprising that some contributors have seen changes to their lives. But it was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of one of them, Michele Luzzati, in June 2014. He was a notable colleague, quick to share and full of kindness, as well as being a fine scholar. We would like to thank Anna Esposito for stepping in at short notice to fill that gap in the volume.

Kate Lowe would like to acknowledge the great advantage she has derived from living with a criminologist, Eugene McLaughlin, while this book has been in preparation. His work on contemporary murder has led to many illuminating conversations and comparisons. Trevor Dean would like to thank the University of Roehampton and Santander for financial support enabling visits to the archive in Bologna and attendance at RSA New York.

Georgia Clarke translated the chapters by Enrica Guerra and Anna Esposito, for which we are very grateful, and Trevor Dean translated those by Henri Bresc and Silvio Leydi.