

A Renaissance of Violence

Based on a close examination of more than 700 homicide trials, *A Renaissance of Violence* exposes the deep social instability at the core of the early modern states of North Italy. Following a series of crises in the early seventeenth century, interpersonal violence in the region grew to frightening levels, despite the efforts of courts and governments to reduce social conflict. In this detailed study of violence in early modern Europe, Colin Rose shows how major crises, such as the plague of 1630, reduced the strength of social bonds among both elite and ordinary Italians. As a result, incidents of homicidal violence exploded – in small rural communities, in the crowded urban center and within tightly knit families. Combining statistical analysis and close reading of homicide patterns, Rose demonstrates how the social contexts of violence, as much as the growth of state power, can contribute to explaining how and why interpersonal violence grew so rapidly in North Italy in the seventeenth century.

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A Renaissance of Violence

Homicide in Early Modern Italy

Colin Rose

Brock University



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To Sarah Blanshei, *Maestra in Archivio*

Pieter Spierenburg, whose influence on my work is deep and abiding, unfortunately passed away during the production of this work. Though I met him only once, I will remember his kindness to me as a graduate student challenging his research. I regret that he will not be able to review this book. I hope it can stand as a testament to his foundational research into the problems of early modern violence, upon which a large community of scholars has depended for many years.

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