



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Homicide in early modern Bologna: a prepositional cartography

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Abstract

In early modern violence, location mattered, and where something took place communicated much to early modern urban residents about the people involved, the significance of the act and the likely judicial repercussions for their communities. This article uses GIS to trace the locations of homicides in early modern Bologna, Italy, with a 'prepositional cartography' that translates early modern Italian spatial mentalities into modern GIS analyses. Mapping homicides reveals much about their meaning and significance. From private buildings, streets and churches, early modern killers spoke a language of space to their audience.

On the night of 17 October 1700, some three hours after sunset, Ippolito Giovannini, a corporal of Bologna's night watch, reported to a notary of the Tribunale del Torrione, the central criminal court of this north Italian city.¹ As transcribed by the notary Cornelio Vignati, Ippolito and his squad of guards were on patrol in the central neighbourhood of the Galiera when they discovered a man named Giacomo Cavolupi, 'near the orphans of San Bartolomeo in Galiera... beneath the porticos of that church'.² The man was grievously wounded in the side, and the corporal's men bore him on a stretcher to the nearby Ospedale della Morte (the Hospital of Death, one of Bologna's two major hospitals). There, he received medical treatment and was interviewed twice, before he succumbed to his wounds the next day.

Before he died, Giacomo Cavolupi told how he had been stabbed by a man named Minghino, who worked as a scribe in the 'butchery of San Francesco della Molinella, behind the [river] Reno on the side of the bridge toward the little fountain'.³ Minghino had accosted Giacomo following a brief conversation, stabbing him in the ensuing scuffle. During a second interview in the morning

Full colour versions of the figures can be viewed in the online version.

¹Archivio di Stato di Bologna (ASBo), Tribunale del Torrione (Torrione), *Atti e processi*, 7519/2, fasc. 40.

²*Ibid.*, fasc. 1r.

³*Ibid.*, fasc. 2r.

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Giacomo gave Minghino's real name (Domenico) and revealed that the assault took place while Giacomo was walking 'from [the] Piazza to my home in the neighbourhood of the Houses of Two Bears'.⁴

The details of the conflict – the two had not spoken for some months, following Domenico's being discovered in the room of a woman named Anna, who lived in the same building as Giacomo – are typical of many such killings. However, we should pay attention to the descriptions that participants provided of the environments in which the violence occurred. Lacking numerically systematized addresses, and inhabiting cities that were highly social and widely traversed, early modern Italians communicated location prepositionally. To situate their audience, they referred to nearby landmarks, known people and landscape features.⁵ This prepositional thinking infuses the documentation of early modern Italy, as the notaries charged with recording the problems and passages of daily life reproduced this mentality on the page. Giacomo was found *beneath* the porticos *near* the orphanage (*putti*, angelic children) of San Bartolomeo in Galiera, *behind* the river Reno *on the side* of the bridge *toward* the little fountain. Giacomo was moving *from* the city's main piazza *to* his home *in* the borgo, and he met Domenico coming *from* that neighbourhood. The layering and accretion of these prepositional descriptors in fact permits a fairly precise locating of the interaction and the ensuing killing, if we have the requisite locations at hand.

Space and place matter to our understanding of homicide because space and place mattered to the early modern people who committed it, suffered it, witnessed it and described it. The records of early modern judicial practice are punctuated regularly by testators' references to where something took place, and why they believed that mattered. When they understood behaviour, they understood it as taking place in grounded settings that were a regular feature of their daily lives; whether these were public or intimate spaces, they related the significance of acts to the places where they acted. Conflict in churches assumed different significance than conflict in the market square; certain civic or private buildings were central landmarks in the mental geography people exercised.

This article combines that early modern prepositional thinking with modern GIS software to locate and analyse a large sample of judicial data pertaining to homicides in the city of Bologna from 1600 to 1700 – what I am here calling a prepositional cartography.⁶ That sample of approximately 700 homicide trials includes 182 killings that took place within the city itself. Of those 182 urban homicides, 89 include documentation and description sufficient to locate the action to parish, street or building level. Most of these descriptions are of course prepositional: in 1680, for example, Anna Civetta was killed in her house 'near the convent of the Sisters of the Maddalena'.⁷ Locating these early modern places in a GIS is difficult. In most cases, what researchers want from GIS – specificity, precision and quantifiability – is the opposite of what historians and humanists expect from

⁴*Ibid.*, fasc. 3v.

⁵N. Eckstein, 'Prepositional city: spatial practice and micro-neighborhood in Renaissance Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 71 (2018), 1240–2.

⁶This data is drawn from a larger study on Bolognese homicide, for which see C. Rose, *A Renaissance of Violence: Homicide in Early Modern Italy* (New York, 2019).

⁷ASBo, Torrone, 7174, fasc. 12.

their data – nuance, messiness and qualitative richness.⁸ The homicide data from Bologna, however, offer an opportunity to bridge these interdisciplinary desires and deploy GIS to better understand a set of historical and humanist questions: what was it like to live in the early modern city? How did people experience violence within its walls? Where in the city did fatal violence take place? What significance did place have in acts?

This article relies upon the labour of a range of GIS researchers and cartographers. The GIS joins datasets about homicide cases from seventeenth-century Bologna to a series of data files created by the OpenDataBologna project.⁹ The *Origini di Bologna* datasets provided historical cartography onto which judicial data can be mapped with a considerable degree of accuracy. For instance, 33 killings took place in or near extant churches, 4 in existing urban *palazzi* and 1 in a tavern whose historical location remains known. This article is therefore an opportunity to acknowledge the distributed workload of Historical GIS scholarship: I am deeply grateful to the researchers and cartographers of OpenDataBologna for their labour and knowledge, and I want to foreground their contribution to this work here. The geodata that underlays the argument here was produced by a team of students, researchers and academics in Bologna whose work is fundamental to the growth of geospatial urban history.

Bologna in the seventeenth century was a city-state with an urban population averaging 65,000 and a rural population of around 140,000.¹⁰ The city and its people possessed some unique socio-political characteristics. It was the northern capital of the Papal States, the broad swathe of Italy governed via legates, or governors, as a territorial buffer and a political benefice of the popes in Rome.¹¹ Bologna's location at the crossroads of major European highways gave it both economic heft as well as

⁸The documents of pre-modern Bologna have already lent themselves to successful GIS analysis, however. T. Zaneri and G. Geltner: 'The dynamics of healthscaping: mapping communal hygiene in Bologna, 1287–1383', *Urban History*, 49 (2022), 2–27. For more on the process and problems of Humanities GIS, see C. Rose and N. Terpstra (eds.), *Mapping Space, Sense, and Movement in Florence: Historical GIS and the Early Modern City* (London, 2016); I. Gregory, *A Place in History: A Guide to Using GIS in Historical Research* (Oxford, 2003); A.K. Knowles and A. Hillier (eds.), *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship* (Redlands, CA, 2008); A. Baker, 'Vernacular GIS: mapping early modern geography and socioeconomics', in A. von Lünen and C. Travis (eds.), *History and GIS: Epistemologies, Considerations and Reflections* (Dordrecht, 2013), 89–110; D. DeBats and I. Gregory, 'Introduction to Historical GIS and the study of urban history', *Social Science History*, 35 (2011), 455–63. By the eighteenth century, Italian statistical practices permitted a more regularized cartography of crime and violence. See D. Busato, 'Statistiche criminali e crime mapping', Università Ca' Foscari Tesi di Laurea, 2016.

⁹The project and its datasets can be accessed at 'Home – Comune di Bologna', <https://opendata.comune.bologna.it/pages/home/>, accessed 1 Jun. 2022. Relevant datasets are located under the *Origini di Bologna* files.

¹⁰On the fluctuations of the Bolognese population, especially after the great plague of 1630, see A. Belletini, *La popolazione di Bologna dal secolo 15 all'unificazione italiana* (Bologna, 1961).

¹¹On early modern papacy as a political force, see P. Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice: un corpo e due anime, la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 1982). On the particular characteristics of Bolognese politics during this period, see A. Gardi, *Lo stato in provincia: l'amministrazione della legazione di Bologna durante il regno di Sisto V, 1585–1590* (Bologna, 1994); A. de Benedictis, *Repubblica per contratto: Bologna, una città europea nello Stato della Chiesa* (Bologna, 1995); I. Robertson, *Tyranny under the Mantle of St Peter: Pope Paul II and Bologna* (Turnhout, 2002).

a broadly cosmopolitan, if transient, population, dominated by an entrenched factional oligarchy whose conflicts animated and hindered its civil society.¹² It was hardly alone in this among Italian cities, but the imposition of papal rule changed the flavour and function of urban oligarchy.¹³ In particular, Bolognese legates successfully developed a centralized criminal jurisdiction around a powerful court called the Tribunale del Torrione, after the ‘Great Tower’ which housed its offices.¹⁴ The assiduous work of this court’s notarial staff, combined with the archival culture that emerged in Italian city-states at the time, left historians the detailed records that animate this and other studies of Bolognese justice and criminality.¹⁵

While these other studies have analysed the character, quantity and significance of the violence that was so prevalent in Bologna’s streets, none so far have succeeded in geolocating a large sample of homicides within the urban *enceinte*, making this present article a significant contribution to our understanding of the geographies of early modern violence. Mapping the city’s fatal violence across the course of a century demonstrates how the streets, homes, churches and public spaces of early modern Bologna played a significant role in how that violence was understood and interpreted by the city’s judicial officials and its residents. As Taylor Zaneri and Guy Geltner noted in this journal’s pages in 2022, GIS allows us to move the conversation beyond *whether* public violence was a feature of urban life, and instead to focus on *how* violence’s public nature inflected upon the rhythms of daily life, violence’s place in daily life and the role of space in shaping the public’s interpretation of violence within the city walls.¹⁶ Moreover, spatial thinking of the sort required by GIS analysis allows us to better contextualize behaviours within the well-understood spatial environments in which Bolognesi lived

¹²G. Angelozzi and C. Casanova, *La nobiltà disciplinata: violenza nobiliare, procedure di giustizia e scienza cavalleresca a Bologna nel 17 secolo* (Bologna, 2003); S. Blanshei, *Politics and Justice in Late Medieval Bologna* (Leiden, 2010); S. Blanshei, ‘Homicide in a culture of hatred, Bologna 1351–1420’, in T. Dean and K.J.P. Lowe (eds.), *Murder in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, 2017), 114–16; Rose, *A Renaissance of Violence*, ch. 6.

¹³A. Madden, ‘“Una causa civile”: vendetta violence and governing elites in early-modern Modena’, in J. Davies (ed.), *Aspects of Violence in Renaissance Europe* (Farnham, 2013), 205–24; E. Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta & Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1993).

¹⁴G. Angelozzi and C. Casanova, *La giustizia criminale in una città di antico regime: il Tribunale del Torrione di Bologna, secc. XVI–XVII* (Bologna, 2008); T. Di Zio, ‘Il Tribunale del Torrione’, *Atti e memorie (Romagna)*, 43 (1992), 333–48; S. Blanshei, ‘Cambiamenti e continuità nella procedura penale a Bologna, secoli XIII–XVII. Parte I: Le procedure del processo penale in età comunale e signorile’, *Documenta*, 1 (2018), 9–38; C. Rose, ‘Cambiamenti e continuità nella procedura penale a Bologna, secoli XIII–XVII. Parte II: Il Tribunale del Torrione’, *Documenta*, 1 (2018), 39–60; C. Rose, ‘Violence and the centralization of criminal justice in early modern Bologna’, in S. Blanshei (ed.), *Violence and Justice in Bologna, 1250–1700* (Lanham, 2018), 101–22.

¹⁵F. De Vivo, ‘Ordering the archive in early modern Venice (1400–1650)’, *Archival Science*, 10 (2010), 231–48; S. Muurling, ‘Whore, thief and cuckold spy: insults, gender and the politics of everyday life in early modern Bologna’, *Incontri. Rivista Europea di Studi Italiani*, 34 (2019), 110; S. Muurling, *Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna* (Leiden, 2020); S. Muurling and M. Pluskota, ‘The gendered geography of violence in Bologna, seventeenth to nineteenth centuries’, in D. Simonton (ed.), *The Routledge History Handbook of Gender and the Urban Experience* (London, 2017), 153–61; M. van der Heijden and S. Muurling, ‘Violence and gender in eighteenth-century Bologna and Rotterdam’, *Journal of Social History*, 51 (2018), 695–716; Blanshei (ed.), *Violence and Justice*; S. Hughes, ‘Fear and loathing in Bologna and Rome: the papal police in perspective’, *Journal of Social History*, 2 (1987), 97–116.

¹⁶Zaneri and Geltner, ‘The dynamics of healthscaping’, 4.

and moved; when we see clusters of behaviour appearing in particular neighbourhoods, we can relate that behaviour to the spatio-social characteristics of the area. Indeed, in many ways the urban fabric became a part of the violence itself, as both the setting of the action and a set of important spatial references, and as symbols, agitators or mitigators, reflecting on the status and behaviours of killers and killed. The present article thus seeks to meld our well-developed understandings of the character and incidence of early modern homicide with the possibilities for deeper interpretation provided by GIS cartography. Location mattered in early modern violence, as did early moderns' prepositional habits of describing these locations.

Of course, our understanding of the locations of homicidal violence in the city come to us through the records of early modern court systems, sources which are widely appreciated by scholars, but deeply frustrating to some.¹⁷ As noted above, 89/182 (48.9 per cent) of urban homicide records permit mapping in a GIS; this is approximately 13.5 per cent of the study's total sample of 659 intentional homicides, 12.7 per cent of the sample when 'accidental' homicides are included in the total count of 701. The ability to map nearly half of urban homicides provides us with a representative sample of public violence, but still excludes slightly more than 50 per cent of the total urban cases from this analysis. We are faced with a question: is our mapped sample ordinary or extraordinary? That is, are the specific locations of these cases recorded because they struck the court officers as significant? Many of the unmappable cases took place in the private homes of ordinary Bolognesi, and their conflicts may not have merited much concern (though enough to bring the power of the law to bear nonetheless). There is likely a significant 'dark figure' of prosaic homicides, taking place in private homes or dark alleyways, knowledge of which would reshape the spatial analysis in important ways. What we are left with, then, represents the eye of the beholder as much as the reality of violence on the ground: these spatial data collected here are those seen fit to be collected. This necessarily limits the scope of the argument, but the threshold for useful spatial analysis is well-met at close to 50 per cent of recorded cases.

The GIS data collected permit analysis of homicides in three settings, each with their own significance and their own positions in the Bolognese cultural mentalities of the seventeenth century. The precise degree to which we can locate homicides depends on the details of the documentation. The data permit location to three categories of space. Individual buildings are rarely identifiable. Of six *osterie* (taverns) named in the sample of urban violence, I have here located one, though this is surely not the total picture of alcohol-fuelled tavern violence. Four private homes – *case* – remain extant in the city and can be identified in the GIS. These are the large family palaces of the city's urban elite, who remained embroiled in local and regional politics and who prosecuted factional and vendetta violence at a disproportionate rate to their numbers. And one gatehouse, on the city's south-east corner, a public 'building' that appears more as an open space, through which people moved, encountered one another and came into conflict over a variety of issues. These locations overcome the prepositionality of other descriptors, as they

¹⁷ An excellent primer on the opportunities and problems of these sources, and how to work with them, is the undergraduate-aimed source collection T. Cohen and E. Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto, 1993).

are easily identifiable landmarks. Homicides that occurred near or within them bore particular characteristics, however, of which these buildings and spaces are signifiers. Thinking spatially about these private and semi-private buildings allows us to visualize and analyse the physical groundings of networks of power and sociability that animated much violence, making our understanding of early modern urban politics more concrete and permitting deeper contextualization of social behaviour within physical spaces.

Streets, as spaces of movement, exchange and transition, of public encounter and confrontation, were frequent places of violence. In the streets of Bologna we often find chance violence, conflicts that emerged suddenly in the course of immediate conflict, though often with histories of their own that can be unpacked through the records of the criminal court. A total of 62 homicides can be placed with reasonable accuracy along the streets where they took place. This category makes the most use of participants' prepositional descriptors, when, for instance, using the accretion of descriptions to attempt to locate *where* along a street an act took place. The ability to map fatal violence to the city's streets reveals clusters and patterns of violent behaviour that would otherwise go unnoticed: streets only exist in relation to other streets and their passage by humans, and they accrete to neighbourhoods with particular socio-economic characteristics relatable to the violence they featured.

Bolognese churches and their environs witnessed 33 different killings in 25 events. Violence in and around churches may or may not be significantly related to that location; as we shall see, churches were often deliberately chosen for acts of vengeance, where witnesses and public display were important. In other cases, the religious environment mattered less: churches loomed large in the mental geography of the city's inhabitants and the nearby church may have been mostly a convenient descriptor in the judicial documentation. Homicides that took place in each of these settings – secular buildings both private and public, streets and churches – tell us about the role of space in urban violence, and how a killing's setting communicated to judicial officials and public audiences a great deal about the significance of that killing, the social positions of its belligerents and its consequences for civil society. With or without the aid of GIS, we can recognize the significance of sacred space in shaping our understanding of profane violence. GIS allows this significance to rise to the forefront of our analysis, however, and to understand individual killings within their broader contexts of habitual or semi-regular church killings. Churches, after all, were edifices located in their surroundings, and the characteristics of those surroundings bears upon the mental space those churches occupied.

Figure 1 maps the locations of homicides in private buildings in seventeenth-century Bologna. It is immediately clear on this map that this is a small sample, and that it would perhaps be foolhardy to make too much of it. Nevertheless, we can learn something about the significance of place in the city's violence from its limited scope. First and foremost, these are all large public or semi-public places. While a great number of homicide records describe the violence as having taken place within somebody's home, it is impossible to locate with any kind of precision the apartments and townhouses of ordinary Bolognese labourers and artisans. What Figure 1 shows are homicides that take place in or outside easily identified,

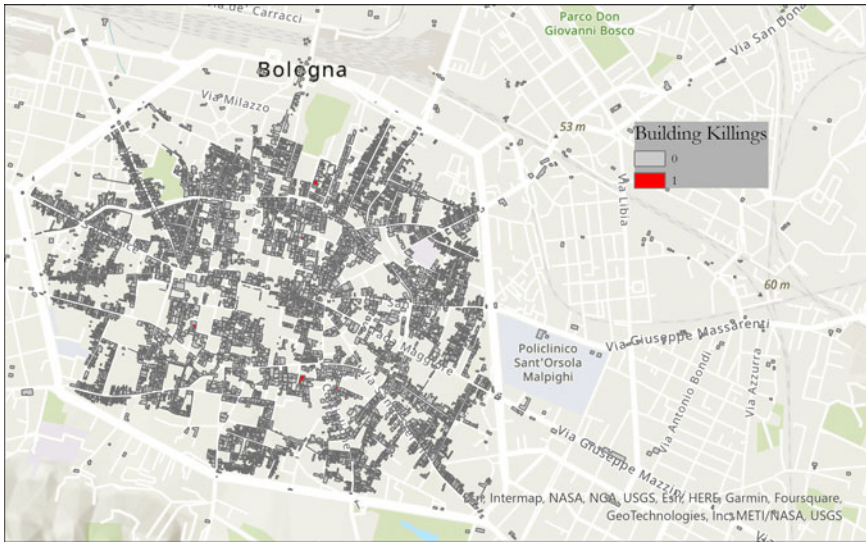


Figure 1. Homicides in private buildings in seventeenth-century Bologna.
 Source: ASBo, Tribunale del Torrione, *Processi*, 3171–7536.

and presently extant or locatable, buildings. Four of these spaces are urban *palazzi*, the grandiose mansions that served as powerbases, and sometimes as fortresses, for the city's political elite.

These four homicides are those that can be located; several more occurred in buildings that have been lost or whose names have transferred to other edifices, making a match in the GIS system inaccurate. For instance, one killing occurred in the kitchen of Palazzo Formagliari, which is neither extant presently nor appears in the database or *edifici scomparsi* (lost buildings). Another occurred in the Casa Bentivoglio, which was moved outside the city limits following the family's formal exile in the sixteenth century. Three took place in the environs of the Casa Barilari, which the modern GIS layers locate some distance from the city walls, and so this article considers those as lost. The remaining four homicides locatable to extant or known *palazzi* took place in or outside the house of the Zambecari, the Ratti, the Calderini and the Boncompagni. Even this limited sample can reveal some significant aspects of urban violence in the early modern city.

Italian urban homes, from the meanest hovel to the grandest palace, were loci of security and strategy in the myriad interpersonal conflicts that took place in the lives of a city's residents.¹⁸ For the urban nobility in particular, these buildings

¹⁸This has been much studied over the past 30 years for Rome in particular, and especially with an eye toward the gendered notions of honour that obtained around domestic spaces. See L. Nussdorfer, 'The politics of space in early modern Rome', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 42 (1997), 163–4; T. Cohen, 'A daughter-killing digested, and accepted, in a village of Rome, 1563–1566', in Dean and Lowe (eds.), *Murder in Renaissance Italy*, 62–80; E. Cohen, 'Honour and gender in the streets of early modern Rome', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22 (1992), 597–625; E. Cohen, 'To pray, to work, to hear, to speak: women in Roman streets c. 1600', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008), 289–311.

were not just homes but symbols of status and power, representations of the family's status in the local and regional elites.¹⁹ Physically, they looked and behaved as fortresses walling off the family from the street outside, offering both a vantage point as well as security from potential assault. Though the city's medieval towers were mostly demolished by the seventeenth century, the basic function of an urban palace remained: to allow the urban nobility a safe point from which to operate in the city's senatorial and neighbourhood politics. The area around the palace was therefore a space for display and conflict, where status could be debated and fought over. Thus, in 1660, two students from Milan, staying at the home of the Ratti, attacked and killed a 22-year-old Bolognese man outside that palace for having refused to yield precedence on the street.²⁰ The *casa* of the Ratti was their territory, and they projected their precedence in that territory. Less directly related to the space of the killing was the 1600 homicide of the merchant Emilio Burdoni in the 'porta Maggiore' of the Palazzo Boncompagni, by his employer Quirsico Providoni; the argument began over their competition for the affections of a woman named Angelica.²¹ Here we see an example of a privately owned home being made the site of a very public conflict, as the two men carried their argument from the city's central market, through the streets, to the gates of the Boncompagni family compound. The location of this homicide is perhaps less significant to our understanding of the act itself than it is a useful example of the prepositional thinking that animated notarial descriptions of city space and the urban landscape.

Homes also witnessed intra-family violence, much of which becomes invisible to modern cartography. In 1632, Giulio Paci, a son born to the second wife of *signore* Giovan Battista Aquilini, died at the hands of his half-sibling from his father's first marriage, in the *casa* of the Zambeccari, relatives and allies of the Aquilini.²² The dispute arose over inheritance, with the elder son fearing that his patrimony would pass over to the new family. In 1660, an artisan named Francesco Franzini was murdered on the steps of his home by his lover's husband.²³ More commonly, homes were sites of domestic violence. The larger sample of homicide cases contains eight cases wherein a man murdered his partner in the home; four of these women were their killers' wives and the other four were sex workers murdered by their clients.²⁴ However, a combination of judicial disinterest and urban

¹⁹M. Carboni, 'The economics of marriage: dotal strategies in Bologna in the age of Catholic reform', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 39 (2008), 371–87; M. Carboni, 'Public debt, guarantees and local elites in the Papal States (XVI–XVIII centuries)', *Journal of European Economic History*, 38 (2009), 149–74.

²⁰ASBo, Torrone, 6796.

²¹*Ibid.*, 3203, fasc. 58.

²²*Ibid.*, 5861.

²³*Ibid.*, 6789.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 7524/2, fasc. 9; 7353, fasc. 18; 7174, fasc. 12; 6808; 6791; 6789; 6787, fasc. 13; 3209, fasc. 199. On sex work in Bologna, and in Italy more broadly, see G. Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985); J. Brackett, 'The Florentine Onesta and the control of prostitution, 1403–1680', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 24 (1993), 273–300; E. Cohen, 'Seen and known: prostitutes in the cityscape of late-sixteenth-century Rome', *Renaissance Studies*, 12 (1998), 392–409; D. Ghirardo, 'The topography of prostitution in Renaissance Ferrara', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 60 (2001), 402–31; Cohen, 'To pray, to work, to hear, to speak'; J. Ferraro, *Nefarious Crimes, Contested Justice: Illicit Sex and Infanticide in the Republic of Venice, 1557–1789* (Baltimore, 2008); T. Storey, *Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge, 2008);

omertà meant that these killings did not receive the attention or the thorough documentation of more prominent cases. Moreover, their locations are largely unknowable. The limitations of the GIS database, and the relative anonymity of the killers and victims in the documentation of these cases, means the locations of these homes are unknown to us now, but the point stands: private homes, such as the elite *palazzi* that appear in Figure 1 and the ordinary townhouses and apartments that do not, were the sites of particular forms of homicide that involved both intra- and inter-family politics. That the domestic interior remained largely beyond judicial reach does not negate the significance of killings that took place inside.

Homicides that took place in private homes and other distinct buildings in the seventeenth century are broadly difficult to locate in a twenty-first-century geospatial system. Those that are located here are a small sample of a much broader phenomenon, and one whose meanings are multiple. People were killed in their homes for as many reasons and in as many ways as people were killed generally; I am wary of ascribing too much significance to any given act in this limited set. In many ways, the locations of the buildings themselves is immaterial: what is certain is that a segment of the fatal violence in seventeenth-century Bologna took place behind closed doors, and a similar segment took place under the eaves of those doors, at the transitional space between private and public spheres, that space that is neither here-nor-there, where status could be contested, where identity could be disputed and where simmering conflict could erupt in violence. Significantly, these spaces became the reference points by which judicial authorities and ordinary Bolognesi described and narrated their city's violence, allowing researchers to map that behaviour in modern software.

The streets of the city are another set of transitional spaces, but spaces which are inherently public. In a culture whose social politics were very much face-to-face, much of the daily lives of ordinary and elite Bolognesi took place in streets, on market squares and in the many open *piazze* that dot the urban geography of early modern Italian cities. Those streets, especially the broad arterial pathways that led from the city gates toward its centre, are the second space of violence mapped out here.

Figure 2 shows a more distinct pattern, though offers slightly less spatial precision than Figure 1. It shows the number of public homicides taking place on the city's streets and *piazze*, the large public squares that dominated much of early modern social life. These *piazze*, and the streets that opened onto them, were spaces of display and exchange. As people moved along them or stopped in them, they crossed paths with friends, customers, colleagues and enemies. And in those

P. Clarke, 'The business of prostitution in early Renaissance Venice', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 68 (2015), 419–64; V. McCarthy, 'Prostitution, community, and civic regulation in early modern Bologna', University of Toronto Ph.D. dissertation, 2015; N. Terpstra, 'Sex and the sacred: negotiating spatial and sensory boundaries in Renaissance Florence', *Radical History Review*, 121 (2015), 71–90; J. Rombough, 'Noisy soundscapes and women's institutions in early modern Florence', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 50 (2019), 449–69; V. McCarthy and N. Terpstra, 'In the neighborhood: residence, community, and the sex trade in early modern Bologna', in N. Terpstra and J. Murray (eds.), *Sex, Gender and Sexuality in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2019), 53–74; N. Terpstra, 'Locating the sex trade in the early modern city: space, sense and regulation in sixteenth-century Florence', in Rose and Terpstra (eds.), *Mapping Space, Sense, and Movement in Florence*, 107–24.

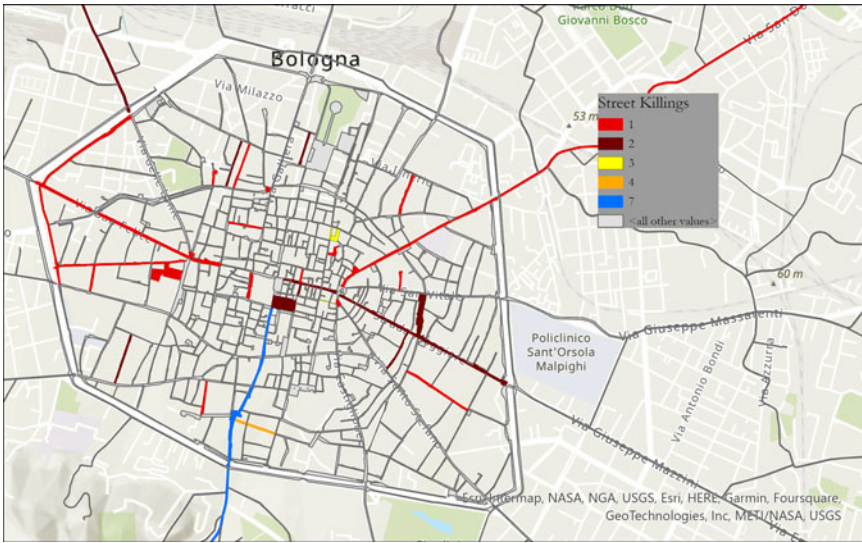


Figure 2. Number of homicides per street in seventeenth-century Bologna.
 Source: ASBo, Torrione, 3171–7536.

encounters with enemies, whether planned or spontaneous, Bolognesi turned to violence 62 times in the sample analysed here. As David Rosenthal's work makes clear, Italian street politics were often territorial and conflictual, and many of the rivalries between groups of young men were expressed in public.²⁵ It is therefore expected that in a society centred, as was early modern Bologna, around public expressions of masculinity and one's stature in the public regard, that the streets of Italian cities hosted significant levels of violence. And indeed what we see in Bologna is such a pattern emerging, though with some distinctions reflecting Bologna's urban identity as a 'crossroads' in the Italian peninsula and its cultural imagination.²⁶

The clearest pattern visible in street-level homicides in Bologna is that the city's major thoroughfares, coming in through the gates located around the exterior walls and heading towards the central piazza, hosted significant fatal violence. Two stretches of the major Via San Mamolo witnessed 7 homicides each (expressed as royal blue in Figure 2) making a total of 14 killings on this single street in the sample of 700 homicides spanning 1600–1700. The Strada Maggiore, entering the city in its south-east end and leading towards the centre, saw two killings (brown); the Via San Donato entering in the north-east and travelling through the city's university district saw one killing, as did the Via del Pratello and Via

²⁵D. Rosenthal, 'Owning the corner: the "powers" of Florence and the question of agency', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 16 (2013), 181–96; D. Rosenthal, *Kings of the Street: Power, Community, and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Turnhout, 2015).

²⁶N. Terpstra and A. de Benedictis (eds.), *Bologna: Cultural Crossroads from the Medieval to the Baroque: Recent Anglo-American Scholarship* (Bologna, 2013).

San Felice on the west side (red). The peripheral streets on the west end also saw one killing each.

A secondary pattern here is that homicides also took place in the major squares of the city. The central Piazza San Petronio (here in brown), overlooked by the city's grand civic basilica, the legate's palace and the offices of the criminal court itself, was the site of two homicides in this sample. The Prato di San Francesco, a large open space on the city's west end outside the major Franciscan church, was the site of one. And the Piazza di San Martino, outside the church of the same name and shown in Figure 2 in yellow, saw three killings. These are major public spaces where Bolognesi came to socialize, to trade, to eat and drink and to see and be seen in the intensely social world of urban north Italy. Moreover, the many smaller *piazette* (little squares) that dot the city's landscape also were sites of homicide: the small red *seraglio* bisecting the major canal in the northern half of the city (now a charming urban park with a playground), the Piazzette di Santi Simone e Giuda and of San Donato at the bottom of the university district on the east side, and the triangular *mercantia* at the intersection of two major streets running in from the south-east each had one homicide found in the sample.

What is more telling is a clustering of cases in particular neighbourhoods. There are some areas around the city where more homicides occurred than in others. The most obvious is the long street of the Via San Mamolo, but, importantly, the neighbourhood of the Mirasole, highlighted in orange on Figure 2, which abuts that major corridor on the east side. That orange line, the modern Via Mirasole, aggregates homicides from three early modern streets – Mirasole Grande, Mirasole di Sotto and Mirasole di Sopra, the latter two to the north and south of the first. The *contrada* (neighbourhood) of Mirasole, the southernmost of the city, was a neighbourhood of artisans which abutted one of the major thoroughways into the city, the Via San Mamolo. It was a neighbourhood through which merchants and traders entered and exited the city, and had taverns, broad avenues and large open spaces. Like other peripheral neighbourhoods in the city, it had a relatively high population of registered sex workers.²⁷ The Mirasole was in fact a highly *public* neighbourhood, in which tensions driven either by old enmity or sudden argument could erupt into violence, and in which the streets became a stage for the violence accompanying those tensions. Moreover, they became a set of prepositional reference points for the witnesses and officials who became involved in the aftermath of murder.

These reference points become richer when we consider the covered arcades, or *portici* (singular: *portico*) that formed the walkways of many of Bologna's major streets since the late medieval period (see Figure 3a). Originally built to expand upper-storey residential living areas, often in the form of cheap apartments for the city's growing student population, the *portici* became emblematic of the city, alongside its bristling forest of towers.²⁸ The resulting covered walkways acted as a sort of transitional space between private and public, between street and building;

²⁷McCarthy and Terpstra, 'In the neighborhood', 56.

²⁸F. Bocchi and A. Benati, *I Portici di Bologna e l'edilizia civile medievale* (Bologna, 1990); D. Friedman, 'Monumental urban form in the late medieval Italian commune: loggias and the *mercanzie* of Bologna and Siena', *Renaissance Studies*, 12 (1998), 325–40; F. Bocchi, 'Shaping the city: urban planning and physical structures', in S. Blanshei (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna* (Leiden, 2018), 56–102.

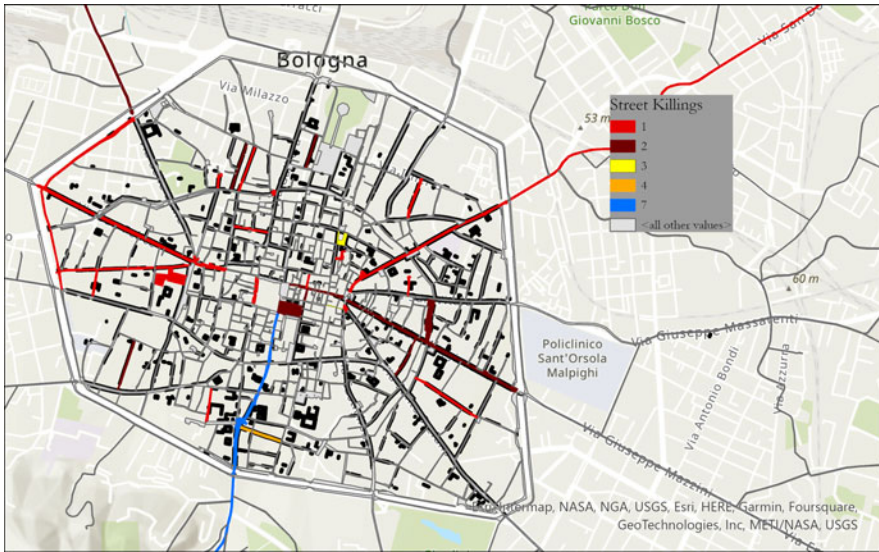


Figure 3. Homicides on Bolognese Streets, showing the *portici* extant in the seventeenth century. Source: ASBo, Torrione, 3171–7536.

they also formed a regular reference point in the prepositional descriptions employed by Bolognese officials and residents. As shown in Figure 3, murders happened 'beneath the portico of Doctor Cortellini',²⁹ at the 'porticos of Strada Maggiore',³⁰ by the 'portico of the priests of the Madonna of Galiera',³¹ beneath the 'portico at the corner in the stableri',³² 'beneath the portico of Giovan'Paolo Branni'³³ and so forth. The variety of reference points attached to these *portici* – they are associated with people, streets, particular buildings – demonstrates their prepositional flexibility for the people of Bologna. These arteries of violence carried people and their conflicts from the city's outer edges towards its very centre. In highly traversed, densely populated early modern Bologna, public violence marred the city streets regularly, and early modern Bolognesi knew well where blood circulated through the urban core.

An unusual case from 1660 aptly demonstrates how public violence was inscribed on the streetscape of early modern Bologna, and how the judicial apparatus in turn employed local knowledge of, and prepositional thinking about, that streetscape to create a narrative of the violence while investigating crime. The story begins in the *contrada* of Mirasole, near the San Mamolo gate, and comes to us first from the victim and then via a series of neighbourhood witnesses.³⁴

²⁹ ASBo, Torrione, 7533/2, fasc. 21.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7175, fasc. 37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 6791, unnumbered fascicle.

³² *Ibid.*, 6266, unnumbered fascicle.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5847, unnumbered fascicle.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6787, fasc. 5.



Figure 3a. A section of the Portico di San Luca, the longest covered archway in the world at 3,500m. Picture by Hay Kranen / CC-BY, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portico_di_San_Luca.jpg.

On the night of 29 February 1660, a textile merchant from Savoy, Claudio Bocchi³⁵ stabbed and wounded a barber from France, Niccolo Frisa. Both foreigners in this city of merchants, students and travellers, the two were part of a transalpine community, and were passing the evening with friends in drink and conversation at the Osteria delle Lamme when a dispute broke out between Claudio and Niccolo over 'the quality of certain French laces'. From the city's southern end, the group perambulated north, arguing along the way, stopping 'outside the bottega of Colonna Merciaro' as the conflict continued. There, Niccolo Frisa punched

³⁵As his name was rendered by Bolognese notaries.

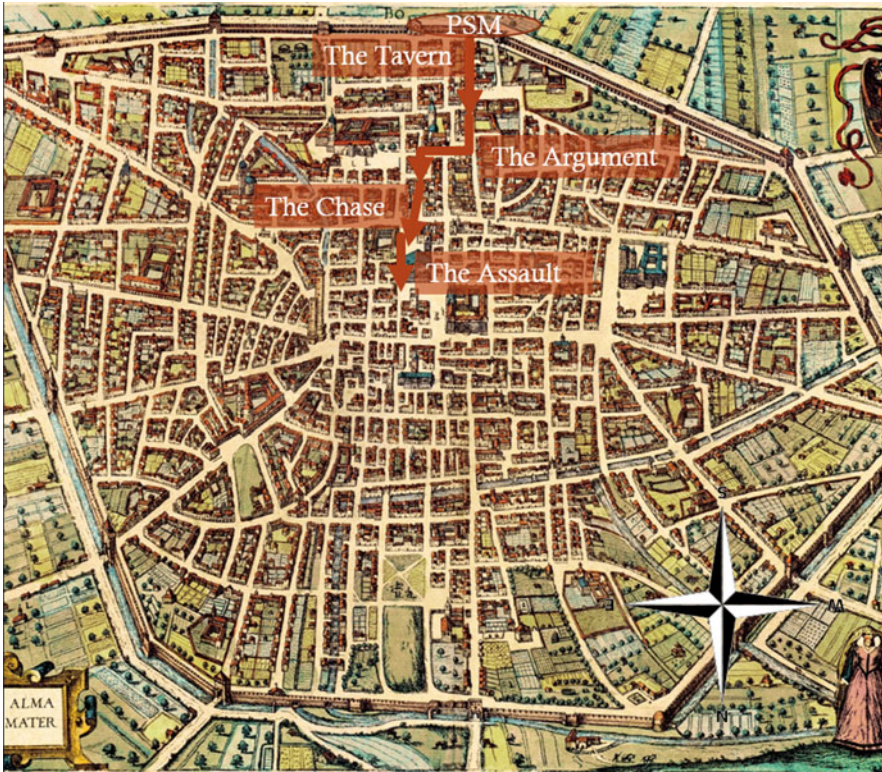


Figure 4. The chase and murder of Niccolo Frisa, 29 February 1660. Note that on this map the compass is inverted, with the south end of the city appearing at the top of the map. This is standard for early modern maps of Bologna.

Source: ASBo, Torrione, 6787, fasc. 5.

Claudio Bocchi twice in the face, and turned and fled east and then north, with Claudio chasing him through the open space on the east side of the city's basilica known as the *bravaria*, the 'place where men shout'. The pursuit continued to the central *Piazza San Petronio*, and there, in front of a barber's shop, Frisa 'fell accidentally, with [his] face in the dirt' and Claudio Bocchi leapt upon him, stabbing him in the back. Frisa limped to the nearby hospital, the *Ospedale della Vita*. Claudio Bocchi was last seen climbing the steps to the basilica of San Petronio, adorned with a portal frieze of Old Testament scenes, including the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, carved by Jacopo della Quercia in the fifteenth century. **Figure 4** shows the approximate route of this chase through the southern end of the city.

The murder of Niccolo Frisa, and its subsequent investigation by the *Tribunale del Torrione*, aptly demonstrate how early modern Bolognesi perceived and communicated space prepositionally, as a significant factor in explaining events to themselves and others. First and foremost, in the testimony of witnesses, time and again we read reference to spaces, audiences and the fact that this conflict was very much on display for the Bolognese public. Outside the *bottega* of

Colonna Merciaro, Frisa told the notary the next day, was a crowd of people, but '[he didn't] know who was there'. The *bravaria*, a central open space in the city's very core, was named for the behaviour it engendered: loud braggadocio among the young men of the city, who came to be seen and to impress their audience, the city's other young men and young women. Finally, the chase ended in the city's central piazza, where the final blow would have been in full view to the people socializing, eating or traversing on its edges. As the investigation proceeded, new spatial and locational details emerged: Frisa's companion Natale mentioned that he had gone from Merciaro's *bottega* to that of a Ludovico, who sold *acquavita* (grappa or other strong liquor) where already he heard that Claudio had stabbed Niccolo Frisa. He heard it again the next morning from a man named Giovanni, an aide to the city's archbishop. *Publica voce*, the word on the street, travelled fast in Bologna, and it paid particular attention to the places and spaces of gossip. Space was the stage on which Bolognese conflict occurred, and the audience could read the stage dressing.³⁶

This unusual case, featuring two foreign protagonists and a large and diverse cast of characters and witnesses, aptly shows how deeply street life inflected upon the narratives of daily experience in Bologna. At every stage of the case, both judicial officials and the witnesses they interrogated paid close attention to location as a barometer of social significance, with particular streets such as the *bravaria*, and particular locales such as the *acquavitaria* of *signore* Ludovico the neighbourhood gossip, assuming thematic iconography in the notary's search for inquisitorial justice. This significance is applicable to the broader picture of urban public violence depicted in Figure 2. The prepositional map of public homicides taking place on streets can be used as a proxy for the mental cartography performed by the residents of Bologna as they went about their daily lives, understanding which areas of the city were liable to feature or foster violent conflict, and which were likely to offer more peaceable pastimes. In this way, again, GIS cartography can help us to better understand the daily rhythms and interactions of early modern urban life.

One element of homicide that GIS mapping can help us to better understand is the publicity, and publicization, of violence in early modern cities. Like the public execution of criminals, killing in public and leaving the victim's body on display delivers a message or a lesson to an intended audience. The lesson itself depended largely on the public's knowledge of the prior relationships obtaining between killer and killed. Relationships of enmity were often well known, a public element of neighbourhood and city politics on which the Torrone kept close watch.³⁷ The public location of a homicide, or at least its aftermath, then included a charge against the authority of the court to police the private enmities of ordinary, and especially elite, Bolognesi. Leaving one's enemy's corpse in the street or in the market square could therefore serve to deliver a political message, both to the kin of the slain and

³⁶There was a long-standing Italian tradition of enacting rituals of conflict and justice as spatial pageants in urban centres. See J. Palmer, 'Piety and social distinction in late medieval Roman peacemaking', *Speculum*, 89 (2014), 977; K. Falvey, 'Scaffold and stage: comforting rituals and dramatic traditions in late medieval and Renaissance Italy', in N. Terpstra (ed.), *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville, MO, 2008), 13–30.

³⁷Angelozzi and Casanova, *La nobiltà disciplinata*, ch. 3.

to city authorities, of the righteousness and untouchability of the killer's position. In cases of murder during the course of more prosaic conflict, the public setting could also influence public and legal perception of the case, as witnesses might attest to claims of self-defence or provocation; justice, legal or extra-legal, was after all a matter of public concern, part of broader patterns of conflict that early modern Europeans were well accustomed to navigating.³⁸ The conflicts and relationships that organized Bolognese society were very much a matter of public knowledge and record. The location where bodies were left on display contributed to that knowledge in important ways, like much else in Bolognese life that took place in the city's crowded outdoors.

If streets and public spaces loomed large in the daily lives of the people of Bologna, churches perhaps occupied an even more prominent place in their social imagination. There, children were baptized, young people were married and communities gathered to affirm their relationships with God and with one another. Significant portions of the ritual lives of early moderns took place in churches, including the sacraments, ordinary liturgical acts and civic gatherings. Violence, too, was a ritualized act, especially in the context of ongoing factional enmity, feud and vendetta. It is therefore no surprise, yet still merits analysis, that early modern Italians killed each other in churches, often during the most sacred moments of the liturgy. The most famous of these church killings is the 'Pazzi conspiracy' of 1478, in which Lorenzo the Magnificent de' Medici and his brother Giuliano were attacked during Easter mass in Florence's grand Duomo.³⁹ Similar practices obtained in Modena and Reggio Emilia, and examples can be found from many other cities of the peninsula.⁴⁰ The practice was widespread enough that treatises on honour and revenge decried killing during the elevation of the host.⁴¹ Despite their disavowals of church killings, however, contemporaries understood the significance, and symbolism, of such acts. As Carlo Guarienti recently argued, murders in churches sought to communicate divine approval, legitimizing the violence of the feud with a veneer of righteousness.⁴² In effect, killing an enemy during, or immediately after, the liturgy sacralized the violence, drawing symbolic power from the setting and the contextual acts. These killings might be opportunistic or deliberate, as public spaces where people knew their enemies could be found and where the outcome of their conflict was on display for all present. The admixture of sacred space and profane act drew condemnation from visitors, but

³⁸D. Smail, *The Consumption of Justice, Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264–1423* (Ithaca, NY, 2003).

³⁹L. Martines, *April Blood, Florence and the Plot against the Medici* (London, 2003); N. Capponi, *Al traditor s'uccida. La congiura de' Pazzi, un dramma italiano* (Milan, 2014); T. Daniels, *La congiura dei Pazzi: i documenti del conflitto fra Lorenzo de' Medici e Sisto IV: le bolle di scomunica, la 'Florentina Synodus', e la 'Dissentio' insorta tra la santità del papa e i fiorentini* (Florence, 2013).

⁴⁰Madden, "Una causa civile", 213; C. Guarienti, 'Reggio, 28 Giugno 1517: liturgia di un omicidio', *Studi Storici*, 49 (2008), 985–99.

⁴¹S. Carroll, 'Revenge and reconciliation in early modern Italy', *Past & Present*, 233 (2016), 114.

⁴²Guarienti, 'Reggio, 28 Giugno 1517: liturgia di un omicidio', 988–90; C. Guarienti, *Il bandito e il governatore, Domenico d'Amorotto e Francesco Guicciardini nell'età delle guerre d'Italia* (Rome, 2014), ch. 3, as cited in Carroll, 'Revenge and reconciliation', 114.

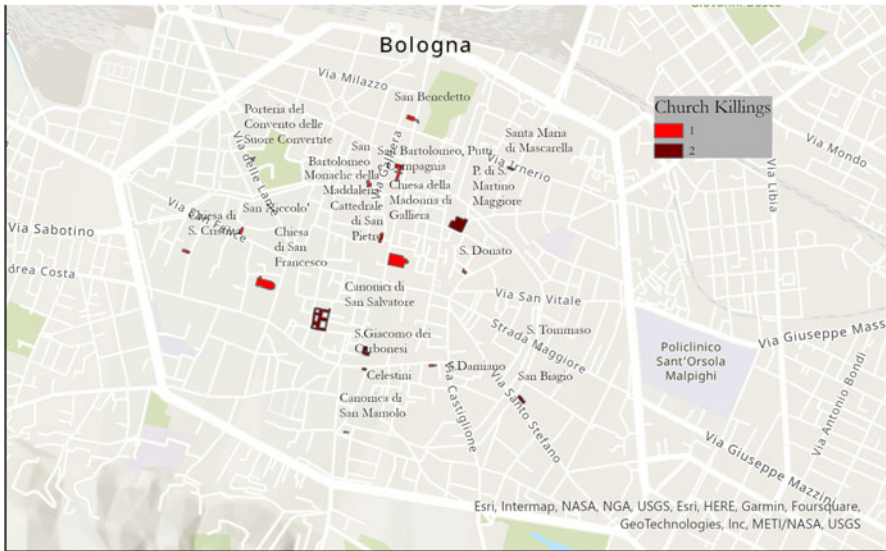


Figure 5. Homicides in and around churches in seventeenth-century Bologna.

Source: ASBo, Torrone, 3171–7536.

homicides in, or outside, churches remained a significant spatial pattern in early modern Italy, especially for assassinations.⁴³

In cases of church killing, the question of jurisdiction might arise, and might affect how historians interpret the sources relating to them. Bologna again provides an instructive example in how secular and ecclesiastical institutions interwove in the Papal States. The Torrone, effectively, recognized no limits to its jurisdiction. In a series of proposals for reform prompted by Paul V's reforms of the court structures in Rome, the judge Francesco Fontana declared his intention that the court should insert itself into any conflict or crime, from the meanest rural *danno dato* (property damage, often unauthorized movement of boundary stones, fence-breaking, etc.) to the most obscene public homicides.⁴⁴ Indeed, in at least one instance in the seventeenth century, bailiffs of the court broke ecclesiastical sanctuary, and prompted a fire that led to one of their deaths, in an effort to extract the accused criminal who had sought shelter in the village church of Budrio.⁴⁵ As the visible warden of justice and peace in the northern capital of the papal state, the Torrone and its officers viewed the entire province, ecclesiastical spaces included, as part of the criminal jurisdiction afforded to this fearsome court.

The map in [Figure 5](#) shows homicides that took place inside or close by churches, and which were noted specifically as significant for that location. In

⁴³S. Carroll and U. Cecchinato, 'Violence and sacred space in early modern Venice', *Acta Histriae* (2020), 13–16.

⁴⁴ASBo, Assunteria del Torrone, 3a, *Constitutiones Turrone Bandi e Stampe, 'Ricordo di alcuni past.ri da trattarsi dall'Ill.mi SS.ri Conf.e et Assonti del Torrone col molto Ill.mo et Ecc.mo Sig. Auditore di esso Torrone, con le rispose da esso S.r Auditore date a capo per capo'*, n.d. (1627?), no folio.

⁴⁵ASBo, Torrone, 7180, unnumbered fascicle (1680).

other words, the churches here are not merely convenient prepositional signifiers – ‘near the church of...’ – although there are many more homicides whose documentation deploys exactly that locational shorthand, such as the killing of Niccolo Frisa on the steps on San Petronio, discussed above. These church killings share some particular characteristics. First and foremost, they generally feature protagonists from the city’s elite families, either members of those extended kin networks or employees thereof. The killings took place within the ongoing relationships of rivalry and alliance that animated much of Bolognese, and broader Italian, civil society.⁴⁶ In other words, these killings, unlike domestic murders, were meant to be seen and their locales were chosen accordingly. They attracted particular judicial attention because of the threat that these relationships posed to public order and civil peace.⁴⁷

A total of 26 homicides took place in or around city churches, reflecting the persistence of elite factional violence in the city across the seventeenth century. Two killings apiece – a total of 12 – occurred in six churches. Another 14 churches saw one killing each. The distribution of these killings mirrors in some ways the distribution of public street killings: churches tended to lay along major public thoroughfares of the city, ensuring a maximum level of visibility and notoriety to the violence there enacted.

Major churches featured strongly here. Two killings took place in the piazza outside San Martino Maggiore, a large church in the city’s north-east quarter. One was a domestic dispute in which a husband killed his wife in an argument over their wayward son in 1660.⁴⁸ The other, however, generated an intrigue that occupied the city’s court officials for some time. Francesco Bezzelli, a Veronese nobleman just arrived in Bologna, murdered his servant Antonio in the dark of night and left his body in the church square on the evening of 23 August 1600.⁴⁹ When the body was discovered and Torrone notaries questioned Bezzelli, he attempted to pin the crime on a local street urchin named Pietro, who had been seen in the area that evening. The case proceeded to the point where young Pietro was

⁴⁶Carroll, ‘Revenge and reconciliation’.

⁴⁷The literature on the role of public, cyclical ‘vendetta’ or ‘feud’ violence in pre-modern Europe is substantial. For Italy, France and England, see, e.g., P. Broggio, ‘Narrazioni della vendetta e della giustizia: articolazioni di potere, cultura politica e acculturazione religiosa nell’Europa della prima età moderna’, *Krypton*, 5/6 (2015), 41–56; G. Hanlon, ‘Justice in the age of lordship: a feudal court in Tuscany during the Medici era (1619–66)’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 35 (2004), 1005–33; P. Hyams, ‘Feud and the state in late Anglo-Saxon England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), 1–43; Madden, ‘“Una causa civile”’; Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*; O. Raggio, *Faide e parentele: lo stato genovese visto dalla Fontanabuona* (Turin, 1990); C. Rose, ‘“To be remedied of any vendetta”: petitions and the avoidance of violence in early modern Parma’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 16 (2012), 5–27; C. Rose, ‘Justice in the contado: rural vendetta and urban authority in Bologna, 1600’, *Krypton*, 5/6 (2015), 17–24; D. Smail, ‘Factions and vengeance in Renaissance Italy: a review article’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38 (1996), 781–89; D. Smail, ‘Hatred as a social institution in late-medieval society’, *Speculum*, 76 (2001), 90–126; D. Smail, ‘Violence and predation in late medieval Mediterranean Europe’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54 (2012), 7–34; S.K. Wray, ‘Instruments of concord: making peace and settling disputes through a notary in the city and contado of late medieval Bologna’, *Journal of Social History*, 42 (2009), 733–60.

⁴⁸ASBo, Torrone, 6789, unnumbered fascicle.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 3227, fasc. 358r.

condemned to die for the killing before further interrogation of the nobleman's associates, and of the nobleman himself, revealed Bezzelli's guilt. Bezzelli believed the murdered servant was a spy for his rival in Verona.

The murder in the piazza was a message to that rival. Outside of Verona, Bezzelli believed he could safely eliminate the threat, and doing so in such a public and sanctified space communicated both enmity and righteousness to his enemies at home. Aware of the ongoing rivalry, Veronese elites would have likely surmised the truth if Bezzelli had successfully pinned the killing on the servant. The statement would have been clear: Bezzelli's claim to justice was magnified by the location where the body was found, on display for the Bolognese public and the Veronese diplomatic elite.

Communicating a claim to justice was the more esoteric reason for killing in or outside churches. Practicalities also played a role. In 1652, the murder of a judge of the Torrone, Giacinto Pungelli, rocked Bolognese civil society for its brazen publicness.⁵⁰ On 8 September, Pungelli attended mass in the Celestine convent just south of the city's central piazza, now the seat of Bologna's State Archive. Exiting the church, he was set upon by a group of men armed with knives and guns; shot and wounded in the scuffle, he was taken to the home of a nearby physician where he died. He was killed by the Steffanini family and their retinue, as revenge for his role in the condemnation and exile of one of their kin. The killing was instigated by the Count Astorre Barbazza, and the conspiracy enveloped a broad swathe of Bolognese urban and rural elites, united by their opposition to the centralized judicial regime of the papal legates governing Bologna.

Regardless of the broader political implications and its place in a larger process of conflict between recalcitrant pro- and anti-papal factions, the case stands out for its location. The Celestine convent is a central church, a grand Renaissance building whose piazza opens squarely onto one of the city's major avenues. The church was patronized by the city's elites, who, filing out of the building into the late summer sunshine, became the audience to the grizzly spectacle of revenge. The message was clear: Bolognese elites would resist the imposition of outside governance with blade and barrel, and in this public, sanctified space, they demonstrated that nowhere was safe for the agents of papal rule. Indeed, the churchyard lent a righteousness to the violence, the civic religion of Bolognese nobility being here expressed through murder. The Pungelli murder was the most significant of a series of such killings by elites – of notaries, watchmen and messengers of the centralized criminal court that stood for the power of foreign rule in this deeply proud city of violent elites.

Church homicides are a prominent element in the prepositional cartography created by notarial records of crime in early modern Bologna. We can see in these records how space and location inflected the meaning ascribed by contemporaries to these events, and we can use these records to recreate the atmosphere of a city through modern cartographic programmes. Thanks to the availability of significant GIS recreations of the early modern city, Bologna provides a valuable case-study for mapping out the incidence of violence – and other elements of city life,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6612/1. The case occupies the entire 1,200-folio document, indicating the resources and time that were given to resolving it. For the broader context of this homicide, see Rose, *A Renaissance of Violence*, ch. 6; Angelozzi and Casanova, *La nobiltà disciplinata*, ch. 3.

such as the activities of various city magistracies – in both close and distant analyses.⁵¹ The maps produced for this article show the city as it was portrayed by the judicial records of the seventeenth century. Major avenues, *piazze*, elite palaces and grand civic churches were not just features of urban topography but sites of anger, conflict, revenge and violence. As notaries, victims, perpetrators and witnesses described the circumstances of their city's violence, they described that violence prepositionally, in relation to the fabric of the city around them.

Using those prepositional descriptors, modern historians can better understand the roles of place in shaping how contemporaries thought about their urban environment. Behaviour was always related to landmarks. Particular areas of the city were brought up again and again in the records of judicial activity. The street-level representatives of judicial authority, the *sbirri*, who formed a sort of proto-police force, patrolled and focused their presence on these areas, perhaps compounding their ill reputations: where you look for crime, there you will find it.

The varying spaces of killing in Bologna tell different stories of the significance of that violence. Murders of opportunity or exchange took place on city streets. Domestic or intra-familial violence occurred under the eaves of the grand *palazzi* of elite families. And sacralized, revenge-driven violence, meant to show the righteousness of the killers' cause, bloodied the floors and *piazze* of the city's many churches. By mapping these homicides in a GIS, we can transform the mental mapping of Bolognese judicial documentation into a prepositional cartography that shows us the city as a space of exchange, conflict and violence.

⁵¹Zaneri and Geltner, 'The dynamics of healthscaping'.