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Was Carlo Gesualdo's Honour Killing Liturgical?

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Abstract In recent years, musicologists have dropped the murder charges against Carlo Gesualdo because criminal law in Renaissance Italy permitted cuckolds to execute their unfaithful wives. As Annibale Cogliano has expounded, Gesualdo had the right to perform an 'honour killing'. Still, the known facts of this case are few, and the extent to which Gesualdo premeditated his attack has remained a mystery. Through a new investigation of the surviving sources, this study proposes that Gesualdo coordinated his honour killing with the church liturgy: fearful of breaking the fifth commandment, Gesualdo attacked on a day when the Bible lesson sanctioned vendetta killing.

The case of Carlo Gesualdo's double homicide has been heard and reheard in various domains for over four centuries. In whichever way it is told, the story of how the Prince of Venosa (1556–1613) had his wife and her lover slaughtered – 'Kill, kill that scoundrel along with this harlot! Shall a Gesualdo be made a cuckold?' – has never ceased to send shivers down listeners' spines ('I do not believe she is dead yet', Gesualdo is alleged to have muttered, as he hacked his wife's lifeless body a second time).[1] To this day, pilgrimages are made by artists and scholars alike to the 'scene of the crime' in the *centro storico* of Naples and from there to the Castello di Gesualdo in the scenic Neapolitan countryside, with the hope of piecing together this troubled prince's life and works. If one were to venture to reopen this case again, suspecting that some evidence had been missed, there is still just one relatively authoritative source to consult: a posthumous copy of the initial 'investigative hearing' ('processo') carried out by the Grand Court of the Viceroy (Gran Corte della Vicaria) in Naples.[2] Other

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[1] Annibale Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida fra storia e mito* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2006), p. 23; translation (with my slight alteration) in Glenn Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and his Music*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 22.

[2] *Processo per l'omicidio di don Carlo Gesualdo fatto alla sua moglie donna Maria d'Avalos e duca d'Andria à 17 ottobre 1590.* The original manuscript is lost but several later copies are extant. Of these, Annibale Cogliano has identified two as 'more reliable' ('più attendibili'): Biblioteca Provinciale di Avellino, *fondo Capone*, b. 10 (fascicolo 2, fols 1–10^{r}); and Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, ms. XXII. 157, fols 251^{r}–259^{r}. On these sources and other variants, see Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 11–24; Annibale Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa: per una biografia* (Irsina: Giuseppe Barile, 2015), p. 91; Annibale Cogliano, *Inventario: centro studi e documentazione Carlo Gesualdo* (Avellino: Elio Sellino, 2004), p. 101. The Avellino copy, as transcribed by Cogliano, serves as the basis for this study. The *processo* is also found in translation in the standard reference on Gesualdo in

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than that, there are 'scandalous chronicles' ('cronache scandalose') – historical fabrications of the Gesualdo affair that differ from the *processo.*[3]

First published in the nineteenth century, the *processo* has long frustrated scholars because the Grand Court appears to have omitted evidence on purpose.[4] The inner workings of the court might mystify musicologists in particular, as there is precious little for us to work with in an unfamiliar jurisdiction.[5] The court's investigators wrote up, firstly, a thorough coroner's report, which describes all the wounds, weapons and bloodied nightgowns in gruesome detail. After that, they took down the witness testimonies of both a maid- and a manservant in Gesualdo's household, which turn out to be not wholly consistent with each other. That is all. The investigators did not interrogate Gesualdo himself because they had no need to record his version of the events. The prince (so the court was content to hear) was just about to embark on a hunting trip that night, when an unwelcome guest arrived upstairs ('You will see the kind of hunting I am going to do', Gesualdo retorted, when asked by his baffled servant why he wanted to go hunting late at night).[6] Judging from the *processo*, the investigators were charged only with determining the guilt of Gesualdo's wife, Maria d'Avalos, and her lover, Fabrizio Carafa, Duke of Andria, so as to spare the prince from criminal prosecution.

Implausible though it might strike us today, the lovers had committed a crime – adultery; Gesualdo was the victim. Gesualdo, as Annibale Cogliano has recently expounded, did not break the law of our time but followed the law that was in effect in his time: a neo-Roman 'Julian' law (*lex Iulia*).[7] To preserve his honour, Gesualdo was

English: Watkins, *Gesualdo*, pp. 14–22, which I shall cite in tandem with Cogliano. Watkins drew upon the first published edition of the *processo*: Carmine Modestino, *Della dimora di Torquato Tasso in Napoli negli anni 1588, 1592, 1594*, (Naples: Giuseppe Cataneo, 1863), II, pp. 52–66. *Processo* is best rendered in English as 'investigative hearing' (not as 'trial', in the modern sense of the word), as it was a *processo per informazione*, on which see Thomas Cohen and Elizabeth Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials Before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 17. Other copies of this *processo* (e.g. Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, ms. XXII. 157) were titled, more plainly, *Informazione* …

[3] The most extensive chronicle from the seventeenth century is the so-called 'Corona manuscript' (of uncertain authorship and date): Angelo Borzelli, *Successi tragici et amorosi di Silvio et Ascanio Corona* (Naples: F. Casella, 1908), pp. 192–203; Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 126–27, 190–94; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, pp. 7–13. Although much of the common understanding of Gesualdo's double homicide has come directly from the Corona manuscript, I shall disqualify it from this investigation because it does not provide any certain facts not already found in the *processo.*

[4] Cogliano (*Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa*, p. 91) calls the *processo* 'deliberately superficial' ('volutamente superficiale').

[5] There are other *processi* of musicological interest, as in Cohen and Cohen, *Words and Deeds*, pp. 103–34. *Processi* were also turned into carnival performances; for one by a playwright who sought Gesualdo patronage, see Vincenzo Braca, *Il processus criminalis* e *I pronostici*, ed. by Rosa Troiano (Cava de' Tirreni: Avagliano, 2002), pp. 18–19, 105.

[6] Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 22; translation in Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 21.

[7] On the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, see Thomas McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 140–47 (p. 146); and Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 28–29. There are some noteworthy differences between the ancient law and its neo-Roman rendition in Gesualdo's Naples (as cited below). In antiquity, only the father of an adulterous wife had the right to kill her, and the husband could only kill her lover if he was of low social class. Otherwise, the law remained in essence the same: the husband had to catch the two in the

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free to execute his cuckolders upon catching them spontaneously in the act (*in flagrante delicto*). It is therefore a historical error, Cogliano cautioned, for us to continue calling Gesualdo a 'murderer',[8] as if he were a criminal, for Gesualdo did not commit the crime of murder (*delitto*). He exercised his right (*diritto*) to perform an 'honour killing' (*delitto d'onore*).[9] As the Neapolitan jurisconsult Nuntio Tartaglia explained, 'According to the law of our kingdom, a husband is permitted to kill both the adulterer and [his] wife when they are caught together in the act, without any distinction of persons'.[10]

Case closed, the Grand Court declared: the law was on Gesualdo's side. The Julian rights of men would even be upheld in print by one of the Gesualdo family's own jurisconsults, Camillo Borrello (d. 1631), who discoursed at length on adultery (Appendix 1).[11] The d'Avalos and Carafa families, bearing the brunt of the law, dared not file a legal complaint (*querela*) against Gesualdo.[12] All of the parties involved in the

act (typically in his own home) to be permitted to kill them both at that moment. In modern Italian law, the Zanardelli penal code (1890–1930) continued to acquit (after trial) husbands who killed adulterous wives. The subsequent Rocco code, which sentenced husbands to a reduced prison term, was abrogated in 1981.

8 The words of, for example, Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine, *Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa: Musician and Murderer* (London: Kegan Paul & Co.; J. Curwen & Sons, 1926) still hold sway over discourse regarding Gesualdo.

9 Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 26–27; Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa*, pp. 90, 105–06. Legal scholars generally concur. In Giovanni Iudica's judgement, Gesualdo was innocent according to civil law but guilty of breaking the code of chivalry because the weapons he employed to kill nobility were appropriate to plebeians; see Giovanni Iudica, *Il caso Gesualdo* (Milan: La vita felice, 2013), pp. 11–13, 21–22. Still, as the 'honourableness' of such killing remains in question in other domains, scare quotes are used here and (selectively) elsewhere in this study.

10 'De iure autem regni nostri marito permittitur & adulterum & uxorem in ipso actu deprehensos ambos occidere nulla habita distinctione personarum'. Nuntio Tartaglia, *Margaritarum fisci practica criminalis* (Naples: successors of Mattia Cancer, 1579; repr. Giovanni Battista Cappello, 1590), p. 105; this book was bound together with Tartaglia's *Practica M.C. vicariae.* Cogliano (*Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 26) cites only an eighteenth-century source on the law: Alessio Sauri, *Codice delle leggi del regno di Napoli* (Naples: Vincenzo Orsini, 1796), XII, titolo LI, notes 1–8. However, sources from Gesualdo's time are numerous. See also Giovanni Francesco De Leonardis, *Prattica de gli officiali regii, e baronali del regno di Napoli* (Naples: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino & Antonio Pace, 1596; repr. Giovanni Domenico Roncagliolo, 1609), p. 54.

11 Camillo Borrello dedicated to Carlo Gesualdo his *Consiliorum sive controversiarum forensium* (Venice: Giovanni Guerigli, 1598), which cites the Julian law (fol. 82^{v}), and to Alfonso Gesualdo his *Regia aragonum* (Venice: Giacomo Aniello de Maria, 1574). Carlo was also the dedicatee of Marco Aurelio Belli, *De solutis externis ad ius civile liber singularis* (Naples: Constantino Vitale, 1604), which I have not located. Borrello discussed adultery in his *Decisionum universarum et totius christiani orbis rerum omnium iudicatarum, summae* (Venice: Giunti, 1627), III, pp. 172–93. The many tomes of 'collected decisions' by Neapolitan jurisconsults are described in Marco Nicola Miletti, *Stylus judicandi: le raccolte di 'Decisiones' del Regno di Napoli in età moderna* (Naples: Jovene, 1998).

12 In view of a point made by Carmine Modestino, we ought not to discount the possibility that the Carafa family had a case against Gesualdo. There is ambiguity as to whether the ancient caveat that the adulterer must be of low class to be killed was in effect in Naples. Based on this caveat, Modestino argued against accepting Gesualdo's honour killing as legitimate. See Modestino, *Della dimora di Torquato Tasso*, pp. 76–78. This caveat is found in (among others) Giovanni Luigi Riccio, *Decisionum curiae archiepiscopalis Neapolitanae* (Naples: Dominico Maccarano, 1625), IV, p. 191. Elsewhere, Borrello reports in his *Decisionum universarum* that this caveat was ignored (Appx. 1). Since the Duke of Andria was not of low status, could Gesualdo have been indicted for murder? As it stands, the record shows that the viceroy set aside his own affection for the duke and did not wade into legal grey areas to help the Carafa family seek justice. See Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 15.

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affair recognised that the law was served, and they soon came to terms with the situation. 'Evidently everyone', as Glenn Watkins remarked in his foundational biography of Gesualdo, 'wished to suppress the scandal as quickly as possible'.[13] At the encouragement of the viceroy, the Gesualdo and Carafa families mopped the mess up without much fuss, while the prince fled to his castle. Save for a dispute (*lite*) that Gesualdo later instigated with Maria's father (to recoup her dowry), there was no further legal action on this matter.[14]

It would still be unwarranted, however, for scholars to cease the investigation against Gesualdo, because the said neo-Julian law had, in fact, long been repealed by another institution to which his family belonged: the Church. As the namesake of his illustrious maternal uncle, Charles Borromeo, former archbishop of Milan and soon-to-be saint (he was canonised in 1610), and the nephew of cardinal Alfonso Gesualdo, archbishop of Naples from 1596 to 1603, Carlo Gesualdo still had a higher authority to face (metaphysically speaking) than the Grand Court. In God's sanctuary, Gesualdo's civil right to kill the adulterers did not necessarily translate into a religious right to kill. The essential difference between criminal and canon law on the punishment for adultery was explained next by Tartaglia: 'Regarding the canonical law in particular, it is illicit for either the father or the husband to kill the daughter, wife, or adulterer caught in adultery'.[15]

Case not closed: if and how Gesualdo negotiated this conflict between his religion and the state is open to further enquiry. After all, before turning homicidal, he was raised by his family to become a pious prince, at the height of the Counter-Reformation.[16] Even though he never had to face the Grand Court or the ecclesiastical court (*curia ecclesiastica*) for killing,[17] Gesualdo still had to face his Creator and, until that time, His representatives in his own family. There was just one court the prince could not avoid. As Gregorio Carafa, future archbishop of nearby Salerno, would write in a moral-theological treatise against duelling for honour, 'A husband cannot in the *court of conscience* be allowed to kill an adulterer caught in adultery'.[18]

On *querele*, see Stephen Cummins, 'Forgiving Crimes in Early Modern Naples', in *Cultures of Conflict Resolution in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Stephen Cummins and Laura Kounine (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), pp. 255–79.

13 Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 36. This is evinced by the correspondence of the Venetian ambassador in Naples. See Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 14; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 14.

14 Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 43–44, 195–201. Gesualdo's claim was questionable according to at least one contemporary jurist: 'If the husband kills the wife caught in adultery, then he does not acquire the dowry'. ('Maritus si occidit uxorem deprehensam in adulterio non lucratur dotem'.) Giovanni Francesco De Leonardis, *Perutilis tractatus de variis iuris decisionibus, et practicabilibus quaestionibus* (Naples: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino & Antonio Pace, 1592), p. 115.

15 'De iure vero canonico non licet neque patri neque marito, filiam aut uxorem vel adulterum in adulterio deprehensos occidere'. Tartaglia, *Margaritarum*, p. 105. For adultery, canon law prescribed excommunication for laity and, for clerics, assignment to a monastery; see Borrello, *Decisionum universarum*, III, p. 175.

16 Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, pp. 47–76, 318.

17 Ecclesiastical courts tried adultery cases when no violence was involved. See Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 43.

18 'Maritum non posse in *Foro Conscientiae* licitè occidere adulterum in adulterio deprehensum'. Gregorio Carafa, *De monomachia seu duello; opus theologico-morale* (Rome: Mascardi, 1647),

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Innocent here, guilty there, and almost above it all as a prince, Gesualdo was bound to hit a fork in the road when he mapped out the course of his hunting trip. One way led towards the Grand Court and the other way towards the Church.[19] Warning signs were posted: 'He who wishes to belong to the Church cannot rightly take advantage of the law which permits a man to kill his wife', St Thomas Aquinas opined in his influential disputation against uxoricide.[20] The imminent challenge confronting Gesualdo was not how to get away with killing his wife and her noble lover – that was relatively easy – but, rather, how to get away with killing them as a Christian prince.

So that we might form a clearer picture of his path to and from homicide, this study reinvestigates Gesualdo's honour killing in its religious contexts, drawing on some hitherto overlooked clues to this case in the Church that were outside the Grand Court's jurisdiction. No previous study of the case has examined post-Tridentine liturgical books – yet we ought to consult these because it is important for us to know when this honour killing fell on the liturgical calendar, for several reasons. Naturally, we might expect that Gesualdo soon sought forgiveness for killing. On which occasion of the church year could he have confessed? Is that occasion marked in his volumes of sacred music? Logical though it may seem, this is one avenue of enquiry we have still not pursued.

Alternatively, there is a darker reason why we should determine when Gesualdo's honour killing fell on the liturgical calendar. Even the Bible justifies homicide in certain circumstances, while forbidding it in general. Adultery was once grounds for justifiable homicide; as we shall see, the death penalty is prescribed for adultery in the Old Testament, but doubts about that penalty arise in the New Testament. At the time of his attack, Gesualdo might have wanted those Bible passages in his favour to be recited (as opposed to those that counted against him). We must consider the distinct possibility that Gesualdo coordinated his honour killing with the liturgy in the hope (vain or otherwise) of freeing himself from the burden of sin. Even before seeking forgiveness, Gesualdo could have sought vindication from the Church and argued the canon law.

I raise the question 'Was Gesualdo's honour killing liturgical?' in view of a coincidence between his actions and the daily lessons read from the Bible.[21] As I will exhibit, Gesualdo struck the night after the Church recited one of the select Bible readings that,

p. 329. On Carafa (1588–1675) and his treatise, see Giulio Sodano, 'Tra politica e religione: le riflessioni di un vescovo regio sul duello', *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2 (2015), pp. 121–43.

[19] This fork is not just metaphorical: in terms of cartography, Gesualdo's residence on the Piazza San Domenico Maggiore in Naples is near the intersection of Via Duomo (which leads to Duomo di San Gennaro, the cathedral of Naples) and Via dei Tribunali (which leads to the Castel Capuano, then home to the Gran Corte della Vicaria).

[20] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa totius theologiae; additiones ad tertiam partem* (Venice: Giunti, 1588), pp. 400–01; trans. in *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas: Third Part Supplements* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1932), pp. 282–84.

[21] More so than 'liturgical', 'paraliturgical' describes the timing, in that Gesualdo's actions align with the church liturgy without being a formal part of that liturgy. I shall, however, speak more plainly, with the paraliturgical aspect understood. In a general sense, almost any honour killing could be 'liturgical': there are cultural rituals behind defending honour that are motivated by what any given group treats

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arguably, condones vendetta killing (I Maccabees 9. 37–40, quoted below). In his pursuit to kill the lovers, Gesualdo followed right on the heels of those before him in the biblical era who had killed a royal bride and groom and were saved from sin. This circumstance leads me to suspect, as an inference,[22] that he sought to reconcile Christian law with criminal law, so as to justify his attack. Even though he left no testimony (without which there can be no conclusive answer to this question), the Breviary could encapsulate his timeline. Judging from the Breviary, Gesualdo's attack was not truly a 'crime of passion' (*delitto passionale*), as the *processo* would lead us to believe; it was premeditated.[23]

If scholars have previously neglected to consider the possibility that the church liturgy, in part, led Gesualdo to kill, when he killed, it is likely because of a long tacit assumption that Gesualdo must have defied church doctrine, as we understand it – and not followed church doctrine, as he (mis-)understood it. Just as we had once assumed that Gesualdo broke criminal law, we assumed that he broke the fifth commandment, and we left it at that. Although this assumption seems more secure, it still proves anachronistic and cannot sufficiently explain the complexities of this case. Recent research on homicide in Renaissance Italy, as I shall elaborate, evinces an at times bewildering correlation between homicides and church doctrine. Most pertinent to Gesualdo's case, there were heated debates inside the Church for and against capital punishment for adultery. A few prelates (notably the pope at the time of the Gesualdo affair) lobbied for restoring the death penalty, but others were more forgiving. Both Gesualdo and Carafa prelates became entangled in the debates, and both families apparently had one male member who reckoned that Christianity sanctioned the execution of their wives.

Even to this day (to draw a comparative inference), honour killings against adulterers (especially alleged adulteresses) are carried out – and censured – in the name of religion, as is all too often reported in the news. In a study on modern-day honour killing, the sociologist Aisha Gill implores us to set aside biased assumptions that this problem persists essentially because of a given religion, patriarchy or nationality alone (stereotypically other than one's own) and to see it as a collective problem with multiple roots.[24] And so it is with Gesualdo: honour, male ego, law and religion all motivated him to kill. We cannot emphasise Gesualdo's honour and 'Julian' rights in this equation but understate his Christianity; perhaps our assumption should be that

as 'sacred'. See Thomas Cohen, 'The Lay Liturgy of Affront in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Journal of Social History*, 25/4 (1992), pp. 857–77.

22 On the presence of the historiographer's voice in homicide mysteries, see Thomas Cohen, 'Reflections on Retelling a Renaissance Murder', *History and Theory*, 41/4 (2002), pp. 7–16. Cf. Thomas Cohen, *Love and Death in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 17–42.

23 Aside from his *ad hoc* hunting trip, nothing is known about how Gesualdo plotted his honour killing (Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 25).

24 Aisha Gill, 'Introduction: "Honour" and "Honour"-Based Violence: Challenging Common Assumptions', in *'Honour' Killing and Violence: Theory, Policy and Practice*, ed. by Aisha Gill, Carolyn Strange and Karl Roberts (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1–23.

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Gesualdo would have killed if and only if he believed it to be a demonstrably Christian act.

To return to the scene of Gesualdo's honour killing with liturgical books in hand will hardly lead us far afield from tried-and-true musicological methodology. Just as we work to identify the liturgical contexts for Gesualdo's *Sacrae cantiones* (1603) and situate his final musical testament, *Tenebrae responsoria* (1611), in the liturgy for Holy Week,[25] so too ought we to test the liturgical placement of his *delitto d'onore.* Once this is done, another enigma will appear at the scene. The Bible lesson on that day turns out to be peculiarly musical in its contents. While this lends credence to the hypothesis that Gesualdo's honour killing was liturgical, it also raises a follow-up question: was Gesualdo's honour killing liturgical music?

Until the ecclesiastical evidence is heard, the 'Gesualdo case' cannot be considered closed.

Why a 'liturgical' honour killing?

Why Christians commit homicides is a question that historical criminologists have raised again in Renaissance studies in recent years. It seems paradoxical, as Trevor Dean and Kate Lowe introduce the general problem, that people who prided themselves as Christians should have failed to obey the fifth commandment (generically understood, then and now, as 'Thou shalt not kill') and have even accepted killing as 'part of "normal" life'.[26] Although homicide cases might be aberrations in the scheme of early music history, musicologists are not wholly exempt from this question. Any lingering romanticised notions that we have about Gesualdo being abnormal as a 'musician and murderer' must be checked in context. As Laurie Stras's study of female musicians in Ferrara evinces, Gesualdo remarried into a court where male violence against women ran rampant.[27] After Gesualdo, the next nobleman and madrigalist of note to attack his cuckolders would be Alfonso Fontanelli (1557–1622).[28] How could they, as Christians, have honestly believed in so-called 'honour killing'?

Considering his family's stature within the Church, this question is pressing in Gesualdo's case. He seems to have harboured doubts about honour killing, because he performed multiple penitential acts late in his life to atone for his sins, homicide possibly counted among them. As depicted in his altarpiece, 'The Pardoning of

[25] See Robert Kendrick, *Singing Jeremiah: Music and Meaning in Holy Week* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014).

[26] *Murder in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trevor Dean and K.J.P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 1. The 'normality' of honour killing is debatable. Scott Taylor cautions us not to exaggerate: the violence against adulteresses we find in fiction does not always match the court processes from real life. See Scott Taylor, *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 194–225 (in particular, p. 214). Taylor's findings are pertinent because Naples was under Spanish rule during Gesualdo's time. See also Colin Rose, *A Renaissance of Violence: Homicide in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[27] Laurie Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 294–95, 312.

[28] Chronicles of the Fontanelli affair are found in Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, pp. 103–04. Unlike Gesualdo, Fontanelli tried to poison his wife and still faced exile from Ferrara as a punishment for killing her lover.

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Gesualdo' (*Il perdono di Gesualdo* [1609]), the God-fearing prince prayed for the intercession of his uncle, St Carlo Borromeo, so that he might enter heaven.[29] It is not implausible that Gesualdo also conceived of his *Tenebrae responsoria* as securing his pardoning, given the fact that convicted perpetrators of illegal honour killings tended (as Scott Taylor has found) to receive Good Friday pardons, if ever.[30] As a Christian, Gesualdo might not have been as confident about his final judgement as he was, as a prince, about the court's secular *processo.* Maintaining his honour in life could have trapped Gesualdo in purgatory (as depicted in the altarpiece) in the afterlife. It is this confliction – or, more accurately, the inquietude instilled by it[31] – that, I suggest, motivated Gesualdo to mount a biblical justification of his honour killing, in advance of carrying out that killing.[32] There is sufficient reason to believe that Gesualdo did not simply decide in the heat of the moment to 'sin now, repent later'. Without pretending to speak for the prince, I shall endeavour to explain why and how this justification process could have unfolded.

Cogliano began to describe what such a justification entailed when he pointed out that some theologians did not, in fact, treat honour killing as a sin. As evidence that this was still current thinking in Gesualdo's time, Cogliano cited the Spanish theologian Martín de Azpilcueta (1491–1586), whose *Manual de confesores y penitentes* (1549) was reprinted in Italian translation a few years before Gesualdo's honour killing. In a chapter on the fifth commandment, rendered as 'Thou shalt not kill' ('non ucciderai'), Azpilcueta presented certain exceptions that could be made 'for the defence of one's own life' ('per difesa della propria vita'): 'Whoever kills justly', as Cogliano quoted Azpilcueta, 'for the just defence of their neighbour or their honour and their belongings, and also so that they otherwise might defend their own life, does not sin, although it incurs irregularity'.[33] As Gesualdo's honour was at stake, he could (Cogliano assures us) kill to defend himself. For Cogliano, Azpilcueta's authority alone was sufficient to prove that Gesualdo was free from sin. It seems Gesualdo had no need to fear.

[29] Reproductions are available online and in Glenn Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex* (New York: Norton, 2010).

[30] Taylor, *Honor and Violence*, pp. 198–99.

[31] Maria Manuela Toscano, 'Chemins vers une esthétique de l'inquiétude dans la musique de Gesualdo', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 30/1 (1999), pp. 27–53; Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, p. 109.

[32] 'Justification' is used here not only in a theological sense (sinners are made righteous through God) but also in a psychological sense: the need for 'self-justification' arises when one's decision-making in a dilemma (i.e. to kill or not?) could be considered immoral. Since Gesualdo never faced the *curia ecclesiastica*, any biblical justification he sought for killing was perhaps intended for himself alone. On the problem of justifying killing through religion, see E. Christian Brugger, *Capital Punishment and Roman Catholic Moral Tradition*, 2nd edn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), pp. 38–56; John Renard, 'Exegesis and Violence: Texts, Contexts, and Hermeneutical Concerns', in *Fighting Words: Religion, Violence, and the Interpretation of Sacred Texts*, ed. by John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 1–29.

[33] 'Chi uccide giustamente, per la giusta difesa del prossimo, o dell'honor suo, et delle cose sue, anco ch'altrimenti potesse difendere la propria vita, non pecca, benché incorra nella irregolarità'. Martín de Azpilcueta, *Manuele de' confessori, et penitenti*, trans. by Cola di Guglinisi (Venice: Andrea Muschio, 1584), p. 174; quoted in Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, p. 106.

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Although Cogliano had the right inclination, his case for Gesualdo, in this instance, falls short of the mark. Theologians were not all in agreement that honour killing constituted self-defence and was therefore exculpable.[34] To represent the opposite opinion, let us hear again from Gregorio Carafa: 'If, for example, [a man] was caught in adultery, then, even though he was killed by the husband of the adulteress with impunity in the external court, such a killing was nevertheless not free from mortal sin'.[35] Since Gesualdo was surrounded by a larger debate about this issue, we should not claim *a priori* that he was sinless when he killed (or even when he ordered his servants to kill on his behalf).[36] Instead, let us consider Gesualdo caught in the middle of that debate.

Rather than 'self-defence', our reconstruction of a scriptural justification for Gesualdo's honour killing should depart from another exception to the commandment. There are certain lessons in the Old Testament that prescribe capital punishment for adultery:

> If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death. (Leviticus 20.10)
>
> If a man is caught lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman as well as the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 22.22)[37]

These are the Bible verses in Gesualdo's favour and, presumably, he knew them well. In addition to the aforementioned collected decisions by Camillo Borrello,[38] there is at least one other source on this exception to the commandment directly connected to Gesualdo. Some years after the honour killing, Gesualdo's own *segretario*, Tiberio Putignano (dates unknown), published a translation of a treatise by Francesco Arias (1533–1605), *Libro de la imitacion de Christo* (1599), with a dedication to the wife of Emmanuele Gesualdo, the firstborn son of Carlo and Maria d'Avalos.[39] Perhaps Carlo had, in some part, inspired this publication; was it another one of his late penitential

[34] Historians are also not in agreement: at odds with Cogliano, Taylor cites the same treatise by Azpilcueta for evidence that Christian moralists discouraged honour killing. In Taylor's reading, Azpilcueta permitted killing to prevent but not to avenge dishonour; uxoricide was 'inexcusable'. See Taylor, *Honor and Violence*, pp. 197–99, where he cites Azpilcueta, *Manual de confesores y penitentes* (Barcelona: Claudio Bornat, 1567), p. 149.

[35] 'Si v.g. in adulterio deprehenderetur, tunc quamvis impunè in *Foro externo* occideretur à viro adulterae, non tamen talis occisio esset à lethali culpa immunis'. Gregorio Carafa, *De monomachia*, p. 218. This position is not unique to Carafa and is also found in collected decisions, as in Francisco Vivio, *Decisiones regni neapolitani* (Venice: Damiani Zenari, 1592), p. 270.

[36] Ordering others to break the commandment was an excommunicable offense. See Michele Miele, 'Confessione, confessori e penitenti nei sinodi di area napoletana della seconda metà del cinquecento', in *Ricerche sulla confessione dei peccati a Napoli tra '500 e '600*, ed. by Boris Ulianich (Naples: La città del sole, 1997), pp. 15–64 (p. 55). It is not entirely certain that Gesualdo engaged in the killing himself (as opposed to delegating it to his servants); see Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 24.

[37] All English quotations from the Bible are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

[38] Borrello, *Decisionum universarum*, III, p. 175.

[39] Francesco Arias, *Dell'immitatione di Christo … Libro Primo*, trans. by Tiberio Putignano (Rome: Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1609). On Putignano's service to Gesualdo, see Marco Bizzarini, *Federico Borromeo e la musica: scritti e carteggi* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2012), pp. 23, 95–96.

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acts? Whatever Putignano's motivations were, here Gesualdo is praised in a treatise that (among other subjects) includes a discourse on capital punishment for adultery. Arias's first commentary is on Leviticus 20.10. 'It is evident', Arias observed, 'that adultery, which is committed with a married woman, and incest, which is committed with a female relative, are most grave sins and condemned by the laws of God, not only with the pain of death and eternal damnation, but also with the pain of temporal death'.[40] There is, Arias promised, no escape for adulterers from these certain deaths. Should the mortal person (i.e. the husband) responsible for executing the temporal death sentence be absent, God will deliver it Himself. Citing the outcome of King David's adultery (II Samuel 11), Arias wrote: 'God so wanted to reveal the gravity of these sins and His hatred for them that this pain of corporeal death would be carried out with much righteous justice when, through the authority of the person who committed the sin, whoever ought to have carried out this pain would be missing; He would supply the justice, which was provided from heaven towards this end'.[41] That is to say, not only should Gesualdo have punished the lovers but God would have done so Himself if he were incapacitated (murdered by the Duke of Andria, hypothetically speaking). With these comments, Arias was not necessarily inciting cuckolds to kill (as we shall pick up shortly) but demonstrating the severity of the sin of adultery to deter it from happening. Adulterers, Arias warned, put their lives at risk, as the Bible shows.

All this, however, was by then scholastic theology (and a select chapter of it at that). Gesualdo could not justify his honour killing simply by finding the single best exception made to the commandment, when there are many other Bible verses, church authorities and historical precedents against killing adulterers.[42] The arguments not in Gesualdo's favour are formidable (as the above quotation from Aquinas alludes) and they were gaining traction during the Counter-Reformation. At no session of the Council of Trent was the death penalty for adultery ever officially sanctioned by the Church.[43] On the contrary, Tridentine and post-Tridentine doctrine erred on the side

[40] 'E cosa evidente, che l'adulterio, che si commette con donna maritata, & l'incesto, che si commette con donna parente, sono peccati gravissimi, & condannati nella legge di Dio, non solo con pena di morte, & di dannatione eterna, ma anche con pena di morte temporale'. Arias, *Dell'immitatione*, I, p. 491.

[41] 'Et volse Dio, per scoprire la gravezza di questi peccati, & l'odio, nel quale gli hà, che questa pena di morte corporale si esseguisse con tanto retta giustitia, che quando per l'autorità della persona, che commetteva il peccato, fusse mancato chi havesse esseguita questa pena, supplisse la giustitia, della quale per questo effetto provedeva dal cielo'. Ibid. In this instance, God punished David and Bathsheba by taking their firstborn son. Arias subsequently comments on Numbers 5. 11–31 ('The Test for an Unfaithful Wife').

[42] On the execution of adulterers in the biblical era, see Anthony Phillips, 'Another Look at Adultery', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 6/20 (1981), pp. 3–26.

[43] The Council of Trent did invest the power to apply the death penalty in civil courts, while remaining reticent about the offences that merited it. See *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, ed. by John McHugh and Charles Callan (New York: Joseph Wagner, 1934; repr. Fort Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books, 2002), p. 421. Synods in the Gesualdo territories reiterated the general prohibitions on concubinage and clandestine marriages, to stop people from living *in perpetuo adulterio.* See *Constitutiones synodales ecclesiae venusinae* (Rome: Paulo Blado, 1591), fols. 37^{v}, 46^{v}; Scipione Gesualdo, *Constitutiones, et decreta diocesanae synodi in metropolitana ecclesia Compsana* (Naples: Giacomo Carlino, 1600), pp. 100, 185.

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of life for adulterers, in accordance with the New Testament (and at odds with Lutheran inclinations towards the Old Testament).[44] In particular, the story of 'Jesus and the woman taken in adultery', as told in John 7. 53–8. 11, casts doubt upon capital punishment for adultery.[45] When tested by the Pharisees to see if he would put an adulteress to death according to the law (still current at that time), Jesus replied:

> Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her (John 8. 7).[46]

Thus, the Old Testament was in conflict with the New Testament, as the neo-Julian civil law was in conflict with canon law. Gesualdo was presented with a clear-cut choice to make.

After the Council of Trent declared the story of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery to be authentic (i.e. part of the biblical canon),[47] the lesson was disseminated through several media that would have reached Gesualdo, among the masses. It is most strange that John 8 has yet to make an appearance in studies of Gesualdo. Indeed, we can only wonder how Carlo responded to this lesson, as it was recited in church on an annual basis. In the Tridentine Roman Breviary, John 8 was scheduled on Saturday in the fourth week of Lent (or elsewhere in the third week for certain mendicant orders, following pre-Tridentine practice). At the same time, preachers sermonised on the lesson in more depth. Adultery of course was a common topic in sacred oratory and Gesualdo (it is safe to assume) had surely heard sermons praising Jesus for saving the adulteress; indeed, a sermon on the topic has come down to us in print from one of the central Neapolitan churches where some of Gesualdo's musicians served, the Basilica dell'Annunziata Maggiore. There Marcello Ferdinandi da Bari expounded the various laws against adultery, in their 'Mosaic' (Leviticus 20), 'evangelical' (Matthew 19), 'canonical' (Hebrews 13) and 'civil' (no scriptural citation) renditions. Ferdinandi even drew an imaginary line between life and death in his interpretations of Mosaic and civil law, tempering the severity of the latter. According to Ferdinandi's rendition of civil law, an adulteress should have only lost her dowry and her honour ('[Adulterio] è detestato dalla legge civile, la qual vuole, che l'adultera perda la dote, e l'honore insieme') – not her life.[48] Even if only in sacred rhetoric, civil law could be bent

[44] See E. Christian Brugger, *The Indissolubility of Marriage & the Council of Trent* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017), p. 24. It may also be recalled that adultery was subject to the death penalty in puritanical societies in the Anglophone world. Cf. R.S. White, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 170–71; George Lee Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1960), p. 149.

[45] *Catechismus, ex decreto Concilii Tridentini* (Rome: Paulo Manuzio, 1569), pp. 466–87 (pp. 478, 484).

[46] While John 8 is commonly cited as evidence against the death penalty in early Christianity, it should not be interpreted unilaterally as such. See Brugger, *Capital Punishment and Roman Catholic Moral Tradition*, p. 64. The only passage in the New Testament that arguably condones capital punishment for adultery is Revelation 2. 21–23.

[47] See Wim François, 'Scripture and Traditions at the Council of Trent: The Fourth and Fifth Sessions', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Council of Trent*, ed. by Nelson Minnich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 72–96 (p. 80).

[48] Marcello Ferdinandi da Bari, *Prediche quadragesimali* (Venice: Giorgio Varisco, 1606), I, pp. 539–59 (pp. 544–45). This civil law is explained in Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 43. If she did not bear a son, an adulteress was not subject to death; her dowry was confiscated. As Maria d'Avalos had already given birth to Emmanuele Gesualdo, this exception did not pertain to her. Ferdinandi

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towards the New Testament and away from the Old. After hearing such sermons year in and year out, Gesualdo might have come to loathe this stretch of Lent.[49]

In theological treatises (if not legal ones),[50] too, Leviticus 20 and Deuteronomy 22 were counteracted by John 8. In the next instalment of Putignano's translation of Arias's *Libro de la imitacion de Christo* (not dedicated to a member of the Gesualdo family), Arias praised Jesus's absolution of the adulteress: 'This was the compassion that the Lord was accustomed to use with this sinful woman (and a great a sinner at that, as she is an adulteress), who, for the crime of adultery merited not only the pain of eternal fire in the other life, but in this one also merited the pain of temporal death. With this compassion he brought the hope of a cure to all sinners'.[51] Rather than bringing death to a couple, Gesualdo could have brought hope to all sinners. If he had truly wanted to imitate Jesus's virtues, then Carlo too ought to have questioned the Julian law and let his wife (and even her lover) live.

John 8 was, moreover, widely depicted in sacred art. One cannot now count how many examples Gesualdo could have seen in Naples, but there was in his lifetime at least one accomplished version of *Cristo e l'adultera* that has come down to us, a bas-relief from the workshop of Giovanni da Nola (1488–1558) that is displayed in the Annunziata. Later, the imposing fresco in the Chiesa di San Martino by Bellisario Corenzio (*c.* 1557–1643) would appear. Outside of Naples, Gesualdo's maternal relative (and close correspondent) Federico Borromeo (1564–1631), archbishop of Milan, would acquire the widely admired (and copied) 'Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery' by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1565).[52] Only in his own confines could Gesualdo have avoided the sight of Jesus and the adulteress.[53] Elsewhere, Gesualdo risked encountering them – the adulteress staring back at him (so to speak) and

preached this sermon at the Annunziata in 1597 (seven years after Gesualdo's honour killing). Giovanni de Macque (*c.* 1550–1614) served as organist there (1590–94).

49 Comparable Neapolitan sermons for the occasion are found in Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Delle prediche quadragesimali; parte seconda* (Naples: Horatio Salviani, 1586), pp. 297–347; Filocalo Caputo, *De discorsi quaresimali* (Naples: Lazaro Scoriggio, 1628; repr. Rome: Gioseppe Monaldi, 1698), II, pp. 39–59; Gregorio Mastrilli, *Discorsi quadragesimali; terza parte* (Naples: Lazaro Scoriggio, 1628), p. 19. Mastrilli, incidentally, was the brother of the Jesuit Carlo Mastrilli, who (as we shall see) arrived at the scene of Gesualdo's honour killing.

50 Borrello, *Decisionum universarum*, III, p. 175, oddly omits John 8, citing Matthew 5 and I Corinthians 6 as New Testament pronouncements against adultery.

51 'Questa fù la pietà, ch'il Signore usò con questa donna peccatrice, & così gran peccatrice, com'è una adultera, laquale per il delitto dell'adulterio merita non solamente pena di fuoco eterno nell'altra vita, ma in questa anchora merita pena di morte temporale. Et con questa pietà diede speranza di rimedio à tutti i peccatori'. Francesco Arias, *Dell'immitatione di Christo, parte seconda*, trans. by Tiberio Putignano (Rome: Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1611), pp. 110–11. Putignano published both this and the parte terza (1615) without dedications. See also Francesco Pavone, *Commentarius dogmaticus sive theologica interpretatio in evangelia* (Naples: Giovanni Domenico Montanari, 1636), pp. 230–31. Pavone published Alfonso Gesualdo's spiritual exercises (in 1608).

52 See Fritz Grossmann, 'Bruegel's "Woman Taken in Adultery" and Other Grisailles', *The Burlington Magazine*, 94/593 (August 1952), pp. 218–29.

53 On the inventory of the artwork in the Gesualdo castle, see Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, p. 22. The painter of *Il perdono di Gesualdo*, Giovanni Balducci, painted *Cristo e l'adultera* in Florence (Basilica di Santa Maria Novella) before serving Archbishop Gesualdo. See Mauro Vincenzo Fontana, *Itinera tridentina: Giovanni Balducci, Alfonso Gesualdo e la riforma delle arti a Napoli* (Rome: Artemide, 2019), p. 226.

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Jesus looking down and away from him for having asked yet again to stone her. We can imagine Gesualdo standing before that painting, with the horns of a cuckold on his head.[54]

In short, Gesualdo could not have been untroubled by John 8. Few, if any, Christians, we might expect, would have sided with the Pharisees over Jesus. Fortunately for Gesualdo, however, the pope at the time of his wife's affair in fact favoured the Mosaic law. Sixtus V reimplemented the death penalty for adultery in Rome in 1586 as part of his crackdown on crime.[55] In the *salone sistino* in the Vatican library there is a telling *impresa* (a heraldic device) that marks Sixtus's bull. Titled 'On the Punishment of Adulterers' ('Del castigo degl'adulteri'), it reads: 'The virgin remains untouched, but the adulterous wife lives not, and Rome, which was once salacious, is now chaste'.[56]

Sixtus's bull ultimately failed to garner the cardinals' total support, but that did not stop him from executing adulterers at his will. Even far from Rome, the Gesualdo prelates were not exempt from carrying out Sixtus's purge. Sixtus was irked by Alfonso Gesualdo, who was reluctant to carry out his capital punishments. Only under duress did Alfonso relent and dispatch the heads of two dozen bandits to Rome, in the hope of placating the pope.[57] Given this dispute, we ought to doubt that Alfonso was wholly complacent regarding his nephew's honour killing (but we do not have any testimony that he either opposed or accepted it).[58] The Old-versus-New Testament debate stood to divide the Gesualdo family in this instance. In whatever way the uncle and nephew settled this potential disagreement amongst themselves (I shall propose Carlo's solution

[54] According to legend, a cuckold (*cornuto*) grew horns (*corni*) on their head. As recorded in the *processo*, Gesualdo yelled 'A casa Gesualdo corna!' when he barged into his wife's room (Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 23). Elsewhere in art there was a tendency to depict cuckolds as sterile. See Francesca Alberti, '"Divine Cuckolds": Joseph and Vulcan in Renaissance Art and Literature', in *Cuckoldry, Impotence and Adultery in Europe (15th–17th Century)*, ed. by Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 149–82.

[55] Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn, trans. by Ralph Kerr et al., 40 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1899–1953), XXI: *Sixtus V (1585–1590)* (1932), pp. 93–94.

[56] 'Virgo intacta manet, nec vivit adultera coniux. Castaque nunc Roma est, quae fuit ante salax'. Mutio Pansa, *Della libraria vaticana* (Rome: Giovanni Martinelli, 1590), p. 78; translated in Corinne Mandel, 'Felix Culpa and Felix Roma: On the Program of the Sixtine Staircase at the Vatican', *The Art Bulletin*, 75/1 (1993), pp. 65–90 (pp. 80–81). See also Elizabeth Cohen, 'Though Popes Said Don't, Some People Did: Adulteresses in Catholic Reformation Rome', in *Sex, Gender and Sexuality in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Nicholas Terpstra (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 75–94.

[57] Alfonso Gesualdo's dispute is recorded in the documentation of a homicide that deprived Sixtus V of his nephew: Domenico Gnoli, *Vittoria Accoramboni: storia del secolo XVI* (Florence: Successori Le Monier, 1890), p. 268. See also Modestino, *Della dimora di Torquato Tasso*, II, p. 46.

[58] Alfonso's opinion of his nephew's honour killing is still undocumented. On the Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli, see Cogliano, *Inventario*, p. 8. Alfonso was elsewhere adamant about maintaining the *honore del clero* in court. See Michele Mancino, 'Ecclesiastical Justice and the Counter-Reformation: Notes on the Diocesan Criminal Court of Naples', in *The Civilization of Crime: Violence in Town and Country since the Middle Ages*, ed. by Eric A. Johnson and Eric H. Monkkonen (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 125–37.

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later),[59] the pope was leaning towards Carlo's side. The papal bull did not (as in civil law) empower husbands to carry out the penalty for adultery themselves (the accused still faced trial before the *curia ecclesiastica*), but, at a basic level, Sixtus and Carlo were in agreement about the Christianity of this capital punishment.

Still, Gesualdo was evidently not satisfied to just point to the pope and to the Old Testament for justification. There is an additional layer of complexity to this case. As will be outlined in the next section of this study, Gesualdo's attack occurred at a time when he – and essentially everybody – could hear a justifiable homicide case read from the Bible in church, right before he killed. Nobody would hear John 8 in church around that time. That is to say, this case leads us to engage not only biblical and canonical law but also (what we might now call) 'liturgical law': the order and rules of celebration in church.[60] It is one act when a penitent reads a Bible lesson by and for themself and another act when all of Roman Christianity reads it together at a prescribed time. That latter judgement would sound unanimous.

I cannot yet say if Gesualdo would be unique in this regard. An exhaustive enquiry into the precedents (both direct and indirect) for Gesualdo's double homicide still needs to be conducted in the archives.[61] To time an honour killing to the reading of a particular Bible lesson in the liturgy might prove to be an extraordinary but not impossible feat. More generally, however, it was not out of the ordinary to set a symbolic time to kill during the liturgy. Although there has yet to be a comprehensive study of the relationship between homicide and liturgy (and to embark on one here would take us outside the scope of musicology), we may nevertheless assemble from the literature a short catalogue of homicides that fit this bill. Not all of those I shall name here are honour killings; other than adultery, there were many motivations for tying homicides to church. The liturgy to be proposed for Gesualdo's honour killing is part of a wider phenomenon.

Under the rubric of 'liturgical' (for want of a more established term from criminology), I broadly include those homicides that were scheduled according to the church liturgy in any way; the homicides could have taken place either inside or outside church, so long as the occasion was marked by liturgical time.[62] One quintessential case has been described by Carlo Baja Guarienti, who, uniquely, devoted a study not to a homicide *per se* but to the 'liturgy of a homicide' ('liturgia di un omicidio'). Guarienti

[59] The reader should not be left with a false impression that there was an irreparable schism in the Gesualdo family: Alfonso soon arranged Carlo's second marriage into the d'Este family.

[60] Anscar Chupungco, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Introduction to the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), I, pp. 399–402.

[61] The most infamous homicide in 1580s Naples was that of Vincenzo Starace, who was Eletto del Popolo, an elected representative of the people; see Aurelio Musi, 'Political History', in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. by Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 131–52 (pp. 140–42). Another intriguing adultery case, in which Sixtus V hanged the fugitive wife of a Neapolitan civil servant, is chronicled in Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, ms. San Martino 264a fols 15^{r}–17^{r}.

[62] In addition, public executions of criminals had their own liturgy as well. See Adriano Prosperi, *Crime and Forgiveness: Christianizing Execution in Medieval Europe*, trans. by Jeremy Carden (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020); and *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Nicholas Terpstra (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008).

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detailed how the assassins of Giovanni Gozzadini (d. 1517), governor of Reggio Emilia, waited for the elevation of the host at mass on the vigil of the feast of St Peter; then they struck (sadly, the Ferrarese maestro di cappella Girolamo Gobbi also perished in the ensuing chaos).[63] Guarienti's study demonstrates perfectly why mass became a prime opportunity to stage a homicide: the target was practically guaranteed to be there, with their every move limited by the liturgy.

Obviously, we are not dealing with another 'Murder in the Cathedral' story here. A liturgy for Gesualdo's homicide would begin at church and culminate with an armed procession to his wife's bedchamber. Gesualdo needed a fitting day of the church year – not an actual church. There were precedents for liturgical homicides outside of church as well. Politically motivated killings sometimes took place on Epiphany because the feast symbolises renewal. Dissenting humanists conspired to murder pope Nicholas V on Epiphany in 1453,[64] and Duke Alessandro de' Medici was murdered on the same occasion in 1537.[65] Among adulteresses, Vittoria Accoramboni (who allowed her husband, a nephew of Sixtus V, to be murdered by her wealthier adulator, Paolo Giordano Orsini) was assassinated the day before the feast of St Victoria herself (22 December 1585).[66] Gesualdo, despite his wife's name, did not despoil a day of Marian devotion (and he later composed a dozen Marian *sacrae cantiones*).

We need not rattle off here a longer list of liturgical homicides.[67] Such a list, in any case, would not prove that all homicides among nobility were necessarily liturgical, following some unwritten rule of noble decorum.[68] They were not. Among other

[63] Carlo Baja Guarienti, 'Reggio, 28 giugno 1517: liturgia di un omicidio', *Studi storici*, 4 (2008), pp. 985–99. Guarienti (drawing upon Jacob Burkhardt) presents a longer list of liturgical homicides (p. 989) than I do here. Another example would be the murder of Giuliano de' Medici during the Eucharist on Easter Sunday in 1478. See Lauro Martinez, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[64] Anthony D'Elia, *A Sudden Terror: The Plot to Murder the Pope in Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 56.

[65] Stefano Dall'Aglio, 'Truths and Lies of a Renaissance Murder: Duke Alessandro de' Medici's Death between History, Narrative and Memory', in *Murder in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Dean and Lowe, pp. 125–43 (p. 132).

[66] Gnoli, *Vittoria Accoramboni*, p. 322. Vittoria was killed by her husband's relative (who was punished for the murder).

[67] One could also cite fiction. Shakespeare scholars, for instance, point out that there is a deliberate 'misapprehension of the liturgy' in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and other plays because distorted Bible verses run through the killers' minds. See Daniel Swift, 'The Drama of the Liturgy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Religion*, ed. by Hannibal Hamlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 52–66 (pp. 61–62).

[68] That is to say, courtesy books did not describe how to dress up honour killing as 'Christian'. Yet those noblemen-killers perhaps felt some need to re-fashion themselves as Christians in (what David Turner terms) a 'culture of cuckoldry'; David Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex and Civility in England, 1660–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Consider Stephen Greenblatt's discussion of Shakespeare's *Othello*, which is rife with protestant propaganda in favour of the Old Testament punishment for adultery. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980; repr. 2005), pp. 246–47. On the noble decorum of another musician-killer, see Richard Wistreich, *Warrior, Courtier, Singer: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2007).

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prominent honour killings that musicians were involved in, one could cite that of Eleonora di Garzia di Toledo, wife of Pietro de' Medici. Giulio Caccini (1551–1618) had apparently learned of her affair and alerted Pietro, who strangled his wife soon thereafter (in 1576).[69]

Other times, killers contradicted the liturgy. The last time the extended Carafa family was embroiled in an adultery scandal, the accused wife was killed on a major feast day. In a case of greater consequence to the family than the Gesualdo affair, Giovanni Carafa, nephew of Pope Paul IV (Giovanni Pietro Carafa), had his wife, Violante, murdered on the feast of St Augustine (28 August 1559).[70] The saint himself would hardly have approved. In his epistles, Augustine admonished those who might try to justify the death penalty for adultery on Old Testament grounds to remember John 8. Imagine, Augustine instructed, that the adulteress's husband had also appeared before Jesus. The husband would have been 'filled with fear and [have] turned his mind away from the desire for vengeance to the will to pardon'.[71] Obviously, Giovanni Carafa was in no mood to listen to St Augustine that day. He was later charged with Violante's murder under the next pope.

Gesualdo was not so haphazard in his timing. After placing his honour killing in liturgical context, we might take another look at 'The Pardoning of Gesualdo', this time in light of St Augustine's epistle. Perhaps the penitent prince seen in the painting had long before turned his mind away from the desire for vengeance to the will to pardon – to pardon himself, that is.

Gesualdo's honour killing in liturgical context

To conduct a liturgical analysis of Gesualdo's honour killing, we must first be certain of its date, an aspect that has often been regarded as inconsequential. There are discrepancies between the dates found in the standard English account of Watkins and the new Italian account by Cogliano (and elsewhere in the literature). These must be resolved before we can find the matching day on the church calendar.

In Watkins, the *processo* is dated 27 October 1590 and, according to the servants, the killing took place on 'Tuesday, which was the 26th of the present month, which is a

[69] Vanni Bramanti, 'Delitto d'onore? L'assassinio di Leonora di Toledo', in *Le donne Medici nel sistema europeo delle corti, XVI–XVIII secolo*, ed. by Giulia Calvi and Riccardo Spinelli (Florence: Edizioni polistampa, 2008), II, pp. 497–520. Isabella de' Medici was killed a few days later. See Caroline Murphy, *Murder of a Medici Princess* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). These homicides are cited here as examples of non-liturgical planning, but it ought to be clarified that they are also exceptions to the Julian law, as the Medici noblewomen were not caught in the act.

[70] Miles Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 30–31. A musician-murderer involved in this Carafa court is described in Richard Sherr, 'Be Careful in your Patrons: A Few Fretful Years in the Life of Nicola Barone, Papal Singer, Composer and Murderer', *Early Music*, 42 (2014), pp. 389–408.

[71] *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. by John Rotelle et al., 44 vols (New York: New City Press, 1997–), II/2: *Letters 100–155*, trans. by Roland Teske (2003), p. 394.

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week ago today' [sic].[72] This leaves readers confused about why the investigators arrived a week after the event and guessing that the date of the 26th is mistaken. In Cogliano, the *processo* is dated 17 October. A week later, on 23 October, the investigators returned to interview the servants. At that time, the investigators took down Tuesday 16 October as the day in question.[73] As this is corroborated by the Venetian ambassador's correspondence from Naples (dated 19 October, with reference to the killing on the prior Tuesday),[74] 16 October is the accepted date of Gesualdo's honour killing. That Tuesday, however, is not quite the day we recognise now. As Alfonso Cuoppolo has explained, our method of counting the days was not adopted in Naples until the Napoleonic era.[75] In Gesualdo's time, the day changed not at midnight but at sunset. This is significant to our investigation because Gesualdo attacked (according to his servant) at around '6 hours of the night' (i.e. around six hours after sunset or approximately midnight).[76] Therefore, the 'Tuesday' night described in the *processo* began on what we would now call 'Monday' night because 'Tuesday' started immediately after sunset on Monday. Thus, Gesualdo's honour killing took place after the turn of the calendar page from Monday 15 October to Tuesday 16 October (rather than from Tuesday 16 October to Wednesday 17 October).[77] Accordingly, we must turn to the pages in liturgical books for those days, with a view to that whole week.

There is no reference to the liturgical calendar in the *processo*.[78] We must be careful when we position 16 October 1590 on the liturgical calendar of that church year

[72] Watkins, *Gesualdo*, pp. 15, 18, 21. Watkins followed Modestino, *Della dimora di Torquato Tasso*, II, p. 52, which was based on Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli ms. X C 32 (transcribed in Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 183–89). There is an internal contradiction in Watkins's *Gesualdo* between these dates and those found in other sources that went unresolved. Cf. Watkins, *Gesualdo*, pp. 12, 14. This problem was previously identified in Keith Larson, 'The Unaccompanied Madrigal in Naples from 1536 to 1654' (unpublished doctoral dissertation: Harvard University, 1985), pp. 469–70.

[73] Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 15, 18–19, 22.

[74] Ibid., p. 14; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 14.

[75] Alfonso Cuoppolo, *Il gigante della collina: storie, dolori e musiche nell'eco delle sue antiche mura; studi e ricerche sul castello di Gesualdo* (Grottaminarda: Delta 3 Edizioni, 2013), p. 296; Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 14. Also of note is the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar (1582).

[76] Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 22; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 21. Through some fine calculations, Cuoppolo conjectured that the time of death was right before midnight; *Il gigante della collina*, p. 296. The timing of Gesualdo's honour killing, however, will not lead us (so far as I have found) to the microlevel of the liturgy of the hours.

[77] That said, there remains a block of unaccounted-for time in the *processo*: if the killing occurred on Tuesday night and, as the servants recalled (a week later), Gesualdo departed on Wednesday morning (before the investigators and those responsible for the deceased arrived), then he must have stayed in his residence during Tuesday morning and Wednesday night, which is not sound logic. This also leaves the question of why the investigators did not arrive promptly on Tuesday morning after the homicide and date the *processo* 16 October instead of 17 October. As Cogliano points out, there are inconsistencies in the *processo* about the hours, circumstances, and who saw what; *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 24. Nonetheless, the date of 16 October is corroborated outside the court by the Venetian ambassador.

[78] The calendar of saints could mark time in *processi*, as seen in Thomas Cohen, 'A Daughter-Killing Digested, and Accepted, in a Village of Rome, 1563–1566', in *Murder in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Dean and Lowe, pp. 62–80 (p. 63).

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because historiographers have on occasion been tempted to nudge the days a bit earlier or later. (After all, a homicide that coincided with a significant occasion in the church year makes for a best-selling detective novel, then and now.) Stefano Dall'Aglio exposes this problem in his source-study of the murder of Alessandro de' Medici.[79] Dall'Aglio found that the sixteenth-century historian Benedetto Varchi might have deliberately moved the murder to the night before Epiphany from the night after. Despite the contradiction between Varchi's date and that found in more authoritative sources, subsequent historians followed Varchi. It was fate, Varchi and his followers fibbed, that anti-Mediceans woke up in Florence and saw a bright future on Epiphany. A comparable revelation about Gesualdo's honour killing might sell as well.

This potential pitfall acknowledged, let us proceed to locate Tuesday 16 October 1590 on the liturgical calendar for that month (Table 1).[80] As the liturgical calendar varies year by year, we cannot simply look up '16 October' in liturgical books. There are two ways in which we must be able to convert this date: first, where it fell with respect to the Sundays of October and, second, with respect to Pentecost. In the church year of 1590, 1 October fell on a Monday and, therefore, the first Sunday of October fell on 30 September (the first Sunday of the month in the Breviary is that which is closest in the week to the first calendar day of the month; that is, Sunday 30 September is closer to Monday 1 October than is Sunday 7 October). Therefore, 16 October was the third day (*feria* 3 or F3) of the week of the third Sunday (*Domenica* 3 or Dom3). Moreover, 16 October was the third day of the week of the 19th Sunday after Pentecost (which fell on 7 June in 1590). Under these two headings we will find the liturgy for the day of Gesualdo's honour killing.

We do not know when precisely before 16 October Gesualdo had learned of his wife's affair. Surely, he did not delay for long before his attack.[81] Yet, to coordinate his honour killing with the liturgical calendar must have required some time for Bible study and, potentially, patience for the proper day to come. I suggest, then, that Carlo, lest his patience expire (and he kill them irrespective of the liturgy), had learned of the affair not more than, say, a month or two prior to 16 October.

Coincidentally, the papacy was often vacant during that timeframe. Sixtus V, the aforementioned champion of capital punishment, died on 27 August 1590, without seeing what became of this marriage that he himself had reluctantly approved in 1586 under special circumstances.[82] Sixtus was succeeded by Urban VII, who lasted only twelve days after his election (until 27 September). The next pope, Gregory XIV, was

[79] Dall'Aglio, 'Truths and Lies of a Renaissance Murder', p. 132.

[80] The table is based on the edition of the Roman Breviary closest in date (prior) to October 1590: *Breviarium romanum ex decreto sacrosancti concilii tridentini restitutum Pii V Pont. Max. iussu editum* (Venice: Giovanni Varisco & Paganino Paganini, 1588; repr. 1589).

[81] According to civil law, a husband could not allow his wife to persist in adultery or else he would have been liable to charges of prostitution; Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 27.

[82] Maria d'Avalos and Carlo Gesualdo were first cousins and needed papal permission to wed. The d'Avalos family also needed the pope to approve Maria's release from a Dominican convent she had entered after the death of her second husband, during her period of mourning. See Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 6; Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, pp. 87–88.

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TABLE 1

CARLO GESUALDO'S HONOUR KILLING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LESSONS FROM I AND II MACCABEES IN OCTOBER 1590, AS FOUND IN THE TRIDENTINE ROMAN BREVIARY (*BREVIARIUM ROMANUM*, FOLS 270R–283R, [276R]). FEAST DAYS (IN THE ROMAN BREVIARY ONLY, FOR WHICH LESSONS FROM I AND II MACCABEES ARE HERE IN BRACKETS) ARE MARKED WITH AN 'F' AND GESUALDO FAMILY BIRTHDAYS WITH A 'BD'. CARLO PERFORMED HIS HONOUR KILLING ON THE NIGHT OF 15–16 OCTOBER (IN BOLD WITH A †), AFTER I MACCABEES 9. 28–40 AND BEFORE I MACCABEES 12. 1–11 WAS READ. IN I MACCABEES 9. 37–42, THE MACCABEES SABOTAGED AN ENEMY PRINCESS'S WEDDING ('THE WEDDING WAS TURNED INTO MOURNING, AND THE SOUND OF THEIR MUSIC INTO LAMENTATION')

OCTOBER 1590						
Sunday (Dom)	*Monday (F2)*	*Tuesday (F3)*	*Wednesday (F4)*	*Thursday (F5)*	*Friday (F6)*	*Saturday (S)*
30	1 F	2 BD	3	4 F	5	6
I Macc. 1:1–16 Ambr. *Offic.* 1/40: 205–7	[I Macc. 1:17–29] Remigius	I Macc. 2:1–14 C. Borromeo	I Macc. 2:19–30	[I Macc. 2:49–69] Francis	I Macc. 2:70–3:12, 25–28	I Macc. 3:42–60
7 F	8	9 F	10	11	12	13
[I Macc. 4:36–51 Aug. *De civ.* 18:45] Pope Mark (et al.)	I Macc. 4:52–61	[I Macc. 5:1–13] Dionysius (et al.)	I Macc. 5:55–67	I Macc. 6:1–13	I Macc. 7:1–17	I Macc. 8:1–4, 17–27
14 F	**15**	**16 †**	17	18 F	19	20 BD
[I Macc. 9:1–20 Ambr. *Offic.* 1/41: 209–11] Calixtus	**I Macc. 9:28–40**	**I Macc. 12:1–11**	I Macc. 12:39–52	[I Macc. 13:1–19] Luke	I Macc. 14:16–26	I Macc. 16:14–24 A. Gesualdo
21 F	22	23	24	25 F	26 F	27
[II Macc. 1:1–6, 18–22 J. Chrys. Ps. 43] Hilarion & Ursula	II Macc. 2:1–9	II Macc. 3:1–12	II Macc. 3:23–34	[II Macc. 4:1–11] Chrysanthus & Daria	[II Macc. 5:1–10] Evaristus	II Macc. 6:1–12
28 F	29	30	31 F			
[II Macc. 6:18–7.5 G. Nazianzen *Orat.* 20] Simon & Jude	II Macc. 7:7–23	II Macc. 7:24–41	[II Macc. 8:10–28] Vigil of All Saints			

not installed until 5 December. During an interregnum (*sede vacante*), violence often spread in the Papal States because the Vatican (so it was thought) was too preoccupied with a conclave to devote attention to criminal activity outside.[83] Without a pope in place, Gesualdo's honour killing had less chance of attracting immediate notice from Rome. He did not necessarily have to wait for the pope to die, but he also did not have too much time to lose, if he were to seize an opportunity. His uncle Alfonso was out of town, busy serving as the sub-dean of the conclave. Better, perhaps, for Carlo to kill and let Alfonso (assuming he would not press for the death penalty) find out later. The papal succession would come into alignment with the liturgical calendar, presenting Carlo with an opportune time to strike.

During his preparations, Gesualdo might have either studied the upcoming liturgical days and weeks himself or consulted with a cleric to determine the appropriate (and inappropriate) possibilities. We ought not deny him the capacity to undertake this study independently (Gesualdo's own breviary and other religious books have not come down to us),[84] but the *processo* implies that Gesualdo had some help. According to his servant, Gesualdo was served supper that evening by his servants and 'a young priest who is a musician'.[85] Just who this musical priest was is a mystery,[86] and this evidence alone is insufficient to charge him with aiding an honour killing.[87] Gesualdo, however, certainly had such people in his employment, in whom he could confide. A priest-musician, moreover, could sooner point Gesualdo to a fitting Bible lesson with a musical aspect.

In whichever way he arrived at 16 October, Gesualdo managed to work around several occasions on the liturgical calendar that would not suit him. These were feast and ferial days with lessons that would undermine his honour killing instead of supporting it (i.e. the aforementioned Lenten period in which John 8 was read); even family birthdays had to be avoided (Carlo Borromeo on 2 October and Alfonso Gesualdo on 20 October). To kill on 4 October would mar the feast of St Francis (for which Gesualdo later composed his *sacra cantio*, 'Franciscus humilis et pauper'). To kill on 18 October would do likewise to the feast of St Luke. 14 October, the feast of St Calixtus, would also not serve Gesualdo because pope Calixtus I (as opposed to

[83] Miles Pattenden, *Electing the Pope in Early Modern Italy, 1450–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 104.

[84] Perhaps Carlo was aware that Sixtus V placed Alfonso Gesualdo (as prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites) in charge of the revision of the Breviary. See Pierre Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, trans. by Atwell Mervyn Yates Baylay (London: Longmans & Co., 1912), p. 210.

[85] Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 22; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 21.

[86] If, based on our current roster of Gesualdo's known musicians, one were to hazard a guess as to the identity of this young priest and musician, Scipione Stella (1558/59–1622) could be put forward. Stella, one of Gesualdo's closest musicians, later accompanied Gesualdo to Ferrara and oversaw the Ferrarese printing of his madrigals. Although not yet ordained a priest in 1590, he would be in 1605. On Stella, see *Scipione Stella, Inni a cinque voci: Napoli, 1610*, ed. by Flavio Colusso (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, 2007). Whoever this priest-musician was, the testimony of Gesualdo's manservant implies some religious premeditation.

[87] Clerics involved in honour killings were charged with a crime. For a contemporaneous example in Naples, see Giovanni Romeo and Michele Mancino, *Clero criminale: l'onore della Chiesa e i delitti degli ecclesiastici nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 2013), pp. 168–69. One of Alfonso Gesualdo's initiatives as archbishop was to take away clerics' prohibited arms (ibid., pp. 88–92).

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Sixtus V) preached leniency for those adulterers who repented.[88] 21 October, the feast of St Ursula, would be all the more self-defeating for Gesualdo; even if his princess was not a virgin like St Ursula,[89] Carlo was not about to risk making a pseudo-martyr out of Maria (and a savage out of himself), by killing her on a day that remembers innocent women suffering at the hands of brutal men.[90]

As for feasts between 15 and 17 October, there were none in the Tridentine Roman Breviary, and those described in the Roman Martyrology are hardly relevant to the Gesualdo case, in both place and content.[91] Feasts celebrated elsewhere in various locales (i.e. St Flavia and St Fortunatus of Rome on 15 October) were not necessarily observed in Naples. In the Neapolitan liturgy, there was no other cause for celebration or solemnity on these three days.[92] This short stretch in the calendar of saints was relatively clear for Gesualdo to strike.[93]

Gesualdo would not be so fortunate as to find one of the Bible lessons on executing adulterers scheduled in October (or anywhere in the Tridentine Roman Breviary).[94] The lessons for October were taken from I and II Maccabees, with additional Sunday readings from the commentaries on Maccabees by St Ambrose (*On the Duties of the Clergy*), St Augustine (*The City of God*) and St John Chrysostom (*Commentaries on the Psalms*). A record of the epic warfare between the Jews and their Hellenist oppressors,[95]

[88] Calixtus I issued an edict that allowed adulterers to return to communion upon repenting. The extent to which Gesualdo knew such tidbits of church history is unknown, but (as remarked) Gesualdo may have had some help.

[89] Or, to draw a contemporary Neapolitan comparison: the Venerable Ursula Benincasa (1547–1618), on whom see Cesare d'Engenio Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra* (Naples: Ottavio Beltrano, 1623), p. 574. Ursula (foundress of the Order of Theatine Nuns) is reported to have consoled Fabrizio Carafa's wife after his death; see Beatrice Cecaro, *Madre di pietà: amore e morte all'origine della Cappella Sansevero* (Naples: Alós, 2010), pp. 145–46.

[90] See Caravaggio's celebrated 'The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula' (1610), which was painted in Naples.

[91] The feasts are listed in *Breviarium romanum* (1589), n.p. See also *Martyrologium romanum* (Rome: Domenico Basa, 1583), pp. 183–84, where the persecution of St Martinian and St Saturnian in Africa is emphasised on 16 October.

[92] The feast of St Januarius, the patron saint of Naples, is the closest (19 September). The seven protector saints of Naples are Agnello (feast day on 14 December), Agrippinus (9 November), Aspren (3 August), Athanasius (15 July), Euphebius (23 May) and Severus (29 April). See Paolo Regio, *Vite dei sette santi protettori di Napoli* (Naples: Gioseppe Cacchi, 1571). Naples also venerated St Patricia (25 August), who fled an arranged marriage and was later shipwrecked off the Neapolitan coast. See Paolo Regio, *La vita di S. Patricia vergine sacra* (Naples: Gioseppe Cacchi, 1590). Also observed was the feast of Ludovico di Tolosa (19 August). In the Gesualdo territories, Venosa celebrates the feast of St Andrew the Apostle (30 November). Another pertinent source, *Ordo recitandi divinum officium, et celebrandi missas; iuxta ritum s.r.e. in civitate, & dioecesi Neapolitana, in anno 1589* (Naples: Orazio Salviani, 1589), survives incomplete (in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli) and is lacking mid-July to December.

[93] Of the several 'Lives of the Saints' series printed in the late sixteenth century, the closest to Gesualdo was Paolo Regio, *Libro primo [-secondo] delle vite de i santi* (Vico Equense: Gioseppe Cacchi, 1586–7).

[94] Revelation 2. 1–17, with Jesus's condemnation of fornication, was read the week after Easter (not including the aforementioned verses of Revelation 2. 21–23). The story of King David's adultery (II Samuel 11), read in the sixth week after Pentecost, would not support Gesualdo's honour killing (unlike David, Gesualdo was not being punished for adultery).

[95] The Maccabees elsewhere figure in music history in Handel's oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus* (HWV 63), which is based on I Maccabees 2–8. The passage under consideration here (I Maccabees 9) comes right after that and before where Handel's sequel, *Alexander Balus* (HWV 65), picks up (I Maccabees 10–11).

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the books of Maccabees memorialise those who fought to defend their religion, whether with arms or faith alone. Matthias, the father of the hero, Judas Maccabeus, killed any of his men who disgraced themselves by converting to Hellenism (I Maccabees 2. 23–28). For the same cause, a mother sacrificed herself and her seven sons without a fight (II Maccabees 7).[96] Through such tales of valour, the two books of Maccabees (as Gabriela Signori has remarked) served Christians as both 'an arsenal and a practical text'.[97] Here the Maccabees were a call to arms, there an exercise in Marian devotion. Judas Maccabeus was even presented as a model of inspiration for Christian princes in the post-Machiavellian era.[98] As such a prince, Gesualdo needed all he could muster from the Maccabees;[99] they were a convenient biblical ally for his attack.[100]

Although there are not any executions of adulterers in I and II Maccabees, Gesualdo could search for some other next-best options. There are, nonetheless, many more chapters in those books that would not support Gesualdo's honour killing. These include: Antiochus invades Jerusalem and boasts about murdering the Jews (read on 1 October), the death of Matthias (4 October), the killing of Jonathan Maccabeus (17–19 October) and, lastly, the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons (29–30 October). Even killing on a day where the Maccabees won a battle does not fit Gesualdo's scenario. The odds were that Gesualdo's honour killing would fall on a day where somebody was killed in the books of Maccabees, given how violent the history is. But the departed could not be just anybody. Gesualdo was not embroiled, after all, in religious warfare. He needed a lesson that condoned male violence against a not-so-innocent woman. Finding that next-best lesson would prove to be a small challenge.

There is, in my reading (as informed by Gesualdo's timing), only one passage in October that could fit that description: I Maccabees 9. 37–40 (F2 after Dom3 on that 15 October). In I Maccabees 9, Judas Maccabeus has fallen and his brother Jonathan has

[96] *La madre dei Maccabei* became an occasional topic for oratorios, including works by Girolamo Gigli and Attilio Ariosti, among others.

[97] *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith: Old-Testament Faith-Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Gabriela Signori (Leiden: Brill, 2012), II, pp. 10–11. Signori's observations generally hold for Gesualdo's Naples: Maccabean wartime propaganda appears in Paolo Regio, *Delle osservanze catholiche; dialoghi sette* (Vico Equense: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino & Antonio Pace, 1597), p. 406, and Maccabean Marian devotions are found in Marcantonio Capece, *Discorsi dell'eccellenze di Maria Vergine beatissima* (Naples: Secondino Roncagliolo, 1630), pp. 774–75.

[98] Roberto Bellarmino, *Dell'uffitio del principe christiano* (Siena: Ercole e Agamennone Gori, 1620), pp. 289–302.

[99] Citations from I and II Maccabees also figured in treatises on final judgement, including Giovanni Andrea Gesualdo, *Ragionamenti sopra i novissimi prima parte; della corporea morte & del'universal giudicio* (Naples: Gioseppe Cacchi, 1577). While it is plausible that Carlo was familiar with this treatise (which, incidentally, was dedicated to a Carafa prince), there is no explicit connection between it and his honour killing (so far as I see).

[100] There was once a cult of the Maccabees in Gesualdo's vicinity. According to one legend, descendants of the Maccabees found refuge around Naples. In the archdiocese of Benevento (to which the *comune* of Gesualdo belongs today), there is a village called Casale de' Maccabei; see Francesco Morante, 'Il casale Maccabei: storia di un territorio beneventano', *Studi beneventani*, 2–3 (1989–90), pp. 29–66. Little is known about either this cult or the noble Maccabeo family in Gesualdo's time (a prince Cesare Maccabeo founded the *Accademia dei Rozzi* in Benevento in 1628). Nonetheless, it is possible that Gesualdo knew of the Maccabees in more ways than from the Bible alone.

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assumed command. Their brother, John, would soon be the next of the Maccabees to fall, in a raid carried out by the tribe of Jambri. The third lesson on that day describes Jonathan's reprisal attack on the Jambri. A princess's wedding is about to be sabotaged. Perhaps much to Gesualdo's delight, the Maccabees' attack was accompanied by music:

> [37]After this [the death of John], word was brought to Jonathan and his brother Simon: 'The tribe of Jambri are celebrating a great wedding, and with a large escort they are bringing the bride, the daughter of one of the great princes of Canaan, from Nadabath'. [38]Remembering the blood of John their brother, they went up and hid themselves under cover of the mountain. [39]As they watched there appeared a noisy throng with much baggage; then the bridegroom and his friends and kinsmen had come out to meet them with tambourines and musicians with their instruments. [40]Jonathan and his party rose up against them from their ambush and killed them. Many fell wounded; the rest fled toward the mountain; all their spoils were taken. [[41]Thus the wedding was turned into mourning, and the sound of their music into lamentation. [42]Having taken their revenge for the blood of their brother, they returned to the marshes of the Jordan.][101]

Here ended the lesson for that Monday 15 October. Before the readings resumed on Tuesday, the lovers were dead, and Gesualdo was en route to his castle. Of course, one cannot just plug the actors and actresses in the Gesualdo affair into this Bible lesson and still arrive at the exact same moral of the story. Gesualdo was not sabotaging a wedding to avenge another Gesualdo; he was killing them because d'Avalos had broken her wedding vows to him. On the one hand, we should resist the temptation to conflate these two episodes. The former was a vendetta killing, the latter an honour killing. Taken in isolation, I Maccabees 9. 37–42 by itself would not be entertained as a scriptural justification for Gesualdo's honour killing. On the other hand, the temporal coincidence suggests that there was a causal link between the two. Given that timeframe, we should scan this Bible lesson for intertextual connections to the lesson Gesualdo taught the lovers. We find not one but two dead noblewomen, two dead noblemen, and multiple musicians and Judeo-Christian warriors at the scene of Gesualdo's honour killing. One set seems to have led to the next.[102] When seen in this light, the difference between this honour killing and that vendetta killing turns out to be not so stark as that between honour killing and (criminal) murder. Honour killing is a form of revenge in the Old Testament: 'He who commits adultery … will get wounds and dishonour … for jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he shows no restraint when he takes revenge' (Proverbs 6. 32–34).[103] Even though

[101] Daniel Harrington, *First and Second Maccabees* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1985), p. 58; *Breviarium romanum* (1589), fol. 276[r]. I Maccabees 9. 41–42 were not included in the Breviary. Cf. *Vetus testamentum secundum LXX latine redditum et ex auctoritate Sixti V Pont. Max. editum* (Rome: Georgio Ferrari, 1588), p. 1358.

[102] As Renard remarks, we often must figure out the 'logic behind marshaling sacred texts in support of or against resorting to violent action'. In general, scriptural justifications for violence are not one-to-one. See Renard, 'Exegesis and Violence', p. 2.

[103] In some pre-Tridentine breviaries, Proverbs 6. 32–34 was scheduled in the second week after advent. See *Breviarium romanum* (Paris: Thielmann Kerver, 1554), p. 92.

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Gesualdo's attack was not characterised as a vendetta in the *processo*, it was elsewhere: the Venetian ambassador to Naples spoke of Gesualdo 'avenging [his] injury' ('vendicando l'ingiuria ricevuta').[104] It would therefore not be a historical error to characterise Gesualdo's honour killing as a form of vendetta. In his own way, Gesualdo put that day's Bible lesson straight into practice.

The exegetical literature on the Maccabees in the Breviary lent further support to Gesualdo's cause. On the third Sunday of October, additional lessons from St Ambrose's *On the Duties of the Clergy* (*Officiorum*) were ordinarily scheduled. There Ambrose praised Jonathan as another example of the outnumbered Maccabees fighting against the odds. 'Why need I further mention [Judas's] brother Jonathan', Ambrose asked rhetorically, 'who fought against the king's force, with but a small troop?'[105] While Ambrose was referring in particular to I Maccabees 11. 68, his commentary was scheduled the day before I Maccabees 9. 28–40 (on Dom3). As presented in the Breviary, Ambrose approved of Jonathan's vendetta killing. The saint's applause would have pleased Gesualdo. His uncle Carlo Borromeo was the archbishop of Milan, which uniquely celebrated the Ambrosian Rite of its patron saint.[106] Gesualdo, who revered his namesake, would have desired his maternal relatives' acceptance as much as that of his paternal relatives (Federico Borromeo was at the 1590 papal conclave with Alfonso Gesualdo). If St Ambrose himself had approved of Jonathan Maccabeus's vendetta killing, then Carlo Borromeo might have followed suit and approved of his nephew's honour killing.[107]

Almost everything had fallen into place for Gesualdo. The prince's exact whereabouts during the day of Monday 15 October remain unknown; we know where he was only on the evening right before the attack. As previously mentioned, Gesualdo was not afraid to dine alone in his own home on that night.[108] We do not have evidence that Gesualdo attended church on that Monday. He might have timed his

[104] Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, p. 14; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 14. Cogliano also speaks of a *vendetta per adulterio* (p. 12). Vendetta and honour killing were subjected to the same moral-theological debate. See Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 169–71.

[105] St Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, trans. by Augustus de Romestin et al., in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1896), X, p. 34. I Maccabees 9. 37–40 was commonly passed over in exegetical writings, being a relatively minor skirmish in Maccabees. In Neapolitan literature, see Michele Zappullo, *Sommario istorico* (Naples: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino & Constantino Vitale, 1609), p. 36. Jesuit commentaries from elsewhere include Nicolaus Serarius, *Commentarii in sacros bibliorum libros … Machabaeorum* (Paris: Edmond Martin, 1610), p. 758.

[106] Gesualdo's honour killing otherwise did not sync with the Ambrosian rite, which scheduled I Maccabees 1–2 in the third week of October; cf. *Breviarium ambrosianum* (Milan: Pontio and Besutio, 1582), p. 411.

[107] Cogliano points out that honour killings were discussed in the correspondences between Geronima and Carlo Borromeo – a subject the archbishop treated carefully to avoid scandal. See Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 45–46.

[108] Ibid., p. 22; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 21.

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honour killing to the liturgy, but uncertainty remains about him partaking in that liturgy.[109] Gesualdo could have killed without having gone to church first.

As opposed to the liturgy that preceded Gesualdo's honour killing, that which followed it is better documented in the *processo.* After the investigators inspected the bodies, another set of Christian rituals began. The Gesualdo family dispatched their most pious female elder, who shared the Christian name of Gesualdo's wife, to the scene. Carlo's paternal aunt, Maria Gesualdo, Marchioness of Vico, dressed Maria d'Avalos in her funeral gown and accompanied her to the Chiesa di San Domenico Maggiore. Meanwhile, the Jesuit Carlo Mastrilli (b. 1551) arrived to collect the Duke of Andria's corpse.[110] With these two symbolic figures in place, a liturgy of reconciliation began in tandem with the funerary rites.

It is telling that a Jesuit appeared on behalf of the Carafa family. The Jesuits, as Jennifer Selwyn has shown, were dispatched to Naples with the express mission of quelling the spread of honour-based violence. There they commended the merits of 'maintaining one's honour while still pardoning an enemy'. In the words of one renowned preacher: 'God is so great, and so potent, that He commands you not to hate your enemy, which means, do not plot his death'.[111] Clearly, in this case, the Jesuit order had failed in its plot by the same measure that Gesualdo had succeeded in his. Yet, even though Mastrilli was too late to reconcile Gesualdo to the Duke of Andria, he still had a chance to reach a reconciliation between their families.[112]

As it would turn out, one homicide did not lead to another, liturgical or not.

Gesualdo's honour killing in liturgical-musical context

This honour killing was evidently the work of a melomaniac. Judging from I Maccabees 9. 39–41, Gesualdo had already begun composing a funeral dirge for the lovers before they were even dead.[113] While all of the legal and ecclesiastical matters we have thus far raised can be (best) treated by historical criminologists and historians of Christianity, musicologists must at some point take over the

[109] As for the question of whether there were other aspects of the October liturgy that could have supported Gesualdo's honour killing, it is possible but unlikely. For instance, the lessons for mass on Dom4 included Ephesians 5. 15–21. Ephesians 5. 3 censures sexual immorality and 5. 19 encourages us to make music for the Lord in order to overcome such temptations. Then, Ephesians 5. 22 instructs wives to submit to their husbands as they do the Lord. See *Missale romanum* (Antwerp: Christophori Plantini, 1577), pp. 84–86. Imprecatory psalms might also be considered. In the weekly cycle, Psalms 26–37 were sung on F2 and 38–51 on F3. See *Psalterium romanum ad usum cleri basilicae vaticanae* (Rome: Typographia Vaticana, 1593), pp. 70–101.

[110] Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: omicida*, pp. 17, 26; Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 17.

[111] Jennifer Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p. 192. Selwyn cites the sermons of Paolo Segneri (1624–94).

[112] Although it was customary to have a formal reconciliation between feuding families, none is documented here.

[113] The prevalence of I Maccabees 9. 41 in sacred oratory remains to be determined, but it did sometimes appear in funerary orations. See Anna Linton, *Poetry and Parental Bereavement in Early Modern Lutheran Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 168. This verse may also be cross-referenced with Amos 8. 10.

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investigation of Gesualdo. The timing between his honour killing and this musical Bible lesson seems too brilliant to be a fluke. Even though it is common knowledge that Gesualdo had a noble predilection for music,[114] nobody has yet advanced the theory that this predilection played a part in the staging of his honour killing. Our investigation might advance such a theory. The sonic traces of that fateful night extend further back in time than his much-studied melancholic madrigals (e.g. 'Moro, lasso, al mio duolo') and penitential sacred music. Put another way, Gesualdo's 'late' spiritual turn in music (as we have generally known it through his *Tenebrae responsoria*) had begun even before he killed.[115] Having placed Gesualdo's honour killing in liturgical context, our next task is to find any liturgical music for that occasion.

It might be said that all of the shouting, slashing and shrieking in the bedchamber, followed by Gesualdo's melancholic music-making in his castle, was a crude form of paraliturgical music. Even with a different cast and change of scenery, Gesualdo's honour killing could be viewed and heard as a performative reenactment of the Bible lesson, with modern music. Strictly speaking, however, some actual liturgical music for this occasion should be found. The basic tasks at hand are to seek out (a) the plainchant for that liturgy, (b) polyphonic settings of these liturgical texts by contemporaneous composers, and (c) Gesualdo's own settings, if any. In all likelihood, the last of these three is doubtful. After all, for Gesualdo to have printed music for this occasion (even under the transparent cover of noble anonymity) would have only broadcasted his *delitto d'onore* further instead of burying it. Otherwise, sacred music was surely sung in October 1590 in Naples and in the Roman Church. We need to make informed choices about which music to discuss and perform when we tell Gesualdo's story.

I Maccabees 9. 41 was not (so far as I am aware) incorporated into any motets by Gesualdo or other composers. The most logical step to take next in our search should be to analyse the responsories for the lessons of October. These responsories, as listed in Table 2, might soon surface in Gesualdo's oeuvre if he had composed music on the occasion of his honour killing (his *Tenebrae responsoria* consists of the responsories for the lessons of Holy Week).[116] The responsories are kept constant in each week of October, with the cycle partially repeated on Wednesday to Saturday (beginning with

[114] Elio Durante and Anna Martellotti, 'Don Carlo Gesualdo: melomania e convenzioni sociali', *Studi musicali*, 33/1 (2004), pp. 43–61.

[115] Watkins applies the notion of 'late style' to Gesualdo's biography in *The Gesualdo Hex*, pp. 36–37. The possible anachronism aside, it is logical to see a bifurcation in Gesualdo's musical output – before and after the honour killing. All of his known sacred works were printed afterwards, except for one motet, on which see Carlo Piccardi, 'Carlo Gesualdo: l'aristocrazia come elezione', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 9 (1974), pp. 67–116 (pp. 90–93).

[116] *New Gesualdo Edition*, ed. by Maria Caraci Vela, Dinko Fabris and Agostino Ziino, 12 vols (Kassel: Barenreiter, 2018–), IX: *Responsoria et alia ad officium Hebdomadae Sanctae spectantia*, ed. by Rodobaldo Tibaldi (2018); Gesualdo di Venosa, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Glenn Watkins and Wilhelm Weismann, 10 vols (Hamburg: Ugrino Verlag, 1957–62), VII: *Responsoria et alia ad officium Hebdomadae Sanctae spectantia* (1959).

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TABLE 2

RESPONSORIES FOR THE BIBLE LESSONS IN OCTOBER (*BREVIARIUM ROMANUM* FOLS 270^{R}–283^{R}). THE CYCLE PARTIALLY REPEATS STARTING ON WEDNESDAY. THE RESPONSORY READ AFTER I MACCABEES 9. 37–40 ON MONDAY 15 OCTOBER 1590 WAS 'IN HYMNIS & CONFESSIONIBUS BENEDICEBANT'

Day	*Responsories (Bible verses)*
Sunday (Dom.)	Adaperiat Deus cor vestrum (II Maccabees 1. 4–5) Exaudiat Dominus orationes vestras (II Maccabees 1. 5) Congregati sunt inimici nostri (Psalm 58. 12) Impetum inimicorum ne timueritis (I Maccabees 4. 8–10) Congregatae sunt gentes (I Maccabees 3. 52–53) Tua est potentia (I Chronicles 29. 11; II Maccabees 1. 24) Refulsit sol in clypeos aureos (I Maccabees 6. 39, 41–42) Duo seraphim clamabant (Isaiah 6. 2–3)
Monday (F2)	Dixit Iudas Simoni fratri suo (I Maccabees 5. 17) Ornaverunt faciem templi coronis aureis (I Maccabees 4. 56–57) In hymnis & confessionibus benedicebant (II Maccabees 10. 38)
Tuesday (F3)	Hic est fratrum amator (II Maccabees 15. 14) Tu Domine universorum (II Maccabees 14. 35–36) Aperi oculos tuos Domine (Daniel 9. 18)
Wednesday (F4)	Refulsit sol Ornaverunt faciem In hymnis
Thursday (F5)	Adaperiat Deus Exaudiat Dominus Congregati sunt inimici
Friday (F6)	Impetum inimicorum Congregatae sunt gentes Tua est potentia
Saturday (S)	Refulsit sol Ornaverunt faciem In hymnis

'Refulsit sol'). Of these fourteen responsories, 'In hymnis & confessionibus' follows I Maccabees 9. 37–40 (the third reading on F2):

> ℟. In hymnis & confessionibus benedicebant Dominum: Qui magna fecit in Israel, & victoriam dedit illis Dominus omnipotens. ℣. Ornaverunt faciem templi coronis aureis, & dedicaverunt altare Domino. (II Maccabees 10. 38)[117]

In its proper liturgical context, this responsory describes the Maccabees' restoration of the temple of Jerusalem and their songs of praise to God who brought them victory.

[117] '℟. With hymns and thanksgiving they blessed the Lord, who had done great things in Israel, and the all-powerful Lord gave them the victory. ℣. The front of the temple they adorned with crowns of gold, and they dedicated the altar to the Lord'. *Breviarium romanum* (1589), fols. 271^{r}, 276^{r}; *The Hours of the Divine Office in English and Latin*, 3 vols (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1963–64), III: *August to Advent* (1964), p. 1214.

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In the context of Gesualdo's honour killing, however, the responsory acquires a different meaning. Imagine Gesualdo listening to it – whether in a state of frenzy or calm and composed.[118] Perhaps the responsory mutates into a Maccabean battle hymn – a prayer for victory before the imminent attack.[119] Gesualdo's cause to give thanks at church afterwards would be more penitential than celebratory. In this regard, it is remarkable that the versus (V.), 'Ornaverunt faciem templi coronis aureis', was also part of the liturgy for the the dedication of a church ('In dedicatione ecclesiae'). Every time Gesualdo erected a church,[120] a snippet of the liturgy from that 15 October 1590 would be performed.

The precise chant melodies sung in Gesualdo's Naples are wanting, as there is not a Neapolitan plainchant manuscript from *c.* 1590 that we can connect to him (or to Alfonso).[121] Nonetheless, we can draw from other chant books to recreate the music for the liturgy of that October (while remembering that the standardisation of chant melodies was then but a post-Tridentine ideal).[122] Our search for these chant melodies in Gesualdo's and others' polyphonic music will have to depart from these books as well.

Polyphonic settings of the responsories for October are rare (and, as such, have not been the subject of a comprehensive study). Those that are relatively proximate in time and place to Gesualdo are listed in Table 3. Not one of the composers is Neapolitan (or Ferrarese), and few if any are even remotely related to Gesualdo in style. What is more, most of these settings were for liturgical occasions other than the lessons of October and must be excluded from the given context. Settings of 'Duo seraphim' (the eighth and final responsory on Sunday) can be excluded first, as it functioned as a responsory from Trinity Sunday to the beginning of Advent and, elsewhere, as a motet

[118] Violent spiritual listening remains to be explored in Renaissance music history. As Andrew Dell'Antonio has shown, there was a post-Tridentine imperative to stick to a 'correct understanding' ('recte sentire') of scripture; individualistic interpretations were tolerated only in so far as they did not stray from orthodoxy. It would not be unproblematic for Gesualdo to have contemplated his honour killing during this lesson. See Andrew Dell'Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 62–65.

[119] John Arthur Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 161. The other verses with battle music (I Maccabees 4. 13–14 and II Maccabees 12. 37) were not included in the Breviary.

[120] Any ceremonial music for several churches that Gesualdo had constructed or renovated after 1590 (most notably, the Chiesa Santa Maria delle Grazie, where *Il perdono di Gesualdo* is on display) has not come down to us. See Cogliano, *Carlo Gesualdo: per una biografia*, pp. 28–29.

[121] The only known sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Neapolitan plainchant manuscript that includes the responsories for October is from the convent of the Chiesa di San Lorenzo Maggiore, Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, ms. XV AA 36, as described in Raffaele Arnese, *I codici notati della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli* (Florence: Olschki, 1967), pp. 226–27. The chant melody for 'In hymnis & confessionibus' (fols 43^{v}–45^{r}) is generally consistent with the printed version in *Antiphonarii romani* (1611). Owing to its aforementioned Maccabean heritage, medieval Benevento also observed the feast of the Maccabees, as in Benevento, Biblioteca Capitolare, ms. V 21, fol. 100$^{r–v}$.

[122] Plainchant for the responsory to I Maccabees 9.37–40, 'In hymnis & confessionibus benedicebant', may be found in *Antiphonarii romani secundum novum breviarium recogniti; pars aestivalis* (Antwerp: Joachim Trognaesius, 1611), pp. 402–03; see British Library, Digital Store 1481.e.24, <https://access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc_100099178062.0x000001> [accessed 10 August 2023] (also readily available on Google Books).

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TABLE 3

POLYPHONIC SETTINGS (*c.* 1570–1620) OF THE RESPONSORIES FOR THE LESSONS IN OCTOBER. NONE ARE YET KNOWN FROM GESUALDO'S NAPLES AND FERRARA

Responsory	*Composer*	*Book*
Adaperiat Deus cor vestrum	None (?)	
Exaudiat Dominus orationes vestras	None (?)	
Congregati sunt inimici nostri	Andrea Rota Raffaella Aleotti Orlando di Lasso Giulio Belli	*Motectorum liber primus* (Venice, 1584) *Sacrae cantiones* (Venice, 1593) *Cantiones quinque vocum* (Munich, 1597) *Sacrarum cantionum* (Venice, 1600)
Impetum inimicorum ne timueritis	Tiburtio Massaino Silvio Marazzi	*Sacrarum symphoniarum continuatio* (Nuremberg, 1600) *Promptuarii musici* (Strasbourg, 1622)
Congregatae sunt gentes	None (?)	
Tua est potentia	Costanzo Porta	*Liber quinquaginta duorum motectorum* (Venice, 1580)
Refulsit sol in clypeos aureos	None (?)	
Duo seraphim (selected)	Tomás Luis de Victoria Claudio Monteverdi et al.	*Motecta festorum* (Rome, 1585) *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (Venice, 1610)
Dixit Iudas Simoni fratri suo	None (?)	
Ornaverunt faciem templi	Costanzo Porta Giovanni Croce Giovanni P. Cima et al.	*Liber quinquaginta duorum motectorum* (Venice, 1580) *Motetti libro primo* (Venice, 1594) *Concerti ecclesiastici* (Milan, 1610)
In hymnis & confessionibus	None (?)	
Hic est fratrum amator	None (?)	
Tu Domine universorum	Costanzo Porta	*Liber quinquaginta duorum motectorum* (Venice, 1580)
Aperi oculos tuos Domine	Amante Franzoni Anselmo Rossi	*Concerti ecclesiastici libro primo* (Venice, 1611) *Motetti … servitori del … duca di Mantova* (Venice, 1618)

text (as in Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine*). The next most popular responsory for polyphonic treatment was 'Ornaverunt faciem templi coronis aureis', and its many settings were most certainly for dedications of churches.[123] The handful of settings of 'Congregati sunt inimici nostri' and 'Impetum inimicorum ne timueritis' lead us still further astray from the October lessons, as these served as religious propaganda at the warfronts in Venice and further north. The settings of 'Aperi oculos tuos domine' by two Mantuan composers might somehow pertain to the noted Jewish community in

[123] Robert Kendrick, *The Sounds of Milan, 1585–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 56.

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Mantua (where Salomone Rossi served).[124] Lastly, we are left with a few settings by the Franciscan Costanzo Porta, who may be the only composer whose polyphony for the feast of the Maccabees (1 August) survives in print. If so, the prints form but an incomplete cycle for that occasion. Few, if any, composers it seems, wrote polyphony for the lessons of October.

Neither did Gesualdo, as it stands now – the Maccabean texts do not figure in his two surviving books of *sacrae cantiones.*[125] And the analytical search for contrafacta and borrowings from these chant melodies in his sacred and secular music would only make the hypothesis more contentious. Any music Gesualdo composed for or about that liturgical day remains unknown.

***

The search for liturgical music by Gesualdo about his honour killing may have hit a dead-end here, but it will go on. For now, let us step back from our liturgical-musical analysis and return to the fork in the road at which we joined Gesualdo. Although his track is faint, our investigation thus far indicates that Gesualdo tried to head towards the Grand Court without veering off course from the Church. Thanks to Sixtus V's bull, that was almost possible. Nevertheless, Gesualdo's hunting carriage must have broken down when it could no longer straddle two diverging paths. One institution granted him the authority to take the law into his own hand and kill his wife and the Duke of Andria; the other plainly did not. In the end, Gesualdo went to church first (or just read the daily Bible lesson), then he went hunting, and then he left his catch for the Grand Court to come and collect, while he fled to his castle.

If that was indeed Gesualdo's chosen path to and from homicide, even in the rough, then it remains to be seen how pioneering this prince was. Despite my best efforts as a musicologist digging through the annals of historical homicides, I have not yet been able to identify other Christian noblemen who killed their adulterous wives with such liturgical (nevertheless musical-liturgical) precision. Further studies of the interrelationship between homicide and the liturgy in the long sixteenth century (especially in the archives of Naples) will be necessary to assess the (ir-)regularity of this scheme. Perhaps Gesualdo was not the only one who hit that fork.

Granted, any such scriptural justification for honour killing as this will not hold up well under our scrutiny today. The Bible, as found here, is dangling like a red herring in Gesualdo's hunting grounds: I Maccabees 9, while provocative, should be unconvincing to us in the face of canon law. Just because the Maccabees killed the enemy bride does not necessarily mean that Gesualdo could kill his wife. We should investigate but not chase the Maccabees, misbelieving that Gesualdo somehow followed their lead into heaven. Obviously, this study should not be mistaken as an *apologia pro Gesualdo.* His

[124] Don Harrán, 'Madama Europa, Jewish Singer in Late Renaissance Mantua', in *Festa Musicologica: Essays in Honour of George J. Buelow*, ed. by Thomas Mathiesen and Benito Rivera (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1995), pp. 197–232 (p. 216).

[125] Gesualdo di Venosa, *Sämtliche Werke*, VIII/IX: *Sacrarum cantionum: liber primus*; *liber secundus* (1961–62).

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double homicide, in this liturgical context, seems more sacrilegious than righteous. The mere thought of attempting to Christianise an 'honour killing' is revolting (whatever our own religious persuasions may be, who among us would choose to side with the Pharisees against Jesus in John 8?). But Gesualdo lived in a different era of Christianity from ours, and he had himself to convince (not us). It is not our place to pass the final judgement on Gesualdo. The *processo* against Maria and Fabrizio is one matter; Carlo's *perdono* is another.

For want of more hard evidence that Gesualdo's honour killing was liturgical, I must now rest my case on the evidence afforded us by the Roman Breviary. Recognising that this evidence alone may be deemed insufficient, I will leave it to the reader to rule on the question posed at the outset of this study. By contextualising Gesualdo's honour killing in the liturgy, have we arrived at the facts of the case, or have I inadvertently concocted another myth (befitting of a 'cronaca scandalosa')?

Whatever the decision, the case of Gesualdo's honour killing remains open and will continue to be reheard in the future. Through this study, I intend to have shown why the Grand Court's *processo*, for all its shortcomings, should not obstruct our own proceedings from advancing any further. We must read between the lines of the fundamentally secular *processo*, while recognising that our contextualisations and speculations could only be confirmed by Gesualdo's own testimony. Lacking that, we must use any remaining clues we can find to try to understand the mindset of the killer. If Gesualdo had indeed bookmarked some pages in the Bible and the Roman Breviary, then we might already have begun to retell this ever-popular story slightly differently, by incorporating the liturgy more into our scholarly and creative works about Gesualdo and his double homicide.[126] Whether we tell the story from the perspective of the prince or the archbishop, Gesualdo's honour killing is a liturgical drama in the making.

[126] See Giovanni Iudica, 'The "Gesualdo Case" in Contemporary Melodrama', in *Law and Opera*, ed. by Filippo Annunziata and Giorgio Fabio Colombo (Cham: Springer, 2018), pp. 159–71.

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APPENDIX 1

The Julian law on the punishment of adultery in ancient Rome and early modern Naples according to Camillo Borrello, a jurisconsult who dedicated books to both Alfonso and Carlo Gesualdo. The excerpts are taken from Camillo Borrello, *Decisionum universarum, et totius christiani orbis rerum omnium iudicatarum, summae* (Venice: Giunti, 1627), III, pp. 172–93 (p. 179). Borrello's discourse exhibits that the customary law of Naples (*consuetudinem neapolitanam*) was relatively loose compared to that of ancient Rome.

62 *OCCIDENDI Adulteros ob criminis obscenitatem potestas concessa est patri* … l. Nihil 32 ff. Ad leg. Iul. de Adulter. *Ut patet illam inventam in actu turpi, in domo sua, vel generi, uno impetu, tamquam in sua potestate illos occidat.*

The authority to kill adulterers was granted to the father on account of the lewdness of the offence … (*see 'Nihil' at 32 ff., According to the Julian law 'Concerning Adultery'*). As is evident, he might in his authority kill them in one attack, as it were, upon having found [them] in the shameful act, in his or his son-in-law's house.

64 *Marito itidem adulterum uxoris suae occidere permissum, sed non quemlibet, ut patri.*

Permission was likewise granted to the husband to kill the adulterer of his wife but not both, like the father.

68 *NEAPOLITANI REGNI iure, Marito permittitur deprehendenti in actu adulterum, & uxorem nulla mora protracta, occidere* …

Regarding the law of the Neapolitan kingdom: the husband is permitted to kill the adulterer and the wife caught in the act without a prolonged delay …

69 *Alexander Severus Imperator,* in dicta l. Gracchus. C. de Adulter. *permittebat id fieri licere in persona vili, & humili … Et hoc erat difficile scire, maxime noctis tempore.*

Emperor Severus Alexander granted that could be permitted on a base and lowly person (*see the said chapter 'Concerning Adultery' by Gracchus*) … And this was difficult to know, especially at night time.

70 *Sed in hoc regno habet ampliorem occidendi potestatem maritus, quam per dispositionem iuris communis, cum occidere permittatur adulterum cuiuscunque conditionis ille fuerit, & in omni loco, cum illum non distinguat* …

But in this kingdom, the husband has a greater authority to kill than by the arrangement of customary law, since he is permitted to kill an adulterer of whatever status that he may have been, and in every place, when he [i.e. the husband] does not distinguish him [i.e. the adulterer] …

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