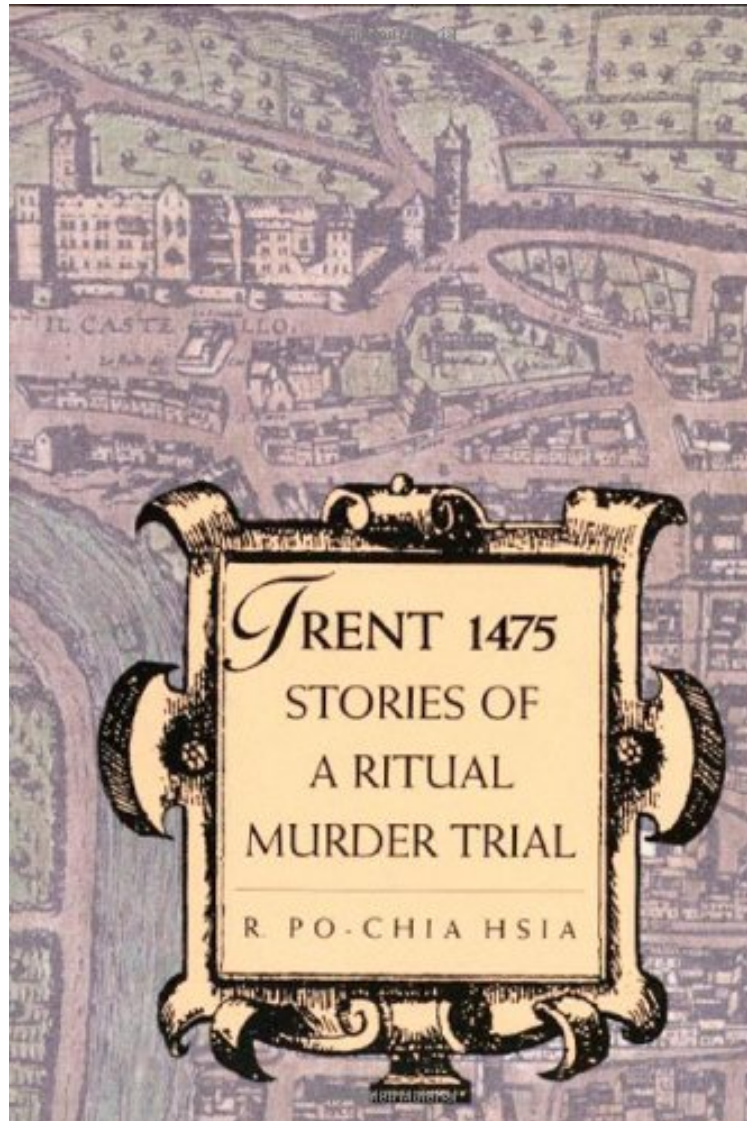


[Read free] Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial

Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial

R. Po-chia Hsia

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R. Po-chia Hsia : Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two StarsBy Karin KriegExcellent!0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Ugliest Frame-up in HistoryBy GioInterrogation by torture is NOT an invention of the CIA. All the elements of the CIA-funded research into brutal interrogation by psychiatrist Ewen Cameron - extreme prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation, depersonalization, recurring torture, threats of death - were well if not scientifically understood in 15th Century Italy. Instead of electric prods and water-boarding, the authorities in the

Papal and Hapsburg states used the "strappado." The victim's hands were tied behind his lower back and he was hoisted into the air until his feet dangled. If the pain didn't produce immediate "confession", the victim might be hoisted higher, dropped suddenly and jerked sharply aloft again. Obviously his shoulders were dislocated. To vary the pain, hot boiled eggs would be put in his armpits. Then, when any bit of submission was yielded, the victim would be isolated again for a few days before a resumption of torture. Such practices were in a sense already illegal - condemned by canon law - but they were wide-spread, and favored by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Few indeed were the victims of such torture who weren't broken and who didn't "learn" the scripted confession expected of them. Giordano Bruno withstood several years of torture in the dungeons of Rome before he was burned alive, with his jaw nailed shut to prevent him from declaring innocence, in the Campo dei Fiori. His statue is visible from my apartment window in Rome. In the Tirolean city of Trent in 1475, the three Jewish heads of families and their several male dependents accused of the "ritual murder" of a Christian child withstood the strappado to varying degrees, denying guilt anywhere from one session to dozens of sessions. In the end, however, they all agreed to confess... and then essentially had to be instructed under torture as to what precisely they would need to confess before they would be granted the relief of death. The show-trial in Trent was far from the only such horrible charade of justice in the history of European anti-Semitism, and the three-family Jewish community of Trent was not the largest to be exterminated under the leadership of the Franciscans and other Preaching Observants, but the Prince-Bishop of Trent, Johannes Hinderbach, had strong motives for publicizing and justifying his persecution of the ritual murder charges. The outcome was the foundation and dissemination of a cult of miracles performed by the "child martyr" Simon of Trent, a cult which persisted and served its vicious anti-Semitic purpose until 1965, when it was abolished by the Vatican! Actually, the Pope in 1475, the Sixtus whose Vatican chapel we all admire as a triumph of humanism, was more than a little suspicious, both of the Jewish guilt and of the subsequent miracle tales, but he didn't have time or care enough to intervene effectively, though the bishop he commissioned to investigate, Baptista dei Giudici, concluded that the trial was a malevolent sham and the miracles bogus. Simon Unferdorben was a two-and-a-half year-old boy child of a German-speaking peasant in Trent, a semi-autonomous city-state under Hapsburg rule. The boy fell in a ditch and drowned. His body was found after several days in the ditch that drained into the bath of Samuel the Jew. There is a good possibility that it was deliberately dumped there by persons with grudges against the Jews; two such suspects were widely identified at the time. Nothing about the "confessions" extracted by torture from the Jews of Trent is plausible. Their confessions were not at all consistent until they had been fully "instructed" by the torturers. The wounds first observed on the child's body were not consistent with the accounts of the ritual slaying to which the Jews were compelled to confess. Not everyone even in Trent believed the accusation; surrounding communities, especially in the Veneto, were highly critical of the judicial procedures. Nonetheless, the entire male Jewish population of Trent, including mere commercial visitors who happened to be there at the wrong time, were executed by burning or decapitation. The latter was considered merciful. The women were forced to accept Christian baptism; they and their children quickly disappeared from the records. Po-chia Hsia, professor of European history at New York University, tells this whole story with a good deal more circumspection than I have -- and of course with a good deal more supporting evidence - but there is no doubt that he considers the charges of Jewish ritual murder universally false and vicious, as do all reasonable people ever since. This small book is a tight narration, an evening's reading. If you have any reservations about the Christian and specifically Catholic burden of responsibility for crimes of hatred against the Jewish people, you owe your own conscience the task of reading Trent 1475.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant Book By Darrin Anderson This tale of a Jewish community in early modern Europe is very brilliant. The book has many interesting facts regarding the tale, and needs to be read to really get to know the brilliance of the book.

On Easter Sunday, 1475, the dead body of a two-year-old boy named Simon was found in the cellar of a Jewish family's house in Trent, Italy. Town magistrates arrested all eighteen Jewish men and one Jewish woman living in Trent on the charge of ritual murder the killing of a Christian child in order to use his blood in Jewish religious rites. Under judicial torture and imprisonment, the men confessed and were condemned to death; their womenfolk, who had been kept under house arrest with their children, denounced the men under torture and eventually converted to Christianity. A papal hearing in Rome about possible judicial misconduct in Trent made the trial widely known and led to a wave of anti-Jewish propaganda and other accusations of ritual murder against the Jews. In this engrossing book, R. Po-chia Hsia reconstructs the events of this tragic persecution, drawing principally on the Yeshiva Manuscript, a detailed trial record made by authorities in Trent to justify their execution of the Jews and to bolster the case for the canonization of "Little Martyr Simon." Hsia depicts the Jewish victims (whose testimonies contain fragmentary stories of their tragic lives as well as forced confessions of kidnap, torture, and murder), the prosecuting magistrates, the hostile witnesses, and the few Christian neighbors who tried in vain to help the Jews. Setting the trial and its documents in the historical context of medieval blood libel, Hsia vividly portrays how fact and fiction can be blurred, how judicial torture can be couched in icy orderliness and impersonality, and how religious rites can be interpreted as ceremonies of barbarism.

From Library Journal Hsia, author of *The Myth of Ritual Murder* (LJ 10/1/88), uses original sources to examine an infamous ritual murder case. In 1475 three Jewish families of Trent were charged with the murder of a Christian child. Judicial torture was used to force the accused to sign confessions fabricated by the prosecution. This victimization of the Jewish community did not go unchallenged. The account of the conflict between Trent's prince-bishop, who wanted the canonization of the alleged child martyr, and the papal commissioner sent to investigate irregularities in the judicial procedures highlights the fraudulent nature of the charges. Informed lay readers as well as scholars and specialists will welcome this addition to the literature on the history of anti-Semitism. For academic libraries and large public libraries with strong reader interest in this area. - Robert Andrews, Duluth P.L., Minn. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover On Easter Sunday, 1475, the dead body of a two-year-old boy named Simon was found in the cellar of a Jewish family's house in Trent, Italy. Town magistrates arrested eighteen Jewish men and one Jewish woman on the charge of ritual murder - the killing of a Christian child in order to use his blood in Jewish religious rites. About the Author R. Po-chia Hsia is professor of European history at New York University.