The Gagini at Petrapertza  |  Two bronzes for Milan Cathedral by Brambilla
North German bronze lions from Bordesholm  |  Rococo altarpieces in Santiago de Surco, Peru
The Citizens’ War Memorial in Christchurch, New Zealand
Barbara Hepworth’s sculpture at Tate Britain and the Hepworth Wakefield
Donatello in Padua  |  Medici tapestries  |  Kentridge  |  Epstein  |  Caro  |  Quinn and Hirschhorn  |  Salcedo

November 2015
of the two near-simultaneous inventions of photogra-
phy) led directly to his estrangement from communities
of learning which were fast becoming hostile to the
non-professional. He comes across finally as a peculiarly
inconsequential figure, left behind by his times in spite
of his enormous contributions to modern visual culture.

Those remarkable achievements in the history of
photography, which serve more as a counter-narrative
than the immediate subject-matter of this book. The
editors are quick to remark that in the decade preceding
his somewhat shambolic announcement of the ‘photo-
genic drawing’ technique before the Royal Society in
1839, Talbot was at least as much distracted by work in
mathematics, philology, classics and botany, as by his
research into photography. These other pursuits are
the basis of most of the material considered here, with
much derived from research among newly accessible
archival records. The volume is divided into three main
sections covering themes of experiment and investigation,
invention and discovery, and the analysis of institutions.
These are complemented by two editors’ introductions
setting out methodological and historical concerns, and
by a critical commentary by Simon Shaffer. While the
essays are often more provocative than conclusive,
the content is elaborated vividly and with scholarly
attention to detail such that the editors desire that
Talbot properly situate ‘amid the networks […] of
Victorian intellectual enterprise’ (p.4) is easily satisfied.

Talbot’s often beautiful photographs are only rarely
repeated in a way that suggests an underlying aesthetic,
and they are presented throughout the book as fundamen-
tally practical objects, participating in the wider nine-
teenth-century project of Modernism perception.
Sustained attention to the ‘cultivation of observational
skill’ (p.8) in essays from Anne Secord and Eleanor
Robson requires the reader to consider the role of
aesthetics in terms of fruitfulness, Paradise and the erotic,
may seem to the first to be the product of a seminar of this title held in Genoa in
the Broadest sense, as the material discussed ranges
from body parts and hair styles to consideration
of its parts. Nevertheless it provides multiple points of
connection in the same territory. In the first part, leaves the reader with the impression that
the major changes of spiritual expression in the early
thirteenth century, the beginning of the period under
consideration. Christ’s suffering on the cross, with eyes
impaled, on rituals of execution by image and finally on
the Counter-Reformation rediscovery of Early Chris-
tian martyrs and finally on Protestant mockenets of
Catholic martyrs. The second part, ‘Social Violence, the
Creation of Civic Identities’, begins with a detailed
study of Rubens’s battle scene followed by essays on Western perceptions of Ottoman
impaling, on rituals of execution by image and finally on
a series of seventeenth-century Dutch prints commemor-
ing public beheadings and disembowements.
The term ‘European Art’ in the title should be taken
in the broadest sense, as the material discussed ranges
from old master paintings to rough effigies made to
be beaten up and burnt in lieu of those they represented.

There are some odd, almost comic mis-statements of
fact, for example, the identification of the author of The
Siege of Corinth as ‘Gorre G. Byron’, which certainly puts
him down, rather than up, for the analysis of art in
Spanish architecture depicted by an anonymous German draughtsman in a
Habsburg embassy of the 1570s in the Freshfield Codex in
Trinity College, Cambridge; as ‘diagon de pez’. These
suggest that a deficiency of the volume is the
apparent absence of editorial direction.

J.M. ROGERS

Death, Torture and the Broken Body in European Art 1300–
1600. Edited by John R. Decker and Mitzi Kirkland-
Ives. 210 pp. incl. 77 b. & w. ill. (Ashgate, Farnham, 2015).

This volume is organised in two parts corresponding
to the sacred and the secular spheres. The first part,
Holy Violence, the Creation of Martyrs’, opens with
depictions of physical wounding in a work of Guido da
Siena (c.1260), continues with essays on the suffering of
Christ in late medieval Netherlandish devotion, on
the iconographic type of John the Baptist’s severed head, on
the Counter-Reformation rediscovery of Early Chris-
tian martyrs and finally on Protestant mockenets of
Catholic martyrs. The second part, ‘Social Violence, the
Creation of Civic Identities’, begins with a detailed
study of Rubens’s battle scene The death of Decius Mus
followed by essays on Western perceptions of Ottoman
impaling, on rituals of execution by image and finally on
a series of seventeenth-century Dutch prints commemor-
ing public beheadings and disembowements.

The term ‘European Art’ in the title should be taken
in the broadest sense, as the material discussed ranges
from old master paintings to rough effigies made to
be beaten up and burnt in lieu of those they represented.

Although not groundbreaking, the papers are of a good
standard. Their disparate character, especially in the
second part, leaves the reader with the impression that
the volume does not quite add up to more than the sum
of its parts. Nevertheless it provides multiple points of
access to the dark universe of early modern brutalities.