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Cicerchia, Andrea. Giuristi al servizio del papa. Il Tribunale dell'auditor Camerae nella giustizia pontificia di età moderna

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Cicerchia, Andrea.

Giuristi al servizio del papa. Il Tribunale dell'auditor Camerae nella giustizia pontificia di età moderna.

Collectanea Archivi Vaticani. Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2016. Pp. 329. ISBN 978-88-98638-02-4 (paperback) €25.

The writing of institutional history rarely makes for light reading and the pitfalls are many: an obsession with detail and with the institutions themselves and their evolution, and a tendency to become mired in a slew of never-ending archival references. Andrea Cicerchia has managed to pull off the feat of telling the story of an institution and its evolution over several centuries, grounding it thoroughly in an impressive archival *tour de force*, yet attentive to the human players linked to the story—highlighting their careers and how the institution of the tribunal of the Auditor Camera was a catalyst for social capital and career advancement for some of the men linked to it over the centuries.

Cicerchia is the first to study this tribunal systematically, and he has done a commendable job of providing a vast fresco of its origins and functioning from the late fifteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, chronicling its many transformations and the men who were involved. Cicerchia's impressive grounding in legal history is evident in his appreciation for the subtleties of the differences in scope and limits of the jurisdiction of the tribunal, which change over the centuries. Drawing upon years of archival work, for the most part conducted at the Secret Vatican Archive and the State Archive of Rome, and working with a stunning variety of sources, Cicerchia skilfully identifies both the many roles the institution played and the players.

In recent years, historians have been increasingly interested in the specificity and functioning of papal justice, the work of Irene Fosi (*Papal Justice: Subjects and Courts in the Papal States 1500–1750*, 2011) being a case in point. Curiously though, this tribunal, which would go on to become one of the most important in the papal states, has hitherto not been taken into consideration in its own right. Attention has been given to the archival holdings that shed light on the Apostolic Chamber with the important monographs by Guglielmo Felici (1940) and the monograph by Maria Grazia Pastura Ruggiero *et alia* (1984) but the tribunal as such had never before been thoroughly described. Cicerchia has filled this void and his readers can only be grateful.

The book is divided into eight chapters that treat the reader to a gradual unfolding of the evolution of the tribunal which would go on to assume an increasing series of responsibilities, overseeing the administration of justice in civil and criminal cases in Rome and the papal states. The author studies the many tensions that, at several intervals, came to the fore when its juridical competences and limits entered into conflict or rivaled that of other tribunals. His scholarship, encompassing both innovative archival research and a clear command of the legal sources and social history, takes into consideration the story of this tribunal in the wider context of the legal institutions of the pontifical state.

Of particular interest for early modern historians of various disciplinary strands is the book's emphasis on the role the tribunal played over the centuries in advancing the careers of men who would go on to occupy important positions in the Roman curia and the legal and administrative apparatus of the pontifical state. Cicerchia chronicles the careers of men with formidable legal training; Girolamo Ghinucci, Giovanni Maria del Monte, Pier Paolo Parisio, Camillo Borghese, and Camillo Cybo are well known to scholars of early modern Rome and church history.

Unearthing a host of documents unknown to scholars previously, Cicerchia's book is clearly of interest to legal historians and scholars of early modern Rome and ecclesiastical history. Its erudite chapters are complemented by an appendix that includes a useful list of the auditors of the Apostolic chamber from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century as well as its criminal lieutenants—people whose roles are only clearly identified for the first time here. Along with these lists is an impressive series of relevant archival documents transcribed by the author and published for the first time. Cicerchia's book is a welcome and important addition to the study of justice in the pontifical states, our knowledge of which, as this book clearly demonstrates, is constantly evolving.

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