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Pattenden, Miles. Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rome

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[See table of contents](#)

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social identity” (153). The banquet offered by Giuliano della Rovere and Pietro Riario (nephews of Pope Sixtus IV) in Rome, 1473, to honour Eleonora of Aragon, future bride of Ercole I Este, is to be viewed under this light; and so also the banquet in Ariosto’s *Innamorato* offered by Charlemagne to all knights, Saracens included, to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. In both, woman becomes the desired food, the one to possess/eat.

The connections among these literary works of the Italian canon, viewed through the lens of food, are extremely interesting. Food becomes a tool that allows the reader to catch subtle nuances, references, citations, and interpretations that touch on social, religious, and cultural realities of the time. Pina Palma’s book is an intriguing read that goes well beyond appearances and brings to light an intricate network of connections that a modern reader would definitely miss without the help of her accurate and well-balanced transversal reading.

ELENA BRIZIO

The Medici Archive Project, Florence

Pattenden, Miles.

Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rome.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 154. ISBN 978-0-19-967062-8 (hardcover) \$99.

This study investigates several important approaches to the field of papal history. First, it ably reconstructs the events surrounding a series of trials that took place in 1560–61 through which Pope Pius IV prosecuted the nephews of Pope Paul IV. The notoriety of the Carafa family’s crimes makes this a good case study for a revisionist perspective built upon manuscript evidence. Second, this study enlarges the current discussion of early modern nepotism using a well-known example, but questions basic assumptions about the expectation of profit and the transmission of papal authority. Third, Pattenden takes up the issue of strategic reform by popes in a period that is sometimes glossed in too generous a fashion as reformist. As Pattenden argues, further inquiry and discussion are necessary in order to establish a true understanding of what contemporaries

considered to be reformist or innovative. Even though the study's conclusion is Pius IV's own innate conservatism, taken together these three foci establish a revisionist approach to papal history that is very welcome.

Built upon Pattenden's doctoral thesis, this brief monograph begins with a discussion of nepotism amid the historiography of the so-called Counter-Reformation papacy. Noting the lack of modern papal biographies and the reluctance of current historians to historicize the practices of supposedly corrupt popes, Pattenden encourages a new examination of Pius IV's attack on members of the Carafa family. He argues that the trials were less an attempt to re-envision or limit the role of the pope's relatives in papal administration than one part of a wider strategy to assert Pius's own authority over the College of Cardinals. The fact that Pius himself adopted several of the same nepotistic practices as Paul IV supports this thesis and encourages a perspective that leans more towards political contextualization than a narrative of cultural reform. Against this backdrop, Pattenden suggests that both the popes and the elite clergy of the late sixteenth century had "surprisingly flexible" ideas of the acceptable boundaries of nepotism and the employment of papal authority.

Chapter 1 narrates the pontificate of Paul IV (1555–59), exploring the role of the Carafa nephews and the evolution of their notorious reputations. This chapter also emphasizes the papacy's tumultuous relations with Spain and France, which provides a comparative context for understanding not only the twists of foreign relations but also the strategies employed by Paul's successors. Chapter 2 extends this comparison, introducing the reader to Pius IV (r. 1559–65) and offering a new vision of a pope that earlier historians have found singularly unexciting. Pattenden's evaluation of Pius as a skilled politician is based on an extensive collation of diplomatic sources and offers a perspective on the papacy that stresses continuity with previous administrative cultures amid the challenges that he faced. Chapter 3 provides a clear yet detailed summary of the cases against Cardinal Carlo Carafa and his brother Giovanni the duke of Paliano. This chapter mobilizes a substantial amount of manuscript material from the trial despite Pope Pius V's order for its destruction. In the same fashion by which chapter 3 shows the papal prosecutors' energy, chapter 4 reveals the naïveté of the Carafa nephews and the customary but nebulous understanding of their role in papal administration. Moreover, this chapter explores the challenge of mobilizing support for prosecuting a cardinal-nephew, even one with few friends following his uncle's death, in an environment in

which other cardinals feared the precedent of capital punishment inflicted on one of their peers. Chapter 5 investigates the years following the trials, specifically the declining popularity of Pius IV and the judicial reversal in favour of the Carafa processed by Pius V in 1566–67. Finally, the Conclusion returns to the theme of nepotism and explores how the actions of Pius IV shed light on the contemporary understanding of the papal family and the development of papal structures of authority, especially regarding the cardinal-nephew.

Overall this is an enjoyable read that presents clearly a notorious series of events, buttressed by a complex research foundation that newly problematizes important issues that remain unresolved by modern historians. The latter allows Pattenden to explore big issues like nepotism and the role of custom in early modern administrative culture, as well as articulating narrative trends in modern historiography. There is no doubt that this study will prove to be important to historians of early modern Rome, just as much for its presentation of past actions as for its ability to ask questions and project important and interesting conclusions.

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Peyronel Rambaldi, Susanna.

Una gentildonna irrequieta: Giulia Gonzaga fra reti familiari e relazioni eterodosse.

Rome: Viella, 2012. Pp. 368 + ill. ISBN 978-88-8334-926-3 (paperback) €30.

“A lady feeling unsettled”: such is the title for this new book devoted to Giulia Gonzaga by Italian scholar Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi. It is not a biography in the usual sense—unlike other works on the same topic, both old and recent. Here, the exploration of Giulia’s life (Gazzuolo, near Mantova, 1513–Naples, 1566) becomes an opportunity to delve into the history of her family, friends, and more generally the Italian aristocracy in a stormy period. The struggle between Charles V and Francis I on the one hand, and the ever stricter Inquisition’s investigations on the other, had in fact produced a very heavy climate that was difficult to escape.