The Roman Curia

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Origins and Structures

The papal curia was a crucial component in what distinguished Rome from other early modern cities. Defying easy classification, the curia or "court" was simultaneously a set of people, a physical space, and the institutional apparatus through which 16th- and 17th-century popes exercised their power. Many other contemporary European cities hosted such courts. However, Rome was unique in that its "court" was not royal but ecclesiastical: its leading members were predominantly celibate priests and prelates, not hereditary gentry or noblemen. The curia was much more than a place of ceremony and display: it also included a fully-functioning system of law courts which, by the 16th century, had been arbitrating Christendom's disputes for at least 500 years. Unlike royal courts, the curia had only a limited native composition, with a plurality—and at some points even a majority—of members who came from outside the Papal States and the Italian peninsula. Moreover, the curia's predominance of celibate clerics shaped Rome in other ways, including its unusual demography and extreme gender imbalance. The curia generated demands that sustained some of Rome's most characteristic secondary industries—from the highbrow, like the paintings and *objets d'art* commissioned by curial clerics as symbols of their status, to the highly visible brothels and gambling dens which gratified their baser needs. Rome may not have been a center of international trade, but through the curia—its persons, and its activities—the city maintained its international centrality. Toby Osborne has explained in the previous chapter how the papacy made its presence felt throughout Europe. The curia, by providing a central administrative apparatus, made that possible. However, the curia was no more a static entity than the papacy itself: each member,

including every reigning pope, sought constantly to adapt its forms and procedures to better suit ever-changing needs.

This chapter explains how the curia changed over the period 1492 to 1692, paying particular attention to shifts in its structures, procedures, and personnel. The medieval curia, through which popes had provided a limited range of arbitrational and spiritual services to the faithful across Christendom, gradually evolved into a more complex and multivalent organism, which fulfilled different roles simultaneously. On the one hand, the early modern curia housed standing committees (or congregations) that directed Tridentine Catholicism, including its programs of spiritual renewal and extra-European evangelization; on the other, it served as the basis for the temporal governance of the Papal States. This unusual duality of purpose, and the tensions it engendered, were important drivers of the curia's history in the 16th and 17th centuries. By extension they also had a significant impact on the papacy's wider history and on the history of the city and citizens of Rome itself.

The curia's origins ran deep into Rome's history: it began with the earliest popes inviting clerics to assist in discharging episcopal duties. Pope Fabian (r.236-50) divided the city into seven regions, appointing a deacon and subdeacon in each to supervise charitable distribution. By the 8th century popes also stationed significant numbers of priests in the great basilicas to assist in liturgical duties; they also co-opted the bishops of Rome's seven suburbicarian dioceses (Ostia, Albano, Palestrina, Porta, Silva Candida, Gabii and Velletri) as additional auxiliaries in this task.[1] When 11th-century popes began to promote their theory of papal monarchy, in which they asserted their supremacy over Christendom, they arrogated the right to elect their successors to just these three groups of clerics, excluding all others and all

[1] T. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984), 215-19.

laymen. These clerics, who were already sometimes referred to as 'cardinals'—perhaps a play on the Latin word *cardines* ("hinges")—soon acquired great power because of this privilege: their proximity to the pope and their role in electing his successor drew attention away from the remaining clerics, who vied for their patronage.[2] Before long, every cardinal had acquired his own *famiglia* or household—a following of clients, many of whom were also his relatives. The first written reference to the "curia," in a document from 1089, refers to the aggregate of these households.[3] Those who hoped to enter or advance in papal service needed a place in a *famiglia* first, because this was by far the best route to preferment. The papacy thus developed its own version of the "court," which was evolving simultaneously across Europe's secular monarchies. The cardinals were its aristocracy, although a very unusual one: not only were they celibate ecclesiastics, but they were not hereditary—the pope alone had the right to appoint or demote them (a right which medieval popes, by and large, guarded jealously). Equally important, the cardinals often claimed that their role in electing the pope gave them an authority and jurisdiction within the Church independent of the pope himself. At the end of the 14th century disagreement over this point triggered the Great Schism (1378-1417), when separate papal obediences competed in Rome, Avignon, and Pisa. In the 15th century, and perhaps even into the 16th, arguments continued to be made that the cardinals constituted an ecclesiastical senate and that a clear distinction existed between them and the holders of other curial offices (even if cardinals often filled other curial positions).[4] This tension only dissolved

[2] S. Kuttner, "Cardinalis: The History of a Canonical Concept," *Traditio* 3 (1945), 176.

[3] H. Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages, c.1050-1200* (Cambridge, 1986), 75-76.

[4] J. Thomson, *Popes and Princes, 1417-1517 Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church* (London, 1980), 57-77; C. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden, 2009), 39-93.

in the later 16th century, when popes began to assert their monarchic authority over the cardinals with greater vigor and when structural changes to the curia's formal institutions gave the cardinals a more direct role than had hitherto been the case.

The need to create a space for representing power and distributing favors within the Church guided the papal court's on-going development. But the papal court was always more than just a space for trading political favors. Establishing cardinals as electors allowed popes to assert their own arbitrational powers over the rest of Christendom: the pope was Christ's vicar on earth and, as such, exercised both a plenitude of power and also supreme judgment over all Christians. Naturally, such claims required a sophisticated administrative apparatus if they were to have significance. Eleventh- and 12th-century popes therefore worked hard to create institutions and procedures for processing and disseminating their judgments, thereby establishing: the Penitentiary, which dealt with matters of conscience; Roman Rota, which heard appeals from other ecclesiastical courts; and Signatura Apostolica, which heard appeals from the Rota and concerning conflicts of jurisdiction. The Apostolic Chancery recorded decisions made by the other bodies, and the Apostolic Treasury handled payments to and by popes. By 1200, as many as 200 writers (*scriptores*), abbreviators, notaries, lawyers, and secretaries may have filled these offices at any time. By the time of the Avignon papacy (1309-76), more than 650 such officials existed (making the curia Europe's largest bureaucracy by some margin).[5] After Martin V returned to Rome in 1420 this bureaucracy burgeoned in size—

[5] B. Guillemain, *La Cour pontificale d'Avignon (1309-1376). Étude d'une société* (Paris, 1962) has counted a range of 519 to 654 for the period of his study. G. Chittolini, "The Papacy and the Italian States," in A. Gamberini and I. Lazzerini (eds.), *The Italian Renaissance State* (Cambridge, 2014), 474, suggested a slightly lower figure of 250-300 (rising to 500 only after the return to Rome), but provides no evidence.

not only did Martin need to unite the three papal *curiae* extant during the Great Schism, but he and his successors used it to consolidate control over their temporal state. As part of their state-building, 15th- and 16th-century popes appointed governors, legates, lieutenants, notaries, fiscal procurators, etc., all of whom ventured out into the Church's territories to exercise the pope's authority there. But their efforts were also increasingly coordinated by temporary commissions, often comprised of cardinals, which met in Rome.

These commissions, particularly prevalent in Paul II's pontificate (r.1464-71), soon dealt with broader questions of how papal policy should be formulated or implemented in a specific area—not just in relation to the administration of the state, but also the wider governance of the Church and even curial reform. At the same time, in order to persuade Italy's secular elites to invest in the papacy's newly-asserted temporal authority, popes offered them red hats and other curial posts. Indeed, Sixtus IV (r.1471-84) instigated a whole new system of venal offices, which members of Italy's elites could purchase in return for a lifelong stipend from the Apostolic Treasury. All this was important for strengthening the papacy's control of the Papal States and the Italian Church. However, it had a crucial side effect in that those secular elites soon found the papal court, where they were all represented, to be the natural place to resolve their disputes and negotiate with each other as well as with the pope. Catherine Fletcher has shown how the papal court thus nurtured the new figure of the resident ambassador and soon became a prevailing center for establishing new diplomatic norms in Italy and beyond.[6]

The curia's other major development in the period 1492-1692 was the institutionalization of the temporary commissions described above into formal

[6] C. Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge, 2015), 15-35.

"Congregations"—committees of cardinals that met regularly and on a permanent basis to scrutinize or execute policy. The first step in this direction was Paul III's (r. 1534-49) decision to license Gian Pietro Carafa (the future Paul IV, r.1555-59) and others to establish the Holy Office in 1542. This Holy Office was to be a new administrative body that investigated other clerics and assessed their theological orthodoxy (an issue which had increased in importance since the Reformation). Paul III may only have intended the Holy Office as a temporary part of ecclesiastical government, but it soon developed a life of its own. In 1555, when Carafa was elected to the throne of St. Peter, he further increased the prestige and resources of the office that had helped him rise to power. As pope, Carafa attempted further curial reform, including by instituting the short-lived Sacro Consiglio (1559). However, the crucial moment in institutionalizing "Congregations" came when Sixtus V published the bull *Immensa Aeterni Dei* in 1588, which formalized the first 15 of them in Law. The initial 15 included the Holy Office and the Signatura, but also new Congregations: of Bishops, the Regular Clergy, the Council of Trent, for the Erection of Churches and Consistorial Provisions, for Sacred Rites and Ceremonies (which, among other things, oversaw canonizations[7]), of the Annona (grain supply), the Navy, Public Welfare, the Sapienza (university), Roads, Bridges, and Waters, State Consultations (Sacra Consulta), the Vatican Press, and Index of Forbidden Books (another of Carafa's ideas, which had first been compiled in 1559). The total number of congregations fluctuated considerably over time as some were suppressed and others created. (Before 1800 around 50 operated at one time or another.) Among the post-1588 additions two were particularly significant long-term: the Congregation of Buon Governo (Good Governance), which Clement VIII instituted in 1592 to oversee the economic, administrative, and financial affairs of the Papal States; and that of Propaganda Fide (Propaganda of the Faith), which Gregory XV established in 1622 to oversee evangelization and missionary work.

[7] See Pamela Jones's chapter on canonizations.

Politics and Administration

One of historians' most important debates about the curia is how it operated. Medievalists sometimes argue that the curia's operations, especially in the Avignon period, represented a major achievement in the fields of bureaucracy and centralization, establishing techniques and practices which secular princes later copied in their processes of state-formation. Early modernists have traditionally made similar claims about the curia after 1500. Jean Delumeau argued that the creation of the Congregations was a pioneering experiment in state bureaucracy and constituted a fundamentally modernizing force, the potential administrative engine of a unified Italian state.[8] Paolo Prodi, whose *Papal Prince* remains the single most important account of the papacy's administrative dimension in this period, perceived the situation quite differently. For Prodi, the curia's changing structures and practices were innovative responses to the particular challenge popes faced of creating a secular government out of ecclesiastical institutions. Popes were able to adapt the spiritual to the temporal precisely because they alone among Europe's monarchs stood at the head of both hierarchies. Prodi saw the process as more *ad hoc* than did Delumeau. Nevertheless, he cites a report from the Venetian ambassador in 1578 that explains how the system of papal bureaucracy worked. Nine cardinals held distinct offices in the curia, but the remainder:

> are employed by the pope to advise him, since having [been] appointed [to] different congregations in accordance with their professions and the experience which they have . . . in such a way that, the pope having heard someone's demand, either decides himself, when

[8] J. Delumeau, "Rome: Political and Administrative Centralization in the Papal State in the Sixteenth Century," in Eric Cochrane (ed.), *The Late Italian Renaissance 1525-1630* (London, 1970), 399-410.

> the need arises, or puts the affair in the hands of whichever congregation suits him, and then resolves it himself, after having listened to whichever opinion of the cardinals pleases him most...[9]

Nevertheless, however irrational the curia's evolution may have been, such accounts of Congregations present them as relatively technocratic and policy-orientated ministries, having far more in common with how modern governments operate today than the equivalent organs of other 16th-century states. For Prodi, subdivision of duties and specialization of the various ministries was one of the early modern curia's hallmarks, demonstrating its unique efficiency among contemporary bureaucracies. Another hallmark came in a similar vein: the increasing level of legal training among new curialists and the growing skilfulness with which they applied it. Statistics alone cannot do justice to this phenomenon, but might be regarded as indicative: around half of those promoted to the College of Cardinals after 1500 seem to have studied law, with the proportion of those who had studied theology significantly lower. The crowning achievement of this consolidation of the curia's role as a legal space was Giovanni Battista De Luca's celebrated *Relatio Romanae curiae*, in which De Luca describes its extraordinary complexity: four separate institutions reflected the pope's own four identities, which were tightly interwoven into a single "mixture," i.e. the seat of the pope's authority where all different types of law were arbitrated.[10]

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[9] Antonio Tiepolo, "Relazione," in E. Alberì, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 2nd ser., 5 vols. (Florence, 1839-63), 4:248.

[10] G. De Luca, "Relatio romanae curiae forensis eiusque tribunalium et congregationum," in *Theatrum veritatis et iustitiae*, 18 vols. (Rome, 1669-73), 15.2:1-266. Cfr. A. Lauro, *Il cardinale Giovan Battista De Luca: diritto e riforme nello Stato della Chiesa (1676-1683)*, Napoli 1991. Prodi 1987, 33, 64-65.

The papal curia may have innovated in the way it formalized administration. However, as Prodi recognized, it was not like some proto-19th-century state bureaucracy. Far from it, on the levels of personnel and of individual interactions, the early modern curia resembled the other courts of early modern states far more than it did the states of later ages. For one thing, the common profile of many curial clerics was less a function of technocratic meritocracy than of common background and a shared set of cultural priorities. The clerics who staffed curial offices may have been better qualified for their posts than before, in many cases, but this reflected the changing general priorities of elite Italians as much as the specific needs of the papal administration. Their social position, political connections, and capacity to take advantage of the opportunities of clientage all continued to constrain curial clerics' careers, however skilled they were at law, administration, or diplomacy. A cleric who wished to become a cardinal still had to win the favor of patrons who could ease his passage upwards through the *cursus honorum* (or sequential order of public offices). In fact, research into the cardinals and curial prelates of the 16th and 17th centuries has repeatedly uncovered a thickening nexus of familial and relational ties. In the later Middle Ages, curialists had often been quite international (and, during the Avignon period, overwhelmingly French). However, from the 16th century, Italians dominated utterly. Not only were two-thirds of cardinals routinely Italians after 1471, but Italians also monopolized the lower grades of office—a process assisted by the practice of venality (popes sold such offices to the highest bidder, usually an Italian). Moreover, even within the broader group of Italians, a small closed group of families dominated the curia, making it akin to an oligarchy. Some families, like the Roman Colonna and Orsini, were represented in the College almost continuously. Overall, nearly 10 per cent of all cardinals promoted between the 16th and 18th centuries were direct descendants of one or more popes (Francesco Antonio Borgia, promoted in 1700, was the first to be directly

descended from three popes).[11] A number of historians, including Marco Pellegrini and Wolfgang Reinhard, have shown how these Italian clerics used curial office to advance their interests and those of their families.[12] Italian cardinals would obtain places on as many committees as possible to be in the best position to satisfy their obligations to friends. During the pontificate of Paul V (r. 1605-21), 61 of the 126 cardinals were members of two or more congregations (with Cesare Baronio a member of seven and Roberto Bellarmino of eight).[13] Maria Antonietta Visceglia has remarked that most cardinals worked tirelessly for the promotion of nephews and clients.[14] Structures that appear "modern" and "rational" were thus often less so. When the Propaganda Fide was formed in 1622, it comprised 13 cardinals. Why? The answer seems to have had less to do with the geography of missionary activity than with the need to placate different interests. The 17th-century curia, for all its innovative administrative practices, remained an arena in which all decisions were political. Who you knew was as important as what you knew.

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[11] C. Weber, *Senatus divinus. Verborgene Strukturen im Kardinalskollegium der frühen Neuzeit (1500-1800)*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), 246.

[12] M. Pellegrini, "Corte di Roma e aristocrazie italiane in età moderna. Per una lettura storico sociale della curia romana," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 30 (1994), 543– 602; W. Reinhard, "Papal Power and Family Strategy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in R. Asch and A. Birke (eds.), *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age* (London, 1991), 329-56.

[13] W. Reinhard, *Paul V. Borghese: mikropolitische papstgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 2009), 291.

[14] M.A. Visceglia, "Factions in the Sacred College in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," in Signorotto and Visceglia 2002, 116.

A central question about the curia's structures and personnel is why they developed as they did. Prodi saw popes as the key protagonists, specifically because of their desire to centralize power in the curia and in their persons. Popes alone had the plenipotentiary authority to initiate such change by fiat, and constant criticism about curial corruption gave them a pretext. Yet, as Lajos Pásztor has observed, no 16th-century pope made more than token efforts to abolish the curia's existing administrative structures. Rather, every pope added to them, establishing new organs of state on top of the old curial structure, which never disappeared.[15] For Prodi, this process began around the time of the early Reformation, although it was not simply a response to Protestant accusations. The process reached its climax under the Counter-Reformation popes Pius V (r.1566-72) and Sixtus V (r.1585-90), whose reforms refashioned the curia into a vehicle for implementing the Tridentine decrees across Catholic Europe. At the same time these popes took decisive steps towards centralizing political authority in Rome and its hinterland in the papacy itself—excluding all other institutions. As part of this process, Sixtus and Clement VIII (r.1592-1605) de-feudalized the Papal States, stripping the Roman barons of their independent political legitimacy and placing significant new curbs on their capacity for violence. Both popes also moved to complete the cardinals' subordination to the pontiff—a process which, in Prodi's view, had been ongoing since the pontificate of Adrian VI (r.1522-23). Pius V bound the College as guarantor of the state's continuity by making it responsible for preventing partitioning or enfeoffment of the Church's lands during papal vacancies. Sixtus V restricted the cardinals further by proscribing expenditure of the papal treasure in the Castel S. Angelo. Under Clement VIII, the College became more dependent on the pope than ever before. Maria Teresa Fattori has documented Clement's strategies for

[15] L. Pásztor, ''L'histoire de la curia romaine,'' *Revue d'histoire écclesiastique* 44 (1969), 357.

controlling its members through financial sanctions and inducements.[16] Poisoning opponents, as Alexander VI (r.1492-1503) was alleged to have done, or judicially executing them, as did Pius IV (r.1559-65), was no longer required. The pope's personal authority was at its zenith as the 17th century began, with significant implications for the whole curia, as Antonio Menniti Ippolito has argued. The pope had so much power because every person and each arrangement needed to be reconfirmed at the start of his pontificate and could, potentially, be changed. For Menniti, this led to perhaps the curia's most distinctive feature, at least when compared to other early modern institutions: its "discontinuous continuity."[17] Policy goals and administrative practices could shift substantially from one pontificate to the next, which is why some congregations disappeared as soon as they had been initiated. (Such congregations could nevertheless still be extremely important as the examples of the Congregazioni De Auxiliis (1602-05) and dei Beati (1602-15) show). The situation was, in this respect, as redolent of the circumstances in which modern politicians enjoy political power as it was of the operative procedures of other early modern bureaucracies.

Prodi is probably correct that many of the most significant developments in the curia's structures and curial practice depended on the actions of individual popes with an agenda to augment their own power. However, even if true, it does not mean that the pope's personal power over the curia increased over the long term. Indeed, Menniti has argued that the long-term effect of this process was quite otherwise: rather, the pope was gradually marginalized

[16] M.T. Fattori, *Clemente VIII e il Sacro Collegio: Meccanismi istituzionali ed accentramento di governo* (Stuttgart, 2004), 214-39.

[17] A. Menniti Ippolito, *Il governo dei papi nell'età moderna: carriere, gerarchie, organizzazzione curiale* (Rome, 2007), 19.

within the administration over which he presided.[18] Menniti points out two aspects in particular: personnel and location. The degree to which the papacy operated as a personal monarchy, by which I mean that it involved the direct interactions of individuals and the management of their individual relationships, diminished considerably during the 17th century. One obvious sign of this was the declining role accorded to papal nepotism in the exercise of government. Innocent XII abolished "institutionalized nepotism" in 1692.[19] By then, however, the nepotistic model of exercising papal power had been challenged for at least 50 years. Conversely, an alternative model, placing chief ministerial power within the papacy not in the hands of the pope's nephew but in those of the "secretary of state," had emerged. The Secretariat, which had its origins in the 15th century, became the highest level of papal government after the pontificate of Urban VIII (r.1623-44), the last pope whose *secretarius intimus* (private secretary) was not a cardinal. Many Italian cardinals supported the idea that the secretary should assume powers previously accorded to the cardinal-nephew, perhaps in part because several 17th-century cardinal-nephews proved unreliable. However, the cardinals also surely took this view because they themselves were an increasingly closed oligarchic group, more like the patriciates of republican Italy than previous generations of cardinals. Gianvittorio Signorotto has demonstrated how the Italian elites who dominated the Sacred College and the curia, operating under the guise of the *squadrone volante* (lit. the flying squad which was also referred to as "God's faction" since it attempted, successfully, to influence the election of two successive popes, Fabio Chigi in 1655 and Giulio Rospigliosi in 1667), were sufficiently self-confident to mobilize to exclude non-

[18] A. Menniti Ippolito, 'The Secretariat of State as the pope's special ministry', in Signorotto and Visceglia 2002, 132-57.

[19] Reinhard 1991, 330.

Italian political influence from papal elections.[20] It is possible to speculate that these cardinals moved to limit nepotism, just as the Venetian and Genoese elites evolved their republics' constitutions to limit the doge's prerogative powers and to prevent one family or faction from monopolizing the ducal office.

Menniti's second point about location is to some extent tied to his first. Paul V (r.1605-21) took up residence in the Quirinal Palace, which thereafter became the pope's principal home. Meanwhile, the congregations of cardinals and other organs of the curia continued to meet primarily in the Vatican (but also elsewhere in the city). Initially, the pope used the cardinal-nephew to communicate with his dispersed administration, but the fact that he was not physically present immediately distanced him from the decision-making undertaken in his name. After the formal role of cardinal-nephew was abolished, the disconnect between pope and curia was compounded. By the Settecento it took a man of rare talent to occupy the papal office and control events. Benedict XIV (r.1740-58), surely the most successful "operator" among 18th-century popes, quipped about this situation: "The pope commands, the cardinals do not obey, the people do what they wish."[21]

The Curia and Rome

The final section of this chapter turns to the curia's impact on Rome itself. Its presence ultimately underwrote the city's importance. From the 12th century, the curia's spaces were a final destination for the many people who travelled to plead their case before the pope or to

[20] G. Signorotto, "The *squadrone volante*: 'independent' cardinals in European politics in the second half of the seventeenth century," in Signorotto and Visceglia 2002, 177-211.

[21] H. Gross, *Rome in the Age of the Enlightenment: the post-Tridentine syndrome and the ancien regime* (Cambridge, 1990), 41-42.

seek preferment from him. After the 15th century, when the curia also became a focal point of new diplomatic networks that sprang up around Italy and Europe, it was the heart which pumped life-blood into much of the city's ceremonial spectacle and display. Diplomatic activity, and the cultural manifestations it induced, drew capital into the city on a very significant scale, adding to other major inflows from papal taxation and the private revenues of cardinals and curialists. Peter Partner and Wolfgang Reinhard have calculated the rise in papal incomes over the course of the 16th century, from under 500,000 ducats to over 2,000,000 *scudi* (the increase in revenues from within Italy more than compensating for the losses from outside it over this century).[22] By 1600 the cardinals and other members of the curia also enjoyed private incomes totalling over 1,000,000 *scudi* above and beyond papal income.[23] While much of this revenue was recycled back to the holders of venal office or papal debt, the cardinals' personal income, like that which the pope siphoned off for his own family, was essentially disposable. David Chambers, Mary Hollingsworth, and others have drawn attention to the account books of various members of the College— these confirm how price insensitive cardinals were in spending and how much they disbursed on services and luxury goods.[24] The curia's constant demand for such goods and services drove much of the migration to Rome:

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[22] P. Partner, "Papal Financial Policy in the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation," *Past and Present* 88 (1980), 50; W. Reinhard, *Papstfinanz und Nepotismus unter Paul V. (1605-1621)*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1974).

[23] J. Delumeau, *La Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1957-59), 1:450-53.

[24] D.S. Chambers, "The economic predicament of Renaissance cardinals," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 3 (1966), 287-313; Mary Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition, and Everyday Life in the Court of a Borgia Prince* (London, 2006).

merchants looking to sell their wares; artists seeking commissions; even prostitutes expecting to ply their trade. Because of the curia, Rome's economy did not merely consume what Romans themselves produced, but served as a redistribution center for all Italy. Jean Delumeau, in particular, has recognized the degree to which the curia's administrative structures constituted the foundation of the entire urban ecosystem.[25]

In the 16th and 17th centuries the curia's presence also helped shape Rome's urban geography. This was the great age of papal building projects aimed at the city's urban regeneration. Later 16th-century popes, most notably Pius IV and Sixtus V, took control of urban planning, including the provision of roads, aqueducts, and fountains.[26] The curia planned and financed such projects for them; however, its visible footprint on Rome was growing in other ways too. Sixtus V's reorganization of the papal administration necessitated new departments and divisions, all needing headquarters from which to conduct their business. Some congregations met in their most senior cardinal's residence; most acquired their own independent offices. Pius V purchased the Palazzo Pucci to serve as a permanent base for the Holy Office in 1566, commissioning Pirro Ligorio and Giovanni Sallustio Peruzzi to renovate it. In the 1620s, the Propaganda Fide convened in the Palazzo Ferrantini, a small palace at the southern end of the Piazza di Spagna donated by a Spanish priest. Under the Congregation's auspices, and financed by its subscriptions, this *palazzo* was developed into a triangular urban block, with a chapel by Gianlorenzo Bernini and facade by Francesco Borromini. Other congregations with designated spaces included: the Signatura Apostolica, which met in the Palazzo della Cancelleria; and the Annona (whose Palazzo dell'Annona on the Quirinal was

[25] Delumeau 1957-59 (as in n.25).

[26] See the chapters by Carla Keyvanian and Katherine Rinne.

built *c.*1630 but was demolished in the 1940s). The movement of cardinals, their agents, and their subordinates, to and from these places of business shaped a good part of Rome's prominent and high priority urban traffic, especially on the routes between the sites of the more important congregations and the Vatican. The presence of a congregation's *palazzo*, like the presence of a cardinal's, affected the piazza where it was located, raising its profile as well as the number of visitors passing through it. Of course, the pope's decision to relocate his primary residence to the Quirinal in 1606 realigned the city's political geography, in turn regenerating hitherto less prominent areas east and southeast of Via del Corso. Menniti studied how the Quirinal Palace developed in the 17th century and how the existence of a papal residence separate to, and distant from, the main site of the curial bureaucracy affected both papacy and city. In addition to emphasizing the new challenges this created for popes who sought to control or coordinate their subordinates, he suggested that the pope's move led other members of the 17th-century curia to settle around a wider area of the ancient city than previously. Menniti further notes how such changes must have generated substantially more clerical traffic across the Tiber, putting pressure on the city's three bridges, which would have become severe bottlenecks.[27] John Hunt has begun to explore the politics of such urban movement in publications on "carriage culture."[28] The pope only returned to the Vatican in 1870, when Pius IX imprisoned himself there in protest at the occupation of his city by the new Italian State,

[27] A. Menniti Ippolito, *I Papi al Quirinale: Il sovrano pontefice e la scelta di una residenza* (Rome, 2004), 155-59.

[28] J. Hunt, "Carriages, Violence, and Masculinity in Early Modern Rome," *I Tatti: Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17 (2014), 175-96; ibid., "The Ceremonial Possession of a City: Ambassadors and their Carriages in Early Modern Rome," *Royal Studies Journal* 3.2 (2016), 69-89.

which suggests that the process of decentralizing the curia's personnel and activities may have continued until well into the 18th century. That ought to have significant implications for how we understand the city's development—for where cardinals went, lesser Romans often followed, redrawing the city's wider social and economic geography in the process.

The curia's presence also shaped Rome in the provision of welfare and local government.[29] Curial officials had long been tasked with formulating papal policy in particular areas of activity and with implementing it on the pope's behalf, and these responsibilities grew substantially in the early modern period. Curial officials served as patrons and benefactors of many hospitals and hospices that criss-crossed the 17th-century city. Their social and moral tastes as Counter-Reformation clerics shaped what welfare these officials provided and which groups they saw as deserving: the indigent, orphans, foundlings, and unmarried women, many of whom were confined to the city's convents to protect their modesty. Educational policy was likewise subject to clerical fashions—not only did the Sapienza even have its own congregation, but popes and cardinals sponsored academies and even the careers of individual scientists.

Further Research

There remains considerable scope for further research into the curia's effect on Rome's society and economy in many areas like sponsorship of science, administration of justice, and provision of social welfare (including Rome's food supply). The Annona's officials regulated grain production in the Agro Romano, setting prices for wheat, flour, and bread, and their

[29] See the chapters by Renata Ago, Thomas and Elizabeth Cohen, Anna Esposito, and Christopher Carlsmith.

actions in this respect cannot be entirely divorced from the curia's wider political concerns.[30] An official who obtained office within the Annona gained a daunting responsibility to stave off famines, but also acquired a unique opportunity for personal enrichment because he controlled both prices and export licences. However, we still lack a complete picture of how such officials balanced competing imperatives, in the Annona or elsewhere. As a complex bureaucracy the curia lacked a profit motive and could only measure its institutional success by size: the number of officials or amount of revenue. How far did this mean that curial officials struggled to accomplish their stated goals—either because those goals were misaligned with their own private objectives or because they conflicted with the aims of other curial departments?

Historians should continue to probe the curia's negative impacts, which came increasingly to the fore after 1600. One example was the tension between curial officials and the representatives of Rome's traditional sources of political authority, the baronial houses and the communal magistrates. Low-level conflicts over jurisdiction were a feature of Roman life, as Laurie Nussdorfer showed in her *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*. John Hunt shows in this volume how such conflicts increased considerably during *sede vacante* (vacant see), when the College of Cardinals competed directly with the commune to exercise legitimate authority in the pope's absence.[31] The curia's presence and its claims to administer temporal government were the anomaly here, not the demands of civic magistrates to govern themselves. The curia's second negative impact was financial: its cost to the pope's Roman subjects, though

[30] On the Annona, see Volker Reinhardt, "Annona and Bread Supply in Rome," in P. van Kessel and E. Schulte (eds.), *Rome/Amsterdam: Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth Century Europe* (Amsterdam, 1997), 209-20.

[31] See John Hunt's chapter.

difficult to calculate, was surely enormous. Popes spent around 9 per cent of the papacy's income of about 2,000,000 *scudi* on administration, including the costs of the curia and the networks of papal officials beyond Rome. However, what counted as "administration" was rather different for 17th-century popes than it had been for medieval ones. Whereas medieval popes had run offices of judicial arbitration, obtaining revenues from those who used their services, Seicento popes presided over a vast, unwieldy behemoth whose activities and structures were, as De Luca discovered, extremely difficult to describe. In fact, by this time over half of papal revenues went to servicing debts, including payments of stipends to holders of venal office. Much of this money was raised from direct and indirect taxation. As the seat of the pope's authority, and the place where his power was strongest, Rome bore the brunt of such taxes, paying several times more in such dues than inhabitants of other parts of the Papal States. There is an open question as to what effects this had on the city.[32]

An additional, but related, line for investigation must surely be how early before their final collapse under Pius VI (r.1775-99) the papal finances spiralled out of control. Economic historians now tend to emphasize only short-term factors, a view at odds with the curia's own older historiography. Taxes rose, public issues of debt crowded out private ones, and opportunity costs within the Roman economy mounted. But how far did the expense of sustaining the curial administration and the debts that popes had incurred through it bleed the Roman economy of capital? Fresh supplies of capital into Rome may have masked this for a long time, but we might ask whether, by 1692, the problems were beginning to show. Paul V, Alexander VII (r.1655-67), and Innocent XI (r.1676-89) all technically defaulted on their obligations to office-holders. Even though Innocent XII (r.1691-1700) abolished venality

[32] F. Piola Caselli, "Public Debt in the Papal States," in F.P. Caselli (ed.), *Government Debt and Financial Markets in Europe* (London, 2015), 111.

entirely, officials' attempts to resolve the 18th-century papacy's fiscal problems had profound effects, including famines, strikes, a debt default, and a collapse of the currency. The curia, which had made early modern Rome what it was, eventually played a significant part in its downfall. But it left an indelible mark on the city—indeed the pope still resides in the Vatican, presiding over a reformed and modernized administration. Elsewhere, signs and symbols of the curia's presence persist silently, often as a palimpsest beneath the official presence of the post-Risorgimento Italian state.