

and the interests of the Scaglia di Verrua clan. Thus, Osborne claims somewhat unconvincingly, although it seems that Scaglia did not accomplish much, his efforts paved the way for future familial and ducal accomplishments.

Scaglia, Osborne notes, did not always work towards obvious goals. Instead, he operated within a developing political culture that prized contacts, friendships, and artistic patronage. Osborne, in this last instance, makes much of the fact that Scaglia commissioned works of art from Anthony Van Dyke, a point repeatedly made but not fully integrated into his narrative. More generally, Osborne provides a detailed, event-by-event, description of Scaglia's diplomatic career. While the book, as a result, abounds in specifics, the connection between these biographical details and the political culture of the time remains a little vague. This illustrates the downside of Osborne's sources that provided considerable detail but failed to give evidence to elucidate a coherent account of seventeenth-century political culture. As a result, interesting questions, such as the nature of diplomatic "friendships" or the exact connections between private and public diplomatic affairs (diplomacy in the service of the state and in the service of the family), are often raised but not pursued systematically. In sum, Osborne has provided us, on the one hand, with a rigorously researched discussion of the Savoyard ambassador Alessandro Scaglia that will surely be of interest to historians of the Thirty Years' War and of diplomatic history. Indeed, he has successfully shown the crucial role played by a representative of a smaller state, Savoy, in international negotiations during this period. On the other hand, those individuals interested in the development of political culture may find their interests piqued but could also feel that many important questions were left unanswered.

Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, eds. *Court and Politics in Papal Rome 1492-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. viii + 258 pp. \$60.00. Review by ERMINIA ARDISSINO, UNIVERSITY OF TORINO.

The volume recently published in the series of Cambridge Studies in Italian History and Culture covers the papacy in the early modern period. It analyses the structures of the Roman court, the changes within it during an age crucial for European history, and the role played in Italian and European politics in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the papal institutions. The collected essays take advantage of research into the recently opened Roman archives and are conducted with innovative methods, offering issues which overcome the traditional historiography of the topics.

One group of essays deals with the Sacred College, showing the complexity of life in the most powerful of the Roman institutions. Marco Pellegrini in his "A Turning-Point in the History of the Factional System in the Sacred College: The Power of Popes and Cardinals in the Age of Alexandre VI" (8-30) presents research on ethics and behaviour of the cardinals, and studies attempts made by the pope in order to control this institution. The pontificate of Alexander VI Borgia (1492-1503) appears as the most interesting for the emergence of factors leading to the decline of the Sacred College as an organ of government in the Roman Church. Different forms of erosion of the prerogatives of dignity of the cardinals become evident in the early fifteenth century. The pope altered the composition of the Sacred College by extensive and frequent promotions, in order to forestall attempts to depose him. Generally, during his papacy, the administration, politics, and diplomacy were concentrated in the hands of a small palace committee. The changing force is put in evidence by the essay of Maria Antonietta Visceglia: "Factions in the Sacred College in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (99-131). This extensive research proves that in the Roman court "factions were neither a static reality nor a source of perennial political instability, but rather dynamic aggregations, whose political value must be defined in relation to a set of variables" (102). In Rome, factions were not determined by spiritual issues, but created mainly by the election of the pope. Visceglia discusses the actors of the factions (i.e. ambassadors, agents of European courts, cardinal-nephew, conclavists, etc.) and their interactions: how the cardinal-nephew determines

the outcome of the papal election following the death of his pontiff-uncle and how he was influenced by the representatives of international power. A further example of the way factions acted in the conclave and in the politics of the Roman curia is the chapter devoted to the affairs related to the *squadrone volante*. "The *Squadrone Volante*: 'Independent' Cardinals and European Politics in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century" (177-211) by Gianvito Signorotto. The *squadrone* was a faction of eleven talented young cardinals formed in 1655 after the death of Innocenzo X. It continued its activity for thirty years, until the condemnation of the quietists in 1684. Animated by a strict pragmatism, it determined the choice of the papacy and the orientation of international politics of the Church in years of great instability and continuous transformation, which saw the passage from Spanish egemony to the French one.

The cardinal-nephew appears to be another fundamental component in the life of the curia, acting as the pope's *alter ego*. But, during the seventeenth century the Secretary of State acquired such importance as to be considered a serious rival of the pope's nephew. Antonio Menniti Ippolito in his "The Secretariat of State as the Pope's Special Ministry" (132-57) studies the way the Secretary deprived the cardinal-nephew of all his functions, becoming "a sort of 'cardinal-nephew' unrelated by blood to the pontiff" (134). Starting with Fabio Chigi (appointed in 1651), the Secretary became a key reference in the curia, an innovation continued by his followers, Giulio Rospigliosi and Decio Azzolini.

Another institution which played an important role in the papacy in the early modern period was the cardinal protector. Olivier Poncet in his "The Cardinal Protectors of the Crowns in the Roman Curia During the First Half of the Seventeenth Century: The Case of France" (158-76) traces the story of the institution since Saint Francis, which introduced the protector of a religious order, to the Cardinal Mazarino, which brought to an end the intrusion of papal nepotism into the system of protectorships. The protector of a Catholic crown was an indirect instrument of control of Roman curia to the government of Catholic countries. Mazarino's

action showed that the papacy at the end of the seventeenth century was losing its role within the international theatre of Europe.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century Rome was "the place in which tensions and conflicts rife in Europe came to a head, but where it was also possible to mediate and form alliances. It was a theatre in which individual bravura in dealing with the succession of events and 'turns' of fortune was indispensable" (78), and was a centre of business, a market-place for bankers and men of finance. Mario Rosa in his "The World's Theatre: The Court of Rome and Politics in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century" (78-98) shows the significance of the relationship between politics, religion and culture in the Roman curia through the analyses of the activity of the Accademia dei Virtuosi and of the memoir addressed by Gregory XV to his nephew-cardinal Lodovico. The Virtuosi acted with political and moral aims and pursued the foundation of a "Christian" political system. In their meetings they tried to outline the figure of the prince indicating in its virtues of beneficence and magnanimity the essentiality of a monarch according to the Scriptures. As on a stage, the pope and the curia acted when involved in ceremonies, whose symbolic value was used in order to safeguard a hierarchical order or to modify it according to the need of the Apostolic See. In Rome there was no actual place that could be defined as a court, all the people who orbited around the pope and had access to him, all the city areas which were involved in the daily life of the pontiff and of his courtiers constituted the court. The chapter "Court and City in the Ceremony of the *Possesso* in the Sixteenth Century" by Irene Fosi deciphers the symbolism expressed in one of the most significant festas: the possession of the Corpus Christi, a cavalcade to the Lateran which sanctioned the functions of a new pontiff. Fosi considers three moments: the papacies of Jules II and Leo X at the beginning of the century, that of Paul III in the middle, and that of Sixtus V at the end, three steps which show the changes in the spiritual and political role of the Roman curia. Still, on the ceremonial life in Rome "Hegemony Over the Social Scene and Zealous Popes (1676-

1700)" by Renata Ago informs on the variety of problems related to the relationship between the pope and the Roman families as far as the ceremonies are concerned. The reform attempts introduced by Innocent XI intended to fight the civic and spiritual corruption that were withdrawing the pope from the festive scene.

The diplomatic representatives sent to the rest of Europe *avvisi* on Roman life, which became a well-developed model of information for the rest of Europe. This practice, started in the second half of the sixteenth century, in private and handwritten form, was put under strict rules as a gazette. Elena Fasano Guarini studies the correspondance between Rome and Florence, showing how, through the role of observer, the young Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici learned the difficult art of governing, which he had to use when he became duke of Tuscany ("Rome Workshop of All the Practices of the World: From the Letters of Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici to Cosimo I and Francesco I," 53-77). Mario Infelise presents the evolution of the *avvisi* since their beginning until the end of seventeenth century, using many examples of this informing activity which introduced a new factor into political life: public opinion ("Roman *Avvisi* : Information and Politics in the Seventeenth Century," 212-28).

This collection of essays seems to respond very well to the intents of the editors as stated in the brief introduction (a useful bibliographical overview on the matter): "by rejecting a generic approach, by looking beyond the stereotypes and taking detailed account of the historical events, we hope to have introduced a variable—an element of complication that is still largely neglected—into the 'general' histories and into those of individual countries." The image of the Roman court which comes out from reading these pages is new and leads to suggestions for further studies.

Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly. *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque*. Palgrave, 2002. xv + 310 pp. + 56 illus. \$39.95. Review by MARIAN MATRICIAN, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, LITTLE ROCK.