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Fosi, Irene. Papal Justice: Subjects and Courts in the Papal State, 1500-1750

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Roche-Guilhen et racontées par deux autres personnages, notamment le poète romain Ovide qui dépeint ses amours avec des détails charmants et relate l'écriture des *Remèdes à l'amour*. Dans plusieurs nouvelles, par le biais des dialogues entre deux personnages, l'auteur présente des critiques du pouvoir ecclésiastique et de la moralité déréglées des personnages. Elle imagine des billets doux envoyés par le pape, des vers de poésie qui éveillent des soupçons et des chansons d'amour ; tous ces éléments ajoutent au charme de l'ouvrage, autant pour les lecteurs et lectrices d'aujourd'hui que pour ceux de l'édition originale.

La présentation des nouvelles par l'éditrice est directe et utile : chaque nouvelle est précédée d'une liste de personnages ; une note explicative résume l'histoire et indique les sources possibles de La Roche-Guilhen. En général, les notes sont brèves mais claires, destinées à un lectorat à qui les époques traitées et la langue du dix-septième siècle ne sont pas familières : certaines reformulent une phrase difficile ou la donnent en français moderne ; d'autres présentent de courtes explications du contexte de la nouvelle. Cette lectrice aurait apprécié une bibliographie des œuvres d'Anne de La Roche-Guilhen, bien qu'il soit possible de la reconstituer à partir des informations données dans l'introduction. On regrette également que quelques mots signalés dans le texte soient absents du glossaire : *surpris*, *médiocre*, *obliger*, *incemment* (le mot moderne *incessamment* y figure). Mais ces petites objections ne diminuent pas le grand intérêt de cette édition. Els Höhner nous donne une belle édition d'un livre qui s'inscrit dans la vague pour les nouvelles galantes et historiques au dix-septième siècle tout en révélant les préoccupations de son auteur.

KENDALL TARTE, *Wake Forest University*

Fosi, Irene.

Papal Justice: Subjects and Courts in the Papal State, 1500-1750.

Trans. Thomas V. Cohen. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 272. ISBN: 978-0-8132-1858-8 (paperback) \$29.95.

This book is the perfect combination of in depth archival knowledge coupled with decades of historical experience and the precision of the English language

in the eloquent and accurate translation of an able historian and writer, Thomas Cohen, who nevertheless may have been a little gratuitous in his use of the expression, “a yen for.” Fosi examines a variety of difference sources to present a rich picture of life and the practice of justice in Early Modern Rome. In addition to the inquisition, there were many courts in Rome, each with their own police force. Jurisdiction limits and rivalries abounded. Sodomy, for example, unlike in Spain, was not the concern of the inquisition but of Episcopal and lay courts. Although her most colourful and main sources are legal, Fosi recognizes their limitations for studying a society, in which crimes were often not reported and most disputes settled out of court. Like the papal police commonly did, Fosi looks at the records of barber-surgeons and hospitals for violent injuries in order to correct the rates of reported incidents of crime and fill missing bits of court records. Nocturnal police reports deposited by the *sbirri* (cops) and written up by notaries give a flavour of night life in the eternal city. In these reports clothing is used as an identifying marker and shows people’s origins, “wearing French clothes.” Papal courts held up an ideal of prudence and tended to be cautious in their findings, often releasing the accused for lack of evidence or motivated accusations. Accusers in fact, especially if they were women, came under intense scrutiny and their reputations greatly affected their testimonies. Papal tribunals helped the poor by appointing legal advocates and pursuing even unreported cases.

The central chapters focus on the papal treatment of specific kinds of crime. Roman inquisitions, for example, regularly prosecuted charlatans and sorcerers, who claimed to be able to cure illness, cause love, find hidden treasure, and protect against weapons. Several cases show the church’s battle against superstition and folk beliefs. In a chapter on blasphemy, Fosi shows how in the eighteenth century papal authorities used spies to try to halt the flow of libertine ideas but ultimately failed. In disciplining domestic behaviour, papal tribunals tried to impose the family model of the Council of Trent. Because there was virtually no legal divorce and people moved about, often taking up alternate identities, polygamy was a common crime. Men could get five to ten years rowing on the galleys, while women were imprisoned for this crime. Spies and street gossip helped reveal cases of domestic abuse, like incest. Since there were many more denunciations for domestic crimes in the eighteenth century than earlier, Fosi concludes that papal tribunals were doing a better job of policing such infractions. In cases of sodomy, defendants

were specifically asked whether they thought sodomy was a sin, and if they responded in the negative, charges of heresy were laid. Particularly compelling is the bizarre case of a peasant, who pretended to be an inquisitor in order to trick young men into penetration with the promise of a church sanctioned pardon, which he ceremonially performed with mumbled words and crosses after the acts. Sodomy within marriage was a common charge, partially, as the papal authorities well knew, because a conviction could lead to the annulment of an unwanted marriage.

After Trent, the church took great efforts to discipline the clergy and protect the faithful from abusive clerics. Police were especially harsh on clerics who tried to justify their acts theologically, such as a priest who deflowered two young servant girls with the argument that heterosexual sex was sinless. Accusations of sodomy often led to heretical charges, as in the case of a monastery prior, who repeatedly called the pope a bugger, complained about the boring liturgy, and proclaimed “unspeakable practices.” The prior was sentenced to seven years in prison. The tribunals could be harsh on sexual abuse, but their main interest was more on punishing heresy than sex.

Paul V tried to reform papal justice in 1612 — if officials were decently paid, he reasoned, they would not be tempted to accept bribes. The reforms were enforced and prominent judges were prosecuted but corruption was still rife. Popular mistrust of papal justice was deep-seated and people continued to seek extralegal settlements to their quarrels. Subjects sought to influence papal government through petitions, letters, and intermediary patrons. Despite the biased nature of petitions and memorials, Fosi shows how they provide a rich picture of vertical relationships and constitute a popular call for justice.

In the last chapter Fosi looks at papal propaganda. Sixtus V (1585–90) established the discourse of power that characterized the baroque papacy. Eschewing Renaissance notions of a papal renovation of the Roman Empire (Julius II), Sixtus promoted “perfect security,” financial reform, and *buon governo* (good administration) in art work, medals, and coins. A relief from his tomb shows soldiers carrying the severed heads of bandits behind a figure of justice. Only at the very end of the book does Fosi address the Black Legend surrounding papal justice in a brief but fascinating survey of the antipapal literature from the gory tales of executions to Stendhal’s image of Rome’s bloodthirsty decadence.

This is a very rich book and prompts few criticisms. The book examines a period of about 250 years and, although Fosi often observes changes, chronology and change is not clear. Cases from the early eighteenth century often appear next to sixteenth century ones. On similar grounds, it would have made more sense to place the last chapter on papal propaganda at the beginning of the book rather than the end. Not only would this have been more chronological but the reader could then observe for himself the gap between ideals and realities in the numerous cases discussed in the central chapters. But these are minor quips in a brilliant book that offers so much, so clearly, in so few pages.

ANTHONY F. D'ELIA, *Queen's University*

Frye, Susan.

Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Pp. xx, 302. ISBN 978-0-8122-4238-6 (hardcover) \$65.

In *Sociable Letters* (1664), Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, imagines herself at a feast celebrating poetic wit. As she enters the banquet, the sole woman on the guest list, she marvels at the intricately stitched "Hangings of Conception" adorning the walls and the tablecloths woven from the delicate threads of poets' brains. By her own admission, Cavendish was not adept with needle and thread. Yet, throughout her prolific writings, textile blurs insistently with text, needle with pen, in carefully "Wrought Works" that situate Cavendish's literary pursuits as a valid alternative to domestic activities and as a similarly virtuous mode of creative self-expression. While she may have been a failed "Spinster in Huswifery," she was a self-professed "Spinster in Poetry."

Susan Frye's splendid study takes as its focus the rich intersections between writing, needlework, and visual design that animate Cavendish's imaginary banquet and that were pivotal to early modern English thought. Troubling the long-standing critical binary that has tended to divorce the (masculine) pen from the (feminine) needle, Frye reads women's writings alongside stunning examples of embroidery and painting that testify to the important interrelationship between women's verbal and visual textualities in