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Fletcher, Catherine. Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador

Jennifer Mara DeSilva

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hand, is far more elusive, both among the elites and commoners. The world this book describes is an enchanted world, where music has thaumaturgic and apotropaic powers—bells might ring of their own accord, Lasso's motet *Gustate et videte* averted stormy weather, the Litany of Loreto cast out evil spirits, and so on. Through religious songs and rituals, the faithful reached out to another world of saints in heaven and souls in purgatory, seeking protection against demons from hell. On a daily basis, they prayed, sang their songs, and attended church. Here Fisher's narrative sets aside any hermeneutic of suspicion and simply reports the testimonies at their word. While propaganda is familiar, piety is strange. But perhaps agnosticism need not constrain him: given his grasp of the cultural moment, and his demonstrated command of a wide range of sources, both "elite" and "popular," Fisher is well placed to explore that strangeness in future work.

MICHAEL O'CONNOR

St. Michael's College, University of Toronto

Fletcher, Catherine.

Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. ix, 194 + 3 ill. ISBN 978-1-107-10779-3 (hardcover) US\$99.99.

This study of the rise of the resident foreign ambassador at the papal court is a welcome synthesis of current scholarship combined with Catherine Fletcher's original work on the topic to date. Focusing on the period from 1420 to 1530, this volume situates the development of the resident ambassador amid the changing political scene from the return of the papacy to Rome following the Council of Constance through to the aftermath of the sack of Rome when Spanish influence grew in the Italian peninsula. Fletcher seeks to provide "a 'new diplomatic history' that sets out to investigate ambassadorial activity 'from below' by using methods from social and cultural history" (6). These strategies broaden the discussion of the resident ambassador in order to determine his responsibilities, his practices, the challenges of the office, observers' expectations, and the materiality of his work and lifestyle. As often as possible Fletcher places these discussions in the ambassador's own words. This is one of the immediate advantages of the

narrative: it is grounded in documentary and archival sources (all translated into English) and yet it is easy to read.

As Fletcher argues, throughout this period the role of the resident ambassador was in flux, reflecting the changes experienced by the papal court as it became a more tightly organized and courtly environment. At first the ambassador was an object of suspicion, as a potential spy or as a conduit for enlarging the influence of secular monarchs, and from the 1420s the pope limited the residence of foreign ambassadors to six-month terms. Through the later fifteenth century as the papal court became the centre of political, ecclesiastical, and juridical negotiation, the presence of ambassadors was tolerated and they were granted official positions in the court environment, access to curial members, and roles in liturgical events. Fletcher argues that the exchange of ambassadors was an important part of maintaining stability in the Italian peninsula after the Peace of Lodi (1454). In this period the number of representatives grew, supplemented by an increasing number of special envoys, resident embassy secretaries, and eventually cardinal-protectors, all of whom collaborated to pursue the aims of their princely patron and state. Fletcher provides a clear, albeit brief, discussion of the titles, roles, and interactions of these figures. In doing so, Fletcher successfully argues that the world of the resident ambassador stretched far beyond the papal court and its spaces—to the gates and streets of the city; the post road leading to and from Rome—and incorporated a network of other ambassadors and contacts that could embrace the entire continent.

A central part of Fletcher's argument concerning the integration of ambassadors into Roman life and a portal to understanding their unique role arises from *De Oratoribus Romanae Curiae* (1505–09, and up to 1516), a guide written by Paris de' Grassi, one of the papal ceremonialists. This is an essential text for understanding the way that ambassadors' authority was framed by the papacy, and for understanding how ritual was an interface between actors at the papal court who each sought their own aggrandizement, usually at the cost of another's prestige or position. Fletcher also weighs into the debate on whether clerical or lay ambassadors were preferred, arguing that after the beginning of the Italian Wars in 1494 there was a marked increase in lay ambassadors sent to Rome. Most likely, this trend sought to capitalize on the military experience of laymen, which might have outweighed the shared cultural understanding of a clerical envoy in the Eternal City. This discussion leads into an analysis of the ambassador's "dual persona" in which he acted both as an individual ("as

of himself”) and, at other times, as the embodiment of his prince or republic. The concept of his dual persona underpins much of the research that follows on liberality, hospitality, precedence, competition between ambassadors, and, to a lesser extent, gift-giving. Fletcher’s exploration of these topics brings together current debates on social, political, and cultural history and deftly highlights the implications for the field of early modern diplomacy. While it would have been helpful to have a deeper introduction to, and evaluation of, the standard texts on early modern diplomacy, specifically Dolet, Barbaro, and Machiavelli, as they relate to these social and cultural discussions and texts (Pontano and Priscianese among others), Fletcher’s academic readers can surely supply the background knowledge.

On the whole, this is a clear and concise introduction to the world of the Roman resident ambassador that fills a need. This study draws interesting conclusions from printed primary and archival sources about the cultural roles and social and material world of the ambassador, while still attending to more traditional questions of information-gathering, foreign relations, and authority. Fletcher has succeeded in establishing the current consensus across a field that has changed dramatically in the past few decades.

JENNIFER MARA DESILVA
Ball State University

Frazier, Alison K., ed.

The Saint between Manuscript and Print: Italy 1400–1600.

Essays and Studies 37. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2015. Pp. 495 + 38 colour & b/w ill. ISBN 978-0-7727-2181-5 (paperback) \$49.95.

An ambitious attempt to explore the trajectories of manuscript and print cultures in Italy’s hagiographic tradition, *The Saint between Manuscript and Print: Italy 1400–1600* largely achieves its goal. Editor Alison Frazier, associate professor of history at the University of Texas-Austin and immediate past president of the Hagiography Society, has selected twelve essays from European and American scholars, many now teaching in Italian universities. Even though Venice and other Italian cities emerged as major European printing centres in the late fifteenth century, with eighty thousand incunable editions representing nearly half