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The articles presented in this issue of the *Royal Studies Journal* had their origins in papers read at a two-day conference held in March 2015 at St Mary's University, London. It was convened to mark the 500th anniversary of Thomas Wolsey's appointment as Cardinal-priest of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere by Pope Leo X.[1] As its title made clear, the conference took an interdisciplinary approach to cardinals, focusing on them not, for the most part, as high churchmen, ecclesiastical dignitaries, or theologians, but as papal ambassadors, as other kinds of representatives to and from the papacy, and as political and cultural brokers. The themes of the conference were, accordingly, fairly broad, encompassing the training and careers as diplomats of individual cardinals, the representation of cardinals as diplomats in texts and art, attitudes of cardinals to diplomacy and warfare, the roles played by cardinals in the European Reformations, and in Western Europe's encounter with the world beyond. This collection of articles thus contributes to a growth in interest over the last decade in cardinals, and their roles and lifestyles.[2] Renaissance cardinals usually had multiple loyalties above and beyond, and sometimes despite, their principal loyalty to the pope who elevated them, or his successors. In keeping with the aims of the *Royal Studies Journal*, this issue presents those papers from the conference that dealt most directly with Renaissance cardinals and their dealings with monarchs, princes, and dynasties, either as representatives of those entities before the papacy, or as papal envoys -and sometimes as both.

Defining a cardinal

The word 'cardinal', from *cardo, cardines* -the hinge, pivot, or axis of the Universal Church-aptly describes the dual aspect of the pope's most senior advisors when the title and role were defined by Pope Leo IX.[3] Among certain theorists at least, they were also the inheritors of the ancient Roman senate, and as such exercised some degree at least of secular -as well as spiritual- authority, and this inevitably drew them into dynastic and national politics. In the mid-to late-fifteenth century, the status and relationship of cardinals to the pope shifted significantly. The papacy developed, in the early fifteenth century, in the words of Walter Ullmann, from "an ineffective, marginalised, and provincial monarchy", to one based firmly again in Rome, and in command of the city and the Curia.[4]

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[2] See M. Hollingsworth and C. Richardson, eds., *The Possessions of a Cardinal: Politics, Piety and Art 1450–1700* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2010), for the most recent and largest collection of essays on the possessions and patronage of mainly Italian cardinals. See also the biographies of individual cardinals referenced in essays in this collection.
[3] S. Kuttner, "Cardinalis: The History of a Canonical Concept", *Traditio*, vol. 3 (1945), 176.
[4] C. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden, 2009), 21.

The broadly independent, conciliarist, approach to Church government that had characterised the papacy's Avignon period (1309-77), altered with its definitive return to Rome under Martin V, elected in 1417. Cardinals may have elected the pope, but his authority in turn defined them, and successive popes from Martin to Sixtus V gradually eroded their status as independent 'princes' of the Church, partly by increasing their numbers to an unprecedented level, thereby weakening the potential power of individuals and the possibility of collective action by cardinals as a group. Cardinals might still be the pope's advisors -like Roman senators- but they lost much of the autonomy they had enjoyed in previous centuries, and had little power without him. Thereafter, they derived their dignity and status from the pope alone, and to enjoy the full authority that gave them, they should in theory at least be closely associated with him, in Rome.[5]

Cardinals had only to hold minor canonical orders, but were appointed as cardinal-deacon, cardinal-priest, or cardinal-bishop -in ascending order of dignity- based mainly on the orders they did or did not hold at the time of their appointment. Cardinal-bishops originally looked after the sees in and around Rome, cardinal-priests were appointed to individual parish churches -the *tituli*- while cardinal-deacons looked after welfare centres, often associated with local chapels. A cardinal's rank might be expressed partly by the seniority of the church to which they were instituted, but this was often more a question of what churches were vacant.[6]

'Princes of the Church'

The papacy of the sixteenth century was, then, an elective spiritual and secular monarchy that dealt with other monarchies, principalities, and republics across Europe as political, as well as spiritual entities, and with a substantial administrative machinery at its command. Here, too, the cardinals (as 'hinges') were pivotal. While professed monks, senior bishops, academic theologians, and papal civil servants could all be made cardinals, from the later fifteenth to mid sixteenth centuries (the period with which most of the essays in this issue are concerned), there was an increasing tendency by popes to appoint men who came from high-ranking families across Europe, not least their own, including the so-called 'crown cardinals'. These were men such as Louis d'Albret and Jaime Francisco Cardona of Aragon, and even the eventual 'Cardinal-King', Don Henrique of Portugal.[7]

Cardinals drawn from these echelons of European society gave popes direct links with noble and royal dynasties across -and sometimes even beyond- Christendom. In theory, this shortened and straightened lines of communication and patronage between the papacy and those families upon whom it had necessarily to rely to ensure that papal policy in all matters from the security of Christendom to good ecclesiastical governance was supported and implemented. Such families gained enhanced status and prestige internationally by having one or more of their members made a cardinal. Monarchs and nobles in turn used family-member cardinals as their agents at the Curia, in an effort to influence papal decision-making, and also perhaps to control, or at least direct, papal authority within their dominions as best accorded with other dynastic or national objectives. Inevitably, this complicated relations between them and the papacy, and conflicts of interest were endemic. A few of these men (including several who are discussed

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[5] Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, 4-7, 21-4. See also D. Hays, "The Renaissance Cardinals: Church, State, Culture", *Synthesis* vol. 3 (1976), 35-46.

[6] Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, 235-42.

[7] Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome,* 110-12.

in this collection) also became popes in due course, and then papal power was usually placed effectively at the service of dynastic concerns and ambitions.

It follows that while cardinals were increasingly 'courtiers' of the pope, sometimes his relatives, and also members of the Sacred College, many were also courtiers of rulers who had sought their appointment. They pursued, to various extents, the political agendas of their royal or princely masters. They kept their own households in Rome, and maintained their own international networks of personal, financial, political, and cultural patronage as much in the interest of the ruler to whose status and influence they effectively owed their appointment. In this way, Rome became, directly or indirectly, a showcase for the artistic and material patronage of the states and dynasties they represented as much as for the papacy and cardinals contributed significantly to the city's architectural and cultural revival in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries.[8]

Cardinals as diplomats and patrons

Accordingly, and in common with other recent work on early-modern cardinals, the nine essays published here present separate, but related, examples of cardinals engaged in a broad range of activities, from direct representation of papal authority as legates and envoys, to the provision of education, and the endowment of individual churches in Rome and elsewhere. Some were involved in the conduct of war and peace making in the Italian states and beyond, in theological debate, ecclesiastical regulation, and reform. All were involved in ritual displays (liturgical and otherwise), entertaining, and shopping. The collection demonstrates and affirms the vital roles that cardinals played across Europe in the transfer and adaptation of ideas, of architectural models and artefacts well beyond their ostensible sphere of Rome and its Curia.[9] In essence, they demonstrate that most cardinals had a 'Janus-like' aspect to their career, looking towards the pope and performing functions within the Curia and in wider papal politics, while looking back towards their own families and the ruling dynasties and clienteles whose interests and ambitions they had also to work for. Each essay offers a different example or variant on this theme of the roles of cardinals. Taken together, they demonstrate the concerns and priorities that are broadly characteristic of Renaissance cardinals in a period of significant change, adaptation, and endemic conflict in early modern Europe.

Perhaps one of the most eminent (if at times also controversial) cardinals of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, whose outlook was very much as just described, was Bernadino López de Carvajal, who is the subject of Marta Pelegrín's essay. Cardinal Carvajal certainly experienced the revived power of the 'monarchical' papacy in competition with European royalty, having held successively no fewer than six titular churches. Despite being excommunicated for a time by Julius II (for his role in the Council of Pisa, and the clash with Louis XII of France), Carvajal eventually became cardinal-bishop of Ostia and Velleri in 1521, and thus the most senior cardinal in the Curia. He was mentioned favourably by Erasmus as a model cardinal, in sharp and notorious contrast to Julius II who had excommunicated him. Like others, Carvajal's household, located in the

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[8] See C. Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge, 2015). See also E. McCahill, *Reviving the Eternal City: Rome and the Papal Court, 1420-1447* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

[9] See M. Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition and Housekeeping in a Renaissance Court* (London, 2004) for a study of Cardinal Ippolito D'Este as cultural patron. See J. Dumont and L. Fagnart, eds., *Georges Ier d'Amboise 1460-1510 Une figure plurielle de la Renaissance*, (Rennes, 2013) for a study of the French cardinal-legate's career and patronage.

Palazzo Mellini and other palaces, was a centre of patronage for his compatriots in Rome and of international exchange. From here, the cardinal publicised the virtues of the Catholic monarchs and their various achievements, notably the Reconquista, which were celebrated in Rome. The cardinal commissioned entertainments and plays, poems and treatises on theology and on Church reform and was, like many of his peers, both a representative of the papacy in his native kingdom, but perhaps more significantly an effective representative of his royal masters in Rome.

The same was true of a least some of the several French cardinals in Rome during these years, a subject addressed by Flaminia Bardati. She discusses patterns of appointment and residence in Rome of the most prominent of them. As she emphasises, the French cardinals were, in the main, high ranking noblemen with ambivalent attitudes towards Rome because they also had duties and responsibilities in the courts and administrative machinery of their homeland. Each tended to waver between loyalties to their sovereign and to the pontiff, depending on the particular issue in question. Some maintained close connections in France, and were motivated by ambition within French politics as much as at the Curia, rather in the way of their Spanish counterpart Cardinal Carvajal. Others, such as Guillaume d'Estouteville and Jean du Bellay were, at times, rather more distant from the French royal regime and concentrated their ambitions and patronage on curial politics. In furtherance of these ambitions, both became important architectural patrons in Rome. As Bardati demonstrates, the kinds of buildings, chapels, sculptures, and other decorative features they commissioned were used to express their own princely status, the French presence in Rome, and in the case of the two aforementioned cardinals, their commitment to their extensive networks of Italian and Roman clients during their marginalisation from French political circles.

This sense of a conflict of loyalties between that owed to the papacy and that to kinsmen, fellow countrymen, and to royal or princely authority, was something that many cardinals felt often. These conflicts were usually personal and political, at times theological, but they could also be actual military struggles.[10] Such was the case with the war over the papal vicariate of Ferrara that broke out in 1482 between a league of Italian states, Venice, and the papacy, and is here given detailed scrutiny by Stella Fletcher. As she points out, at its outbreak, the vast majority of cardinals were Italian, and the war was fought between the brothers, cousins, and other male relatives of more than a dozen of them. Some had families who were on the papal side, but others did not, and how they responded to the conflict varied according to the extent to which each man felt a primary loyalty to his native *patria*, or to the papacy as his adopted one. Some cardinals took a keen interest in the war; others sought to prevent it so far as they could from interfering with their roles in the Curia and its business. Other cardinals made some efforts at offering mediatory service, but only after the initiative had been taken by prominent laymen. The complicated history of the war, short though it was, reveals the wide range of conflicting motives amongst members of the Curia, and highlights how the 'princes' of the Church often had to contend directly with their relatives, friends, and enemies among secular princes.

The subject of papal friends and relatives has loomed large in the discussion of cardinals in recent years. Great attention has been paid to papal nepotism (in its strict and more general senses), together with the sale of offices in the papal Curia. Recent scholarship has established that these types of appointments were essentially administrative practices that assisted the popes of the later-fifteenth century onwards to rapidly re-

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[10] See D. S. Chambers, *Popes, Cardinals and War* (London, 2006) for an overview of the subject.

establish their authority, and to ensure that they had loyal supporters, and a means of assisting the dynasty to survive the deaths of individual popes.[11] As Jennifer DeSilva points out in her essay, a significant number of appointees to the Curia were men below the canonical age of thirty. Contrary to contemporary perceptions, and the bulk of scholarly discussion to date, however, the evidence she presents demonstrates that over the period from 1420 to 1605, the kinsmen of European noble and royal families exceeded papal relatives among underage cardinals appointed to the Curia. Among the important issues she addresses in examining the effects of these appointments, is how young appointees were regarded in the light of contemporary notions of maturity and ideals of virtue at different life stages within the clerical estate. Churchmen had to conform to such ideals no less than other male members of society, but the way they did so was articulated very differently from that of their lay counterparts, and the great majority of cardinals appointed in the period covered were by education and background capable of the maturity expected in contemporary theory.[12] As DeSilva demonstrates, the elevation of underage cardinals was a far more complex and contextualised phenomenon than has hitherto been appreciated by historians of the papacy, and involved noble and royal kinship networks across Western Europe.

While the majority of cardinals studied here were resident in Rome and represented to varying extents royal or princely interests, there were Italians cardinals involved in the administration of the Church in these dominions. As might be expected, they had complex and often difficult relationships with their fellow cardinals, and with the monarchs they served or represented.[13] Susan May looks at one of these prominent Italians, Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini, who was made Cardinal-deacon of Sant' Eustachio in 1460 (at the age of 23) by his uncle Pius II -so the classic *nipote*. He became the first recognised 'cardinal-protector' of England for Henry VII in 1492. Such posts were not exclusive to the English, but the first two Tudor kings placed great reliance on their chosen 'protectors', whose general remit was to present and support the nominations by the king of individuals to bishoprics and other senior benefices, and generally to maintain the interests of the kingdom, working with other specially appointed diplomats to the Holy See. The cardinal-protectors were also expected to support the election of their sovereign's preferred candidate in conclaves, when cardinals were at their most powerful.[14] May demonstrates that as cardinal, Piccolomini was also of great assistance in the ecclesiastical patronage of Queen Elizabeth of York, particularly securing papal indulgences for the church-hospital of St Katherine-by-the-Tower in London. More generally, the cardinal acted as a cultural conduit for humanist artists, scholars, and writers between Italy, England, and other parts of Europe through his patronage networks among prominent banking and trading families such as the Bardi, the Cavalcanti, and Frescobaldi. Over some eleven years from 1492, Piccolomini represented English interests at the Curia until his own election as Pope Pius III in September 1503. The election of the English 'protector' was in theory a great coup for Henry VII, but Pius was already ill before the conclave and died within weeks of his election. His was one of the shortest pontificates in history.

As noted at the outset, numerous Renaissance cardinals also played important roles as ministers of state in the kingdom or republic of their origin. Very few, if any, were as

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[11] See P. Partner, *The Pope's Men: The Papal Civil Service in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1990).

[12] R. Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, 2003), 67-107.

[13] See S. Fletcher, *The Popes and Britain: A History of Rule, Rupture and Reconciliation* (London, 2017), 63-92, for an overview of the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[14] W. E. Wilke, *The Cardinal Protectors of England; Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation* (Cambridge, 1974).

directly and intimately involved in the government of the state than the man who is the inspiration for this collection, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Lord Chancellor of England and Archbishop of York at the time of his elevation to the cardinalate in 1515, Wolsey is the subject of my own contribution to the issue and that of Simon Lambe. For over twenty years until his fall from grace in 1529, Wolsey superintended virtually every aspect of Henry VIII's government. Although deeply pleased by being made a cardinal by Leo X, he was never satisfied with that status alone. The key to Wolsey's sense of himself -and his capacity to do as much as he did in directing the king's foreign policy, and giving Henry relatively effective control over the government of the Church in England- was his status as cardinal legate *a latere*. My article traces the process by which Wolsey first determined to acquire that authority, his conception of it, and his attitude to the pope who conferred it upon him. There seems little evidence to support what was once the orthodoxy that 'Wolsey's' foreign policy was determined by his commitment to the papacy and his own wish to one day to occupy the Throne of St Peter. Rather, it suggests that in this, as in much else, Wolsey's principal aim was the advancement of Henry's status and reputation, and thereby the security of his own. In pursuit of that aim, the cardinal often exercised his legatine powers and status in plain contradiction to papal plans and directives, frequently ignoring or deferring papal demands for communication and action, all the while claiming that everything he did was in the interests of the pope. In his prime, concepts of papal 'monarchy' cut no ice with Wolsey. This was particularly so during his creation of the European 'Universal Peace' of 1518, inaugurated at the Field of Cloth of Gold two years later, and his further efforts at Anglo-French peace-making in the mid-1520s. Yet, for all his spectacular diplomacy designed to give his king what he wanted, Wolsey fell, in the end, because not even his much-vaunted legatine powers -by then granted for life- allowed him to reconcile competing royal and papal demands in the matter of the annulment of Henry's marriage. The real power behind Clement VII's refusal to grant an annulment was yet another monarch, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. In the end, Wolsey could not serve two masters, let alone three.

Simon Lambe quite rightly insists that historians' focus on Wolsey as the "shuttle-diplomacy" cardinal legate, while understandable, should not blind us to his role as a cardinal within the English state. Wolsey himself certainly saw a close connection between his "magnificent peace-making" abroad, and efficient and effective government at home. As is well known, unlike so many of his contemporaries in the Curia, Wolsey was a man of humble origins. It was solely through the king's favour that he was raised rapidly to the highest ranks of English society by virtue of his appointment as a bishop, archbishop, and cardinal-legate. He was mindful of the standards of dignity and magnificence that were maintained by his Continental counterparts, and strove to show himself their equal in all respects in an English context. Wolsey's large household, its arrangements and routines, mixed traditional English noble models and fashionable Italianate furnishings and accoutrements, as a reflection of its master's international status.[15] He was also aware that his rise was resented by at least some members of the nobility. As Lambe shows with particular reference to the county of Somerset, Wolsey used his household personnel as the core of a patronage network, and as part of his efforts to encourage a broader social representation in local politics in furtherance of domestic stability. While he aimed principally to increase royal influence and control in the localities, he may also have hoped to avoid relying as directly as his predecessors had on prominent individual nobles to

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[15] See S. J. Gunn and P. G. Lindley, *Cardinal Wolsey: Church, State and Art* (Cambridge, 1991), on Wolsey's architectural and artistic patronage in England.

implement royal government at a local level. In Church and State alike, so far as he could, Wolsey made himself the vital link between the crown and the political nation, a model that would be adopted and adapted by his protégé and successor as chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, with important consequences for the future development of the Tudor monarchy.

The second of the two English cardinals in this collection could not be more different from the first. John Murphy reviews the life and thought of Reginald Pole. Pole was a first cousin of Henry VIII, and as a man with Plantagenet blood in his veins was a potential claimant to the throne: he might almost be called a 'royal cardinal'.[16] He was also a significant reformist theologian and prolific writer, and was made a cardinal in 1536 -without the support of his king, and he never served Henry. In fact, it was often against the king of England that Pole took up his pen, and he was appointed several times as a legate *a latere* on missions to Francis I and Charles V to persuade them to support papal censure of England. He was also a legate to the Council of Trent before becoming, in 1554 after the accession of Mary I, cardinal legate *a latere* to England, and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury. In England, Pole sought to implement the Tridentine reforms as far as he could, despite suspicions about his own orthodoxy harboured by Paul IV, but he was largely occupied with trying to reconstruct the entire fabric and hierarchy of the Marian church. He was also legate for peace between Charles V and Henry II of France. As Murphy points out, with Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain, Pole became central to Tudor-Habsburg-Valois relations, although never in the highly interventionist way of his predecessor as legate, Cardinal Wolsey. He was, however, like Wolsey, not only the pope's delegate in England, but he was also representative of English interests before an often hostile papacy. Paul IV revoked his legatine powers in April 1557, but as *legatus natus* Pole remained an unofficial representative of Mary's interests (and those of Philip) until his death in November 1558.

One of the cardinals who responded to the movement for Catholic reform with even greater zeal than Pole was his Portuguese counterpart, the Cardinal-Infant D. Henrique, the subject of the last essay in this collection. A royal cardinal by any definition, he was the younger son of the Portuguese king. D. Henrique was well educated, and was an advocate for reform during the reign of his brother, when he was regent for his great nephew, and when he himself became the 'Cardinal-King' and last monarch of the house of Avis from August 1578. As Milton Pacheco explains, notwithstanding his enthusiasm for Tridentine reforms, D. Henrique held multiple high ecclesiastical offices and responsibilities, including three archbishoprics in Portugal. These benefices provided him with enormous revenues, which he deployed in a programme of architectural renovation and innovation in all the jurisdictions that he was responsible, and also in Rome in his titular church of Santi Quatro Coronati. In his mind at least, this considerable architectural and artistic patronage went hand in glove with his implementation of Catholic reform across the kingdom, the renewal of religious institutions, manifested in the education of the clergy, the devotion of the laity, and the eradication of heresy. Many of the institutions he patronised have survived actively into modern times.

In some respects, D. Henrique seems the 'ideal' Renaissance cardinal among the ones presented in this collection, being of high social status in his own homeland, and very closely connected to its ruling house. He was personally pious and enthusiastic for reform, for the authority of the papacy, and the maintenance and renewal of the institutions of the

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[16] T. F. Mayer, 'Pole, Reginald (1500–1558)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/22456.

Church in his homeland. He facilitated the implementation of papal reforms at home, and maintained a large and detailed correspondence with his fellow cardinals and leaders of Tridentine reform. At the same time, his patronage was designed to advertise and aggrandise the power and status of his dynasty. True, he was not a cardinal in Rome, as he ought properly to have been according to contemporary theory (something he had in common with Wolsey), but his patronage and approach to the varied duties and responsibilities he undertook exemplified those of his fellow cardinals generally, and the others in this collection in particular.

Renaissance cardinals were clearly a diverse group of men, and, as this collection shows, the majority of them were involved in the highest political circles in their own homelands as well as at the Curia. Most were significant figures, formally or informally, with many playing key roles in government or administration of church or state. They were almost all significant cultural and artistic patrons in Rome and/or in their home localities, and all had a variety of titles, offices, and indeed personas in these localities, expressed through their architectural commissions, both ecclesiastical and secular. With the exception of Cardinal Wolsey, the families of cardinals have been shown to be crucial to their appointment to the Curia, and their priorities and effectiveness once there. Whatever their merits as diplomats and patrons, very few were "self-made" men, and most were indeed of royal or aristocratic houses, and so were quite literally princes of the Church. Even Wolsey might be described as a kind of 'royal cardinal', given his exceptional closeness to his master Henry. Whereas many other cardinals added their office to familial titles and dignities almost as of right, or at least expected privilege, Wolsey's only means of attaining the red hat was at the insistence of the king upon whom his entire status in England and beyond completely depended.

The virtue of 'magnificence' was esteemed as highly among cardinals as it was among their princely secular counterparts, despite the fact that cardinals were also supposed to be the spiritual descendants of the apostles who were all poor men. The artistic and architectural patronage of these cardinals, like that of any other powerful individuals in the period, was designed to assert their reputations as men of dynastic eminence, of political and ecclesiastical standing and significance (whether at home or in Rome or both). In the majority of cases, it was also intended to assert their claims to personal and family piety and their apparent commitment to the mission of the Church as they understood and interpreted it. The prestigious palazzi they constructed in Rome, their provincial retreats elsewhere in Italy and/or in their homelands all carried the same emblems, the same decorative devices, advertising their dynastic and ecclesiastical status. The design of these residences (and the churches they patronised, particularly the *tituli*), the sculptures, paintings, and furnishings of these secular and sacred buildings, were all intended to provoke awe and admiration for them among guests, foreign observers and perhaps above all, among their fellow cardinals. Jennifer DeSilva's observation in another issue of this journal about the use of rituals and public space occupancy holds true in the context of architectural and material patronage as well. Those in authority (including cardinals) "represented themselves and their allied nations or master in ritualised ways in order to publicise their positions in the local hierarchy and communicate with observers about their roles and responsibilities". Moreover, such patronage by an individual "sent messages of prestige that placed him above his neighbour in the local hierarchy", whether in Rome or in his native locality.[17]

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[17] J. DeSilva, "Taking Possession: Rituals, Space and Authority", *Royal Studies Journal* vol. 3, no.2 (2016), 1-17.

Between them, the essays in this special issue of the *Royal Studies Journal* explore the quite varied strategies deployed by the featured cardinals, and usually their (royal) families, to get into office in the first place. They also observe to some extent at least how the papacy itself under successive popes re-codified the role of cardinals in the light of its own increasingly assertive 'monarchy' from the mid-fifteenth century. The essays survey how individuals responded within and beyond their various roles in the Curia and as legates *natus* and *a latere* whether in Rome, in Siena, London, Paris, Ferrara, or Évora. Yet, there were also broad similarities in the motives of cardinals in their cultural patronage and their achievements as disseminators of texts and ideas, theological and otherwise, and as conduits of artistic and architectural merit and fashion. This intellectual and cultural exchange across Europe, together with their substantial material patronage wherever it was expressed, remain for the modern enthusiast and academic historian alike the lasting legacy of the Renaissance cardinals.

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