CHAPTER SIX

THE ALLOCATION OF TITLES

The churches to which each cardinal was attached embedded them in the historical and physical fabric of Rome. There were rules which dictated who was assigned to which kind of church, as well as family and national relationships that were maintained at particular sites. These are the subject of this chapter. The most significant aspect of the relationship of the cardinals with Rome’s churches was practical, however, as they were often used to provide accommodation. This was the major concern when cardinals were allocated their churches, and they moved between them when they could to secure the best residences, as will be discussed further in the next chapter. It was this practical relationship that expedited the cardinals’ part in restoring the city to an extent impossible for a single pope.

After the twelfth century, cardinal-deacons, priests, and bishops were almost indistinguishable from one another as the three orders combined as equals to elect a pope. In their official relationship with the pope, the cardinals acted in concert as a college and not individually. The only exceptions were cardinals who held particular offices such as vice-chancellor, who governed the financial side of the curia, especially appointments to bishoprics and abbeys, and resulting fees and taxes, or chamberlain (camerarius or camerlengo), who administered ecclesiastical property and revenues, and controlled the agents who acted on behalf of the papacy throughout western Christendom.1 These offices could be held by cardinal-deacons, priests, or bishops; Rodrigo Borgia was made vice-chancellor in May 1457 by his uncle, Calixtus III, just a few months after he had been created cardinal-deacon, and then held the office for the next thirty-five years. They were often filled by cardinals

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close to the pope not least because they were in the pope’s gift, and there was a great deal of money to be made through these offices: Francesco Condulmer was, under Eugenius IV (his uncle), chamberlain from 1432 to 1439 and vice-chancellor from 1437 until his death in 1453; Filippo Calandrini was chamberlain for his half-brother, Nicholas V, in 1454 and 1455. The personal relationship a cardinal had with a pope—whether as a relative or friend—was more significant in his advancement than his position within the college.

Service fees that were shared among the members of the college present at consistory were divided equally among them whether they were cardinal-deacons, priests, or bishops, an indication, according to Garati, that they acted as a group of equals. There was, however, an important internal hierarchy that dictated precedent in ceremonial, addressing consistories, or voting in conclave, as well as access to the best titular churches, which was based on seniority: the length of time an individual had served as a cardinal, not age. Moreover, each cardinal could distinguish himself from his peers through his own personal and political connections, ambition, and style of life. In his treatise De cardinalibus, Martino Garati da Lodi set down the basic rules that applied for making cardinal-deacons, priests, or bishops, although these could always be set aside according to the whim of the pope.

Who got what

Until the 1470s, the evidence suggests that there were clear distinctions applied according to age and status that dictated whether a man pro-

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