

Antonio Del Monte

Antonio Del Monte, born in Monte San Savino (Arezzo) in 1462, was the firstborn of Fabiano Ciochi, a jurist practicing as a consistorial lawyer in Rome. After his legal studies, he obtained the prepositure in the cathedral of Arezzo and gradually began accumulating ecclesiastical benefits in Arezzo, Monte San Savino, and Montepulciano. The General Council of the latter city decided on October 11, 1512, to donate a house in Piazza Grande to an adopted citizen of Montepulciano, who had become a cardinal. This coincided with Montepulciano's return to the Florentine orbit, reclaimed from the lord of Siena Pandolfo Petrucci after the last Siennese episode in 1495, coinciding with the expulsion of the Medici from the city of lilies. Antonio Del Monte played a significant role in facilitating this return. His ties with Montepulciano were strong, having studied and lived there in his youth, ultimately becoming a citizen and later holding the position of archpriest in the collegiate church (which later became a cathedral).

In addition to the mentioned ecclesiastical benefits, his connections extended to the Ricci family of Montepulciano. Giovanni Maria, secretary to Antonio Del Monte, was born from this family and later became a cardinal, appointed by Antonio's nephew, who became Pope Julius III. Antonio also arranged marriages for his two sisters: one in Monte San Savino with Checco di Cristofano Guidalotti, and the other, Caterina, with Giovanni Pandolfo Nobili, also from Montepulciano, from whom he had a daughter named Silvia. Furthermore, a niece of Antonio Del Monte, Giovanni Maria's sister, married another member of the Nobili family in Montepulciano: Roberto, the father of Vincenzo, the commander of the papal cavalry. Vincenzo's son, also named Roberto, was appointed a cardinal at a young age by his uncle, Pope Julius III. Another daughter of Vincenzo, Ludovica, married a Ricci. Antonio's extensive family network allowed several Montepulciano families to secure high-level positions in Rome from the early decades of the 16th century to at least the mid-17th century, surpassing the trajectory of the Del Monte family itself.

Antonio Ciochi Del Monte's ecclesiastical career was consistently upward. In 1493, he became an auditor (later lieutenant) of the Rota. In 1502, he served as president, in the consistory, of the Rota for the lands of Valentino, based in Cesena, undertaking political and military tasks. In 1503, he strengthened San Marino and engaged against the rebellious fortresses of Maiolo and San Leo. In the same year, Alexander VI appointed him Bishop of Città di Castello. Del Monte remained in Romagna throughout the year, remaining loyal to Cesare Borgia. When Cesare fell in November, Del Monte was in Cesena and managed to gain the complete trust of Julius II, who, while negotiating with the Spanish cardinals to seize the fortresses of Valentino, appointed him the "governor and head" of the city in January 1504. On July 26 of the same year, he was appointed Auditor of the Camera. His office cost him 6,000 ducats, and despite others being willing to spend more, the Pope wanted the good name of Del Monte more than the additional expense, as reported by the Venetian ambassador in Rome, Antonio Giustinian.

In 1506, after leaving Città di Castello, he was appointed Bishop of Siponto. In the same year, he accompanied the pope in the expedition against Bologna. He was elevated to the rank of cardinal in the consistory of March 10 in Ravenna, with the title of San Vitale, later changed in 1514 to Santa Prassede. On May 11, 1511, he resigned from the bishopric of Siponto in favor of his nephew Giovanni Maria and, on May 30, was appointed Bishop of Pavia, with an income of 5,000 ducats. Initially, he administratively oversaw the diocese until receiving full investiture. Shortly after, he became the protector of the Servites. In July 1511, he was included in the Congregation tasked with the trial of the rebellious cardinals who had promoted the Council of Pisa. As a cardinal, he served as papal legate in Perugia, participated in the Lateran Council, and played a role in collecting and publishing its proceedings. After the death of Julius II and the conclave that elected Leo X, Del Monte sided with the Medici. In 1516, he was appointed Bishop of Novara and became the Camerlengo of the Sacred College. His prestige as a jurist continued to grow. Following the death of Leo X, he was among the cardinals who governed the Church. Although his name was among the eligible candidates in the conclave, he ended up supporting Adrian VI, over whom he had a significant influence. In

1521, he had relinquished the bishopric of Pavia to his nephew Giovanni Maria, receiving in return the bishopric of Albano, later Frascati, which he left in 1523 for the diocese of Palestrina, then that of Sabina. In the subsequent conclave after Adrian VI's death, he aligned with the pro-French faction, opposing the imperial and Giulio de' Medici's party, who was later elected as Clement VII. However, Del Monte replaced the new pontiff in the protectorate of the Oratory of Divine Love. In 1524, he assumed the diocese of Portuense, relinquishing the legation of Perugia, and became the Subdean of the College of Cardinals. Subsequently, he temporarily administered the dioceses of Rimini and, for a brief period, Alatri. In 1527, he signed the capitulation after the Sack of Rome and was among the Pope's delegates in negotiations with the enemies. At the beginning of 1529, due to Clement VII's illness, Del Monte was entrusted with state affairs. In this capacity, he took possession of Perugia, which surrendered to the Imperial forces. Meanwhile, the cardinal had become one of the most ardent supporters of the council and played a significant role in the negotiations for the divorce of Henry VIII.

Known as a "learned man" (as defined by Machiavelli), Del Monte employed the work of great artists of the time. Antonio da Sangallo the Elder designed a palace in Monte San Savino, in addition to the one in Montepulciano, between 1515 and 1518. In Rome, he acquired a palace, with renovations assigned to Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (at Piazza Navona, later destroyed), and a piece of land (later called Vigna Vecchia) where the Sansovino family initiated a construction project. The famous Villa Giulia, commissioned by his nephew Giulio III, was built here. Raphael portrayed the cardinal in the Disputation of the Sacrament. Antonio Del Monte died in Rome on September 20

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