

**Hurtubise, Pierre.**

***La cour pontificale au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle d'Alexandre VI à Clement VIII (1492–1605).***

Studi e testi 501. Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2017. Pp. 749. ISBN 978-88-210-0967-9 (paperback) €80.

Pierre Hurtubise, a veteran scholar of Rome—of the ins and outs of the Roman Curia, the making of a curial career in the early modern period, the workings of curial bureaucracy and Roman aristocratic circles—has provided readers with a unique and all-encompassing *vue d'ensemble* of the pontifical court in all of its complexity during the sixteenth century. His book was years in the making; it draws upon a lifetime of rigorous and painstaking archival scholarship in addition to a thorough command of the relevant bibliography. It is a delight to read and fits into a niche of its own, literally laying bare the social, ceremonial, and political life of the papal court in the important period of transition from the High Renaissance to the beginnings of the baroque, in its multiple facets of an Italian elected monarchy and the seat of the Roman Catholic Church. Hurtubise's book joins an important bibliography which has been studying the papal court in its many aspects, yet the sheer breadth of the different strands he considers sets it apart and makes of it a work that is sure to be a lasting contribution to scholarship.

His previous book, *Tous les Chemins mènent à Rome. Arts de vivre et de réussir à la cour pontificale au XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle* (Ottawa 2009), already successfully tackled the subject of clerical careers and social mobility in the sinewy papal court in the sixteenth century. This book goes much further, fleshing out the profiles of some of the most important figures in the papal court, a context that was subject to constant change based on the pontiff who occupied the throne of Saint Peter. Hurtubise leaves no aspect of this complex court unstudied, from the increasing complexity of clerical bureaucracy to the fiscal management of the church's affairs the world over, which required greater professional skills as the century progressed. The church's response to the threat of Protestantism, and how life in the court responded in turn, is especially present in the book. The watershed moment, the Council of Trent, altered so much in Rome's day-to-day management of the faith the world over.

The book is divided into eight chapters in which Hurtubise evinces his clear command of the topic. The first chapter ("Tels papes, telles cours?" 23–46) shows the papal court as ephemeral, existing only as long as the occupier of