

**Nussdorfer, Laurie. *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. Pp. 287. Illus.**

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istrators and contemporary social reform associations, such as the Social Science Association, Driver creates a national map of the workhouse system.

This study is most engaging in the latter part of the book where the politics of the anti-Poor Law constituencies in the northern industrial counties of England are linked to the political practices and discourses of the nascent Chartist movement. Using the experience of Huddersfield, a northern regional centre for the distribution of raw wool and its finished products, as his prime example, Driver illustrates how central policy was a provisional outcome of processes of conflict and negotiation.

Students of social policy, geography, urban history and social history will surely benefit from this thoughtful and thorough study of the workhouse and social policy in nineteenth-century England. Historians of women will also be interested in reading of the role which middle-class women like Frances Power Cobbe and others active in the Social Science Association played in the design and execution of social policy. Driver's evidence points to a gendered language of mid-century social reformers particularly with regard to the attempt to "domesticate" the workhouse system and to see inmates as part of an extended "family." This would suggest an even earlier starting point for those recent studies which have analyzed the gendered nature of early twentieth century social policies.

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Nussdorfer, Laurie. *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. Pp. 287. Illus.

Professor Nussdorfer's excellent study vividly illuminates the dynamics of municipal

political interactions between the secular governors of Rome and their absolute monarch, the pope. The popes, who had almost continuously resided within Rome, ruled both the city and the neighbouring territories known as the Papal States. Like other monarchs in the 15th through 17th centuries, the popes had sought to strengthen their control over their subjects, both urban and rural. Professor Nussdorfer is part of the wave of recent scholarship which argues that absolutism had not, however, completely subdued urban and other particularist institutions; while both theory and power had certainly shifted in favour of the ultimate ruler, the recourses subjects took to remonstrate and obstruct remained plentiful, and so it was also in Rome.

In many ways, the popes' relationship to their subjects and capital city was not the same as that of French or Spanish kings to theirs. For one thing, the popes were also spiritual rulers, not only over their secular subjects, but also over Roman (and most other) Catholics throughout Europe; this meant, among other things, that papal secular policy could be (and often was) confused with doctrinal assertions and that religious penalties could be added to other threats in any struggle over objectives. For another, the popes were elected, not hereditary, monarchs, so every papal election meant extensive changes in the personnel holding key offices in both the Church as such and throughout the Papal States. (Since changes in prime ministers, e.g., created similar uncertainties in hereditary monarchies, I do not fully agree with Professor Nussdorfer about the extent of this contrast.) Prominent local families, who expected to wield significant influence within Rome and its provinces, suddenly and continually found themselves having to deal with the relatives and friends of the pope from other Italian territories or even beyond. Would the receivers of papal patronage

be sympathetic to the Romans' concerns about markets, agriculture, taxation, law and order, bond ratings, street and bridge repairs, and individual/family sensibilities in neighbourhood churches or religious processions? Would prominent Roman families face pressure to marry their sons or daughters to the new pope's upstart nieces or nephews? Personalities, issues and circumstances ensured that no answer to these questions was predictable.

Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII is to be recommended, then, both to students of the 17th century and to modern urban scholars. Professor Nussdorfer solidly grounds the book in papal and Roman sources and informs her judgements on the basis of extensive reading in secondary studies that relate to her concerns. She describes the context of her study and then precisely and subtly analyzes the interplay of power and prestige surrounding Urban VIII (pope 1623-44), his family and other clients, the governing institutions and people of Roman, and the larger, common population of a renowned city then boasting a population of about 115,000. The exposition is both engaging and clear, and it makes a solid contribution to our understanding of municipal politics in the absolutist context of early modern Europe. The disciplined economy and focus of her work is also striking: the most famous names associated with Urban VIII's pontificate are those of Galileo, Richelieu and Bernini, and of these the first two are not even mentioned. As a sculptor, Bernini contributed to aspects of civic government that Professor Nussdorfer needed to discuss; the others' connection with her subject would have been too recondite, and the temptation to bring them in was resisted.

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