

*Papato e politica internazionale nella prima et à moderna.* Maria Antonietta Visceglia, ed.

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This book is a welcome addition to the history of the papacy. Its chief contribution is to turn the conversation toward understudied aspects of papal political interactions that reveal the institution's relations with a variety of groups in fascinating ways. Born from the activities of the PRIN (Progetti di rilevante interesse scientifico nazionale) research group, since 2008 the group has assembled scholars from across Europe to discuss "the international policy of the papacy in the modern age." Divided into three sections, this collection examines "Structures, Resources, and Limits of Papal Universalism," "Pontifical Space in Europe and the Mediterranean, between Religious, Cultural, and Political Frontiers," and "The Papacy as a Center of Trans-Oceanic Negotiations." The volume opens with a thoughtful introduction by the editor Maria Antonietta Visceglia, which sets the motives for papal universalism within the political context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, explores how this initiated changes with the curia, and interacts with the scholarship on confessionalism. This introduction sets the stage for a wide-ranging collection that presents advanced research by experts in the field.

Due to constraints on space, I will present only highlights of the twenty-two valuable contributions in this volume. In part 1 Heinz Schilling examines Paolo Prodi's vision of the papacy (i.e., its two-souls status) in light of Martin Luther's criticism and as a limitation on papal international affairs. Alain Tallon investigates the mid-sixteenth-century papacy's activities as a diplomatic mediator for peace between secular princes. In contrast to certain scholars of the last few decades, Silvano Giordano argues for political and governmental continuity between pontificates based on the continued presence of cardinals and secretaries working in the congregations. Giovanni Pizzorusso explores the challenges faced by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in extending its jurisdiction across the globe and the role of missionary dioceses. Both Marco Pellegrini and Mario Rosa present papal concordats, from the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively, as mechanisms for establishing both papal and secular states' privileges.

In part 2, the study of frontiers is a particular focus of Gianvittorio Signorotto, Bertrand Forclaz, and Irene Fosi, whose collective works embrace Milan, Switzerland, and the Holy Roman Empire and their political and confessional affairs. Manuel Rivero Rodríguez,

Aurélian Girard, Giovanni Ricci, and Christian Windler examine papal relations with non-Christian communities in North Africa and the Middle East, which attempted to improve both religious diplomacy and the situation of Christians living in those areas. Antal Molnár, Laura Ronchi De Michelis, Francesco Gui, and Angelantonio Spagnoletti present studies of relationships between Italian and Balkan or Russian states that reveal political intricacies with much larger religious implications. In part 3, Paolo Broggio's contribution explores the development of the concept of missions ("missiology") within the context of early modern colonization, religious schism, curial administration, and the ideals of the Catholic reformation. This is followed by Francesca Cantù's investigation of the intricacies of sending an apostolic envoy to the Americas, and the Spanish monarchy's right to possess the New World based on Pope Alexander VI's bulls of concession of 1493. Elisabetta Corsi argues that despite the geographical and cultural distance between Europe and China, in the early modern period Rome produced and disseminated knowledge of Chinese civilization through the printing press, which laid the foundation for modern sinology. Eugenio Menegon's study of the papal legations to Qing China (1705–06 and 1720–21) rounds out the volume, reasserting the necessity of considering papal practice within the larger context of world history and the obstacles spawned by cultural difference.

Many of these subfields deserve further research and publicity. This volume is a substantial contribution to displacing the vision of the papacy as a closed Italian institution that became involved in political affairs solely for the love of power. As these essays plainly show, in the early modern period religion was deeply political and simultaneously both local and global.

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