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Philippe Genequand, *Officiers et Gouvernement de l'Église sous Clément VII d'Avignon (1378-1394)*. Bibliothèque d'histoire médiévale 28. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021. 605pp. Notes, references, and index. €49.00 (pb). ISBN 9782406115861.

Review by Joëlle Rollo-Koster, University of Rhode Island.

In the spirit of the École française de Rome, Philippe Genequand delivers an imposing volume focused on the officers and government of the papal administration of Clement VII (1378-94). Pope Clement VII was one of the two popes who ruled during the Great Western Schism (1378-1417), which divided the late medieval Catholic Church into two obediences, one located in Avignon and one in Rome. Genequand's book fits within the tradition of the (now defunct) massive doctoral French *thèses* well represented within the same field by Bernard Guillemain's, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon (1309-1376): Étude d'une société* (1966) and Jean Favier's, *Les finances pontificales à l'époque du Grand Schisme d'Occident 1378-1409* (1966), both imprints of the Éditions de Boccard, former editor of the École française. Genequand's volume, a continuation of Guillemain's work, also complements and reinforces the political analysis he offered less than a decade ago in *Une politique pontificale en temps de crise: Clément VII d'Avignon et les premières années du grand Schisme d'Occident (1378-1394)* (2013).<sup>[1]</sup> It is also part of a somewhat constant and renewed historiographical interest in the functioning of the late medieval/early modern papal administration.<sup>[2]</sup>

Genequand organizes his massive book (just over 600 pages, which may be doubled if we consider that most of the hundreds of biographical sketches are printed in small font) into three large parts of unequal length (not a criticism just an observation). The first section (more than 300 pages) addresses the organization of the curia at the end of the fourteenth century, which coincided with Clement's rule; the second focuses on personnel and careers (around 100 pages); and the third on remunerations (also around 100 pages). The general conclusion is followed by an appendix on currency (always helpful for anyone who deals with the imbroglio of medieval currencies); a second appendix presenting the manuscript utilized for (both) of his books, since his two studies are founded on the same archival material. His presentation will help anyone interested in tackling the Vatican archives and is primarily focused on the systematic tallying and analyses of the *Archivio Apostolico Vaticano's* accounting registers (formerly the *ASV* or *Archivio Segreto Vaticano's introitus et exitus, Instrumenta miscellanea, Collectoriae*), to which he added cameral letters (found dispersed in *Collectoriae* for the most part); a few documents from the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*; and for Avignon's material, the collection of three notaries, Vêran de Brioude, Antoine Garnier, and Raymond de la Brugière, who witnessed acts that required their authority. One should note that the first part of Genequand's discussion (Part I, the papal *familia*) relies heavily

on Marc Dykmans's edition of François de Conzié's ceremonial/*coutumier*.<sup>[3]</sup> In addition to the prosopographical studies of hundreds of curial officials, the book holds scores of tables that clarify and exemplify the book's documentary analysis. Regrettably, however, there is no list of tables.

In his introduction, Genequand presents the book's main objectives: a synthetic analysis of all the members of the church's central administration (including prosopographical vignettes); the means of their renewal; their sociogeographic identity, clientele, and patronage (professional or social); and the various means of remuneration. Offering a bottom-up human view of the largest running institution of the Middle Ages and the men (the only mention of a woman was the pope's launderess) who made it work, Genequand explicitly states that he is not interested in the legitimacy of Clement but rather in how the pope exercised his authority through the abundant traces left by his administration. He specifies, following most modern historians of the Schism, that concepts such as antipopes are modern constructions that do not reflect medieval reality. In other words, the popes of the Schism were the popes of their obedience. No historian has questioned that fact, nor did the Council of Constance, which ended the Schism, address the question of electoral legitimacy.

Despite this bottom-up approach, as a specialist of the Schism, one of the main critiques I have of Genequand's book is that the mass of documentation frequently buries the reality of the Schism. Although experts on the Schism will find Genequand's detailed presentation of hundreds of individuals and his deep dive into the cogs of the papal administration useful, from the opening page, the author does not make the case as to why anyone else should open his book. Genequand thus misses important opportunities to contrast his results with other medieval administrations. Still, Genequand's study offers a snapshot of responses for the few years that encompassed Clement VII's rule. Were officers salaried or not? Did they keep their jobs forever, or were there limits (the general rule was that charges attached to the person of the pope were finite, they lasted as long as he did, those attached to the institution were open-ended)? Were they remunerated in currency or in kind (all sort of kind, from property to meals)? Were people lodged, fed, dressed? Were careers immobile or were there possibilities for promotion? Did people actually work, or were many charges simply honorific? Were people hired for their qualifications or through clientele, patronage, or nepotism?

One of the most historically significant features of the papal administration of the late Middle Ages was its growth, specialization, and professionalization at all levels. Important, too, was its self-awareness, since it started archiving a large majority of the documents it produced. This protomodernization existed in the most patriarchal organism of the curia, the Papal Household. Part One surveys all the curialists who operated within its walls, beginning with those who operated the closest to the pope: the chamberlains (his *chambriers* in French, which I always distinguish from *camerlengo* for the head of the Apostolic Chamber), chamberlain-nonprelates/prelates/and of honor, offering abundant minibiographies.<sup>[4]</sup> He then addresses the referendaries, confessors, masters of the Sacred Palace, Chaplains (honor and commensal chaplains, chaplains of the Chapel), physicians, and barbers. Genequand then moves to household services and its head, the majordomo (*maître de l'hôtel*), head butler (*maître de salle*), butler/bread keepers (*panetiers*, they received/distributed the bread but did not bake it, they set the tables etc.), wine keepers,<sup>[5]</sup> master of water (proof enough for me that medieval people indeed drank water, including the pope!), master of the wax, and furrier. It is of note that most of these charges included the care of the instruments and products attached to their position. Next, Genequand

addresses the kitchen and marshals, starting with the masters of the kitchen, who were not cooks but rather in charge of keeping things running smoothly, the buyers of foodstuff, tableware custodians, pantry keepers, cooks (for the pope's table and common kitchen), and grooms. Concluding this section, Genequand insists on the notion of control that appears throughout the documents: from controlling expenses to behavior to reducing promotions to better manage manpower. As for human resources, it is obvious that all these officers had additional personnel under their charge, though they do not appear in the documentation.

Next, Genequand addresses the various administrations, including the Apostolic Chamber with its camerlengo, treasurer, receivers, notaries and scribes, clerks of the Chamber, notaries of the Chamber, collectors and subcollectors, and messengers; the Chancery with its scribes of the letters, cumulating and noncumulating scribes, abbreviators, correctors, registrars, *bullatores*, and secretaries; the Penitentiary with grand and minor penitentiaries, cumulating and noncumulating scribes and other officers; and finally the various tribunals: Consistory, cardinals tribunals, the Audience of the Sacred Palace, the Audiences of Contradict Letters, the Audience of the Apostolic Chamber, the Audience of the Penitentiary and Avignon's municipal courts. Genequand concludes this section on the Chamber by remarking, firstly, that the number of officers involved in running it was somewhat small; and, secondly, that it was a closed, specialized administration with little capacity for movement or promotion. Here we can see that the quality and competencies of its personnel were closely guarded and sheltered. The Chancery, for example, outweighed the Chamber or Penitentiary in number and prestige (ah, to be an abbreviator or scribe of the letters!). Nevertheless, many of the "writing" offices in all these administrations evade analysis, and it is difficult to discern actual officers from honorific titles. Most came from France and were of modest academic levels. The Penitentiary seems to have escaped the accumulation of offices that the author found in other units, and he states, "les penitenciers mineurs ont conservé à leur activité une étonnante authenticité" (p. 285). While, in general, minor penitentiaries did not overlap charges, its scribes were often officers from other units who accumulated charges and considered this one honorific. As for justice, all its officers were all highly qualified and well-known men.

Concluding this first part, Genequand notes the general length of most charges (an average of ten years), which brings up the question of the renewal of offices, and the lack of administrative channels to move within or up. Officers remained in place or accumulated several charges that they most often did not actually practice. As for the ones who did work, they remained in function for a long time after they were chosen for their specific competencies. The pope named high officers from his own lands (Geneva, Savoy), but they were still men qualified for the task. Clement did not innovate, but he chose men from his milieu whom he knew, and thus was aware of their talents.

Part Two focuses on personnel renewal and career patterns, beginning with a study of the "changing of the guard" with the elections of new popes. Following tradition, officers of the pope's household and of safety were renewed (because attached to the person of the pope) while administrators of the curia remained in place. The author then addresses renewal in general, and its causes, namely death or promotion. He concludes that evidence points to a calcification and lack of movement, since the number of charges did not catch up with the growing number of officers. Hence, people stayed in place. His next concern, the geographical origin of the curial staff, emphasizes a strong provenance from Pope Clement VII's own geographic origin, Geneva, and its surroundings, followed by the Limousin and Avignon's vicinities. In short, a trend not

that different from other Avignon popes. As for the academic level of the officers, most university graduates came from the juridical milieu (civil and canon law), and ironically not from theology. What Genequand highlights though is that the status of pontifical officer overrode any other titles, noble or not. Patronage, however, counted immensely, demonstrating that the papal curia still held traits that could be labeled archaic, while simultaneously controlling it enough to make sure that individuals accomplished their tasks. The College of Cardinals was one of the most important patrons, followed by *genevois* and a few curialists; patronage issuing from outside the court was rare.

Continuing with the study of career movements, Genequand addresses what he labels “immobilism” and finds a rationale in the frequent accumulation of charges, evidence enough that some were purely honorific, since their holders are not found in registers actually doing the thing they had been entitled to do. For example, most couriers or sergeants at arms of the pope were not acting as such, while most squires were. Individuals were also happy to share their services between the pope and cardinals, or other secular princes.

Part three, focused on remuneration, is technical and detailed but will quickly become a point of reference for anyone interested in medieval salaries in their multiple currencies and iterations. Interestingly, officers would be paid only when they spent the night following their workday in Avignon and receipts (quitclaims) were taxed. Genequand addresses most curial salaries by charge, adding exceptional pensions and alimonies offered, for example, to the pope’s brother or his physician and noting a general increase in remuneration. The highest percentile of the payroll went to the defense sector (squires, sergeants, ushers, etc.), which represents some 60% of the total. The following section addresses salaries in kind: free meals and foodstuff (often to pay arrears), liveries and furs, diplomatic gifts, candles and wax, beds, “irregular” gifts such as granting a house in lieu of salary, fiscal and administrative advantages, dispenses of all kinds from taxes to birth defects, the granting of benefices, with or without dispense of residence and accumulation of benefices. Curialist-bishops are a good example of the latter, with bishops who reaped the benefits of a diocese they never visited and did not run. As Genequand observes, such advantages answer the question Peter Partner asked in the *Pope’s Men*, “Why did men become papal officials” (p. 516).

Genequand concludes his long study by turning, finally, to the obvious question of modernization, asking if the papal court was at the “origines de l’État moderne” (p. 517). He contrasts Bernard Guillemain’s tripartite definition of modernism (development of archiving, search for competencies, and specialization, all traits that would make Clement’s curia modern) with Peter Partner’s more rigorous definition. Partner insists not only on “modern practices” but also on a mental conceptualization that would frame and impose a bureaucratic form of government. While Partner would agree that many traits (literacy, specialization, denial of privileges) made Clement’s court modern, “patrimonial” and “archaic” elements still anchored it in the past. Trying to find a balance between both, Genequand suggests a more modest definition for medievalists, arguing that Clement’s curia was modern in its willingness to accept new models based, for example, on specialization and its recruitment based on competencies. Most importantly, perhaps, individuals took their responsibilities seriously. Functions and charges were permanent, it kept archives, and it was pragmatic.

There was no system of checks and balances at Clement’s court, and people could have abused the system unfettered. But they did not, evidence of the qualities of its manpower. Of course, the

curia remained patriarchal in its means and methods, especially in its forms of remuneration, patronage, and the simple fact that administrators were utterly blind to the total sums they could mobilize (collectors were independent and the collectorate system only delivered to the court what was left after the payment of all arrears). Genequand's long study conveys the power of curial service. Nobles, for example, stopped defining themselves as nobles. Instead, they were officials of the pope.

Genequand has produced an important study that will remain a reference for the study of the medieval papal administration. Still, one can reproach him for a few blind spots. The author constantly refers, for example, to the word "confrerie" for groups of officials that I understood as men in similar positions. But the usage of the term is confusing since a confraternity also defines a specific association based on occupation and religious devotion. In a different vein, the author frequently returns to Bernard Guillemain's opus, ignoring the historiography that has questioned some of his dating and conclusion. [6] His bibliography is somewhat dated and does not address the conclusions of recent authors who have also worked on the papal curia, like the already mentioned Patrick Zutschi or Kirsi Salonen. Moreover, his analysis of the Italians at the court overlooks specialists like Jérôme Hayez and Richard Trexler. [7] It is also curious to see questions of patronage and clientele addressed without once encountering the word "nepotism." And here lies my most stringent criticism, the lack of contextualization and comparison. The author leaves his readers with the demanding task of juxtaposing and comparing his results with other studies on the papal court or even other medieval administrations. One would hope to see him discuss his results along with, for example, Sandro Carocci's *Il nepotismo nel medioevo: Papi, cardinali, e famiglie nobili* (Roma, 1999); Wolfgang Reinhard's "Nepotismus: Der Funktionswandel einer papstgeschichtlichen Konstante," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 86 (1975): 145-85; Laurie Nussdorfer's *Brokers of Public Trust: Notaries in Early Modern Rome* (Baltimore, 2009); or Jacques Ellul's *Histoire des institutions: Le Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2013). It is regrettable that Genequand remained circumscribed to the microhistorical and prosopographical without opening all the doors that his study could.

For now, Genequand's immensely detailed study will be of particular interest to students of the late medieval papal court in Avignon and of medieval administrations. It will also offer ample ground for future comparisons. His minibiographies are a fascinating entry into the lives of hundreds of *fonctionnaires* who made the administrative papal wheel turn.

## NOTES

[1] I reviewed the volume for *The American Historical Review* 120.1 (2015): 311-12.

[2] See, for example, Armand Jamme and Olivier Poncet, eds., *Offices et papauté, 14e-17e siècle: Charges, hommes, destins* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2005); Armand Jamme, et al., eds., *Offices, écrits et papauté (XIIIe-XVIIe siècles)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2013); Armand Jamme, ed., *Le Souverain, l'Office et le Codex, Gouvernement de la cour et techniques documentaires à travers les Libri officiariorum des papes d'Avignon (XIVe-XVe siècle)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2014); and Patrick Zutshi, *The Avignon Popes and Their Chancery. Collected Essays* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo 2021). I reviewed the latter volume in *Sehepunkte* 21 (2021), Nr. 11 [15.11.2021], URL: <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2021/11/35873.html>. See also Arnaud Fossier, *Le bureau des âmes. Écritures et pratiques administratives de la Pénitencerie apostolique (XIII-XIVe siècle)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2018) and Kirsi Salonen, *The Roman Curia, the*

*Apostolic Penitentiary and the Parties in the Later Middle Ages* (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2003), or by the same author, *Papal Justice in the Late Middle Ages: The Sacra Romana Rota* (London: Routledge, 2020).

[3] Marc Dykmans, *Le cérémonial papal de la fin de moyen âge à la renaissance: Les textes avignonnais jusqu'à la fin du grand Schisme d'Occident* (Bruxelles: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 1983).

[4] For simplicity of language, I will define his *curialiste*, something the author did not do. The word can cause confusion. Someone who resided and worked in Avignon as a subcontractor for the curia was defined as a *cortisianus* (also translated as “curialist” rather than courtesan). Presently, a curialist is someone attached to the papal court, an officer/official who held office at the court, whether high or low. See Joëlle Rollo-Koster, “Mercator Florentinensis and Others: Immigration in Papal Avignon,” in *Urban and Rural Communities in Medieval France*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson and John Drendel (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 73-100; and “Avignon’s Capitalization and the Legitimation of Transiency,” in *Images and Words in Exile: Avignon and Italy in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century (ca. 1310-1352)*, ed. Elisa Brilli, Laura Fenelli, and Gerhard Wolf (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015), 259-69.

[5] It is regrettable that Genequand does not return to the crucial role the papal wine cellar played in the events of April 1378. Not only does Walter Ullmann quote Urban himself as referring to electoral riots as *vinolentia* (*The Origins of the Great Schism: A Study in Fourteenth-Century Ecclesiastical History* [London, 1948; repr. Hamden, 1968], p. 39.), but breaking and entering cellars appears to have been a tradition during the papal election, including 1378. See Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter: Empty Sees, Violence, and the Initiation of the Great Western Schism (1378)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 138, 207-8.

[6] It is somewhat disheartening to see that the author ignored several of my works on the *Liber Divisionis* and the lists of the confraternity of Notre Dame la Majour and my questioning of some of Guillemain’s conclusions. My prosopographical analysis of some 4,000 residents of Avignon between 1371 and 1384 would have helped him identify some of the individuals he encountered. See Joëlle Rollo-Koster, “Forever After: The Dead in the Avignonese Confraternity of Notre Dame la Majour (1329-1381),” *Journal of Medieval History* 25 (1999): 115-40; “Amongst Brothers: Italians’ Networks in Papal Avignon (1360s-1380s),” *Medieval Prosopography* 21 (2000): 153-89; *The People of Curial Avignon: A Critical Edition of the Liber Divisionis and the Matriculae of Notre Dame la Majour* (Lampeter, GB, and Lewinston, USA: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

[7] Jérôme Hayez has published extensively on the Italians in Avignon, amongst his most representative see S. Brambilla, and J. Hayez, eds., *Il tesoro di un povero: Il Memoriale di Francesco Bentaccordi, fiorentino in Provenza (1400 ca)*, Rome, Viella, 2016, or “‘Veramente io spero farci bene...’: expérience de migrant et pratique de l’amitié dans la correspondance de maestro Naddino d’Aldobrandino Bovattieri, médecin toscan d’Avignon (1385-1407),” *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des chartes*, 159/2 (2001): 413-539 or Jérôme Hayez, and Diana Toccafondi, *Palazzo Datini a Prato: una casa fatta per durare mille anni*, Polistampa, Firenze, 2012. Richard C. Trexler, *The Spiritual Power. Republican Florence Under Interdict* (Leiden: Brill, 1974).

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