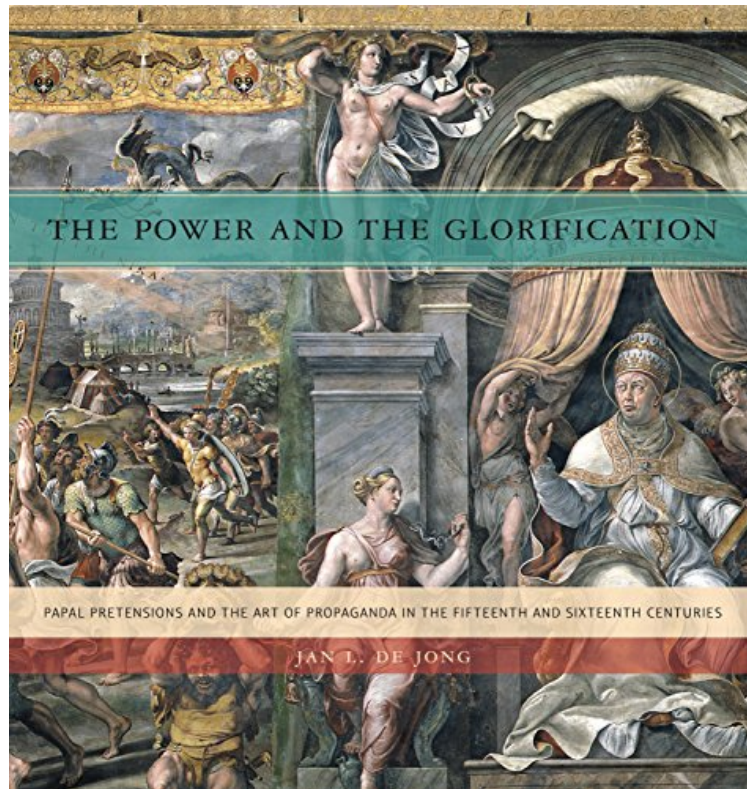


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# The Power and the Glorification: Papal Pretensions and the Art of Propaganda in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

Jan L. de Jong

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**Jan L. de Jong : The Power and the Glorification: Papal Pretensions and the Art of Propaganda in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Power and the Glorification: Papal Pretensions and the Art of Propaganda in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries:

Focusing on a turbulent time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, *The Power and the Glorification* considers how, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the papacy employed the visual arts to help reinforce Catholic power structures. All means of propaganda were deployed to counter the papacy's eroding authority in the wake of the Great Schism of 1378 and in response to the upheaval surrounding the Protestant Reformation a century later. In the Vatican and elsewhere in Rome, extensive decorative cycles were commissioned to represent the strength of the church and historical justifications for its supreme authority. Replicating the contemporary viewer's experience is central to De Jong's approach, and he encourages readers to consider the works through fifteenth- and sixteenth-century eyes. De Jong argues that most visitors would only have had a limited knowledge of the historical events represented in these works, and they would likely have accepted (or been intended to accept) what they saw at face

value. With that end in mind, the painters' advisors did their best to 'manipulate' the viewer accordingly, and De Jong discusses their strategies and methods.

This book sheds a powerful light on the great historical frescoes of High Renaissance Rome. Jan de Jong dwells on the historical situation of the popes, the meanings of history in Renaissance Europe, and the responses of contemporary viewers to these paintings. He teaches us how to see these grand and fascinating works as they were meant to be seen—and, at the same time, suggests some of the reasons why they did not have their full intended effects.—Anthony Grafton, Princeton University

Jan de Jong presents us with the first systematic study of the genre of political propaganda, invented in the sixteenth century. The author shows how the papacy, under pressure from religious and secular rivals, honed and fashioned the message of its narratives to present an image broadcasting its empyrean status. The pope's authority was underscored by showing the emperor and kings kissing his foot. His right to rule the Papal States was justified by depicting Constantine making a gift to Pope Sylvester of the lands of his western empire. The role of the pope as adjudicator and peacemaker was authenticated by representing Paul III brokering the peace between Charles V and Francis—even if that fragile treaty lasted only a handful of years. The political propaganda pioneered in the projects studied here provided a model followed by the courts of Europe up to and beyond Napoleon's. De Jong gives us a fresh and vivid account, some of it based on material hardly studied before.—Marcia Hall, Temple University

The Power and the Glorification is a good entry into the avenue of painted papal propaganda of the period, and de Jong's intentions as iterated in the introduction are realized quite adequately.—Bobbi Dykema, Sixteenth Century Journal

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the popes had firmly re-established themselves in Rome, after long years of exile, schism and instability. Their subsequent renovation of the once-great city recast Rome as the embodiment of a renewed Apostolic Church, built upon centuries of tradition, continuity and divine sanction. And yet, as Jan L. de Jong argues in this insightful and beautifully illustrated book, the unprecedented expansion of papal patronage in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries took place at a time when the pope's authority was being seriously questioned—by conciliarism, foreign invasions, the rise of nation states and ultimately the Reformation.—Dorigen Caldwell, Burlington Magazine

This engaging publication by de Jong offers a broad look at the way certain images were used as papal propaganda during the 15th and 16th centuries in Italy. This was a time when the church was presented with extreme challenges both from within and from secular forces. The book offers five case studies of artistic responses in a rough chronological sequence: the decoration in the Castel Sant'Angelo, the Conservatori's Palace on the Capitoline Hill, the Hall of Constantine in the Vatican, the Farnese Palace in Caprarola, and the Vatican's Sala Regia. The unifying theme among all these cycles is the use of visual propaganda to exalt the status and significance of the papacy and promote its claims of supreme authority within the church. . . . Since many of these decorative cycles are relatively understudied, the book provides a welcome contribution to their study. It is well illustrated, with solid notes and index and useful scholarly appendixes.—A. V. Coonin, Choice

About the Author: Jan L. de Jong is Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Groningen.