These original essays offer thought-provoking perspectives on the complex evolution of the papacy in the last 500 years, from the pope as an Italian Renaissance prince to the pope as a universal pastor concerned with the well-being and salvation of human beings everywhere on earth. Structured by detailed studies of some of the most significant popes in this evolution, this volume explores how papal policies and actions were received as the popes sought to respond to the political, cultural, and social circumstances of their time. Included are essays examining pontificates from that of Julius II, warrior as well as patron of the arts, to the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon, as well as Paul VI’s pleas for peace during the Cold War and John Paul II’s itinerant, prophetic, and hierarchical model of a pastoral papacy in the age of television and the internet.

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