Pierre Hurtubise *Une Famille-Témoin. Les Salviati*. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1985. Pp. 527.

To use a rhetoric that the subjects of this book would appreciate, Pierre Hurtubise's large, painstaking, and quietly insightful book does honour to the unusual powers of survival biological, social, and political of the Salviati. This Italian family could claim in its male line more than six hundred years of history, some 350 of those years as high-ranking aristocrats and prelates. The author hastens in his first pages to disassociate his efforts from the tradition of congratulatory family history and to align them rather with an historiography, advocated by Lucien Febvre, that highlights real social experience. And Hurtubise has achieved this kind of serious, sophisticated family history of which few examples yet exist. His book is a tribute to, if certainly not a glorification of, the values and behaviour of an early modern Italian family notable because it typified, even more than it excelled, others of its sort. "Better than their exceptional cousins, the Medici," writes Hurtubise, "the Salviati show us the rise and transformations of a family becoming and living noble."

The Salviati serve well as a representative family, a *famille-témoin*, for several reasons. Not only did they reproduce successfully over many generations, but their good fortune led them to establish major branches in two principal centres of Italian political and cultural life. In Florence and, from the early sixteenth century, in Rome, Salviati enjoyed prosperity and influence, though not, of course, without tense and awkward moments. Tracing the distinct, but interacting evolutions of these two wings of the family is one of Hurtubise's recurring concerns. Furthermore, the family are valuable examples because, over the course of their many years of ascent and prominence, they sought livelihood and social advancement in a variety of activities: office-holding in the commune and later the church, commerce — first regional and later international, landlordship, finance, courtiership, marriage-making, patronage and competitive consumption. Thus, in great detail we see in many combinations the moves which family members adopted to improve or preserve their positions. With particular interest Hurtubise follows the mutually reinforcing manoeuvres of various Salviati in the hierarchies of the church and of secular society. Another important theme is the linkages between, on the one hand, political and economic strategies and, on the other, cultural investments. Hurtubise treats the building and decoration of churches and palaces, the mounting of plays, the assembling of libraries, the hanging of pictures as, in part, motivated by a functional desire to maintain status by the cultivation of appearances.

Hurtubise's book reads like an extended concerto written around these several themes. It does not trumpet a grand central thesis, nor does it elaborate an ambitious theoretical structure. Rather, the work is rich in the historian's love of the particular. From bits and pieces unearthed in long and systematic sifting through archives, both public and familial, the author has reconstructed the fortunes of many of the Salviati clan. Elegantly, he marshalls details to display the broad range of experiences family members underwent. Proceeding from one moment or incident to another, he recounts what the documents have told him and then suggests how the episode fits into the period and what motives his actors may have had. Because his sources are reticent about the consciousness and inner life of his subjects, he uses the fruits or other historians' work to establish context and suggest plausible explanations for the family's deeds. For example, Hurtubise associates the rejection by one member of the family of a too "realistic" painting of the Virgin commissioned by another member with Savonarola's earlier strictures about propriety of imagery (pp. 113-4). In the end, this approach often confirms an existing interpretation, though sometimes with an interesting twist. At other times, the hypothesis is fresh as, for instance, some comments about the "quantitative" tendencies in religious sensibility in the later seventeenth century (pp. 476-7).

This method, while it frequently turns up glinting nuggets of insight about particular situations, tends to presume for the family a collective course in which, as a rule, they conformed to the expectations of their rank and epoch. Unless an idiosyncrasy reaped admiration and therefore left a mark in the record, the anomalies, the misfits, the downwardly mobile were likely to have eluded Hurtubise. Thus, the exceptionally zealous *dévot*, who enjoyed his contemporaries' approbation turns up in these pages, but the drunkard or the dreamer makes scant appearance. Similarly, although sections of the family differed in their success, all are assumed to share major goals and values.

Hurtubise treats individual diversity as it contributes to collective strategy or at least becomes absorbed with time; conflict has small role in this picture of the Italian family.

Une famille-témoin teaches by rich example, but sometimes we hanker for a bit more of the distance and order which a general argument or theory can offer to put the many particulars in a more unitary frame. While the author in his introduction acknowledges his sympathetic interest in recent efforts which inject history with social science, its impact on his own book is implicit and somewhat limited. For example, while he uses notions like family strategy, he does not explicitly address the meaning or power of the concept. Nor indeed does he define what, for his purposes, a family is. From the construction of the book we deduce that "family" here means those who bore a common name. In some sense this definition may be functional; those who appear in the book as Salviati are those members of the group whom the author can trace in the archives. But from the perspective of social experience the family may have been differently composed. In particular, it would be nice to see more clearly what the Salviati themselves understood by family, for their views and ours might diverge. Did the family think of itself as a collectivity with a direction and identity distinct from that of its individual members? Here we regret that we cannot see more clearly how the Salviati handled situations of competition or disharmony among family members. But since consciousness is where the documents least well serve the scholar's aspirations, in the face of such matters he may either abdicate or resort to more abstract theory. While in the interpretation of matters of fine structure Hurtubise willingly seeks assistance in other historians' propositions, on larger, more theoretical issues he is inclined to demur. Historians should certainly not wade over their heads in the lake of social scientific theory and we respect Hurtubise's modest self-restraint in this regard; nevertheless, some more explicit account of how he framed and gave boundaries to his project would help the reader do justice to the bounty of narrative.

Thus, in summary, this is not a book about "a" family, though a *famille-témoin*, which, because typical of its status, tells us about more than itself. In reconstructing the history of the Salviati Hurtubise impresses us with his indefatigable probing of the archives and his careful, intelligent commentary; his book will well reward the patient reader.

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Charles M. Johnston and John C. Weaver — *Student Days: An Illustrated History of Student Life at McMaster University from the 1890s to the 1980s*. Hamilton: McMaster University Alumni Association, 1986. Pp. viii, 135, illus.

In the preface to this delightful and thoughtful book, the co-authors state that their objective is "to identify and illustrate the main ingredients of student life" at McMaster University "across nearly 100 years." They achieve that large goal with relative ease as they paint, generally in broad strokes, the life of undergraduates at what was once a small Baptist institution on Bloor Street. They succeed in drawing three elements which they believe need to be more richly coloured over the years: "the evolution of student autonomy, the trend toward fragmentation of the student body, and the growth of equality for women." And, throughout the text, there is a steady stream of appropriate photographs, nearly every one of which is captioned with intelligent charm and humour. The whole book, text and photographs alike, is so engaging that the reader tends to forget that it is very much the product of thorough research.

That said, a few observations can be made which illustrate that the co-authors are only human. The final chapter, covering the years from 1975 to 1985, is one of Weaver's responsibilities; and he allows it to get out of hand because he attempts to portray too much and loses the touch which