



# **Empire of Souls: Robert Bellarmine and the Christian Commonwealth (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology)**

*Stefania Tutino*

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Robert Bellarmine was one of the pillars of post-Reformation Catholicism: he was a celebrated theologian and a highly ranked member of the Congregations of the Inquisition and of the Index, the censor in charge of the Galileo affair. Bellarmine was also one of the most original political theorists of his time, and he participated directly in many of the political conflicts that agitated Europe between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Stefania Tutino offers the first full-length study of the impact of Bellarmine's theory of the potestas indirecta in early modern Europe. Following the reactions to Bellarmine's theory across national and confessional boundaries, this book explores some of the most crucial political and theological knots in the history of post-Reformation Europe, from the controversy over the Oath of Allegiance to the battle over the Interdetto in Venice. The book sets those political and religious controversies against the background of the theological and institutional developments of the post-Tridentine Catholic Church. By examining the violent and at times surprising controversies originated by Bellarmine's theory, this book challenges some of the traditional assumptions regarding the theological shape of post-Tridentine Catholicism; it offers a fresh perspective on the centrality of the links between confessional affiliation and political allegiance in the development of the modern nation-states; and it contributes to our understanding of the development of 'modern' notions of power and authority.

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