Book Review of The Mapping of Power in Renaissance Italy

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and tacit endorsement of policies discriminatory to Calvinists. A catholicized, Southern Netherlands culture fundamentally incorporated exiles and exile experiences.

By contrast, Catholics in the Republic—returnees hoping for restitution, and those who never left—lived out a modus vivendi, as Janssen puts it, in which Catholics could worship privately despite occasional interference, because political authorities opposed a thoroughgoing Calvinization of society. The decentralized and community-based inflection of Dutch religious policies even blunted the exclusion of Catholics from society. Nonetheless, the few Catholics from the Republic choosing permanent exile in the Southern Netherlands saw themselves as persecuted. And returning exiles brought a newly invigorated faith to the Republic, forming the backbone of a reviving Catholic community, and honored familial experiences of exile, even if not publicly as Calvinists did.

At just under two hundred pages, Janssen’s volume is ambitious and impressive. Each question he examines could consume several monographs. Fortunately, his command of the sources generally allows him to address his subjects credibly. His discussion of the mechanisms by which people became exiles, for example, succeeds handsomely. As Janssen himself concedes, though, his study lacks the community context to show how Catholics experienced exile in an everyday way that would permit a proper comparison to Calvinist case studies such as Emden. Demonstrating the creative force Janssen claims for these communities, then, might require a separate study. But Janssen’s rebalancing of narratives that have minimized the culpability of Protestants and Catholics in depriving one another of normal lives in their home communities, which he describes in terms of administrative, political, and social cleansing, challenges the reader most. Terms that evoke the ghosts of the former Yugoslavia, however, may obscure rather than allow us to see these processes anew. Moreover, in describing these policies Janssen contrasts Habsburg reconciliation with intentionally callous Calvinist practices (which they surely were).

This is as much an open query for the field of Reformation history, though. Can scholars recreate the rawness of certain experiences while eschewing judgment? To gloss a similarly potent parallel, do we gain by comparing the at times aggressive marginalization of the Republic’s Catholics to the violence of Jim Crow in the United States? That Janssen’s work brings his readers to consider these matters is laudable, though, and I look forward to further work with anticipation.


Reviewed by: Brian Maxson
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This book provides a contextual study of the patronage and development of the Florentine Guardaroba, a room within the Palazzo Vecchio that contains a large globe and dozens of painted maps from the 1560s, ’70s, and ’80s. Rosen argues that the existent unfinished space represents a fraction of the original design dreamed up by Giorgio Vasari and Duke Cosimo I, both of whom planned the maps of the world’s then-known regions to complement numerous other features in a complicated representation of the cosmos. The finished space was to amaze onlookers with its cabinets of curiosities, descending globes, hundreds of portraits, and other features. The deaths of Duke Cosimo and Vasari, however,
left the project in the hands of Duke Francesco I and then his brother Duke Ferdinando, both of whose interests lay elsewhere. Subsequently, both men devoted their resources more to spaces in the new Uffizi than in the Palazzo Vecchio, leaving the Guardaroba unfinished. The book is a well-executed analysis of an intriguing space and will be of interest to historians of Florence and early modern cartography.

Rosen presents the story of the Guardaroba across seven chapters. The first chapter investigates large painted maps created before the sixteenth century. Rosen uncovers numerous examples of maps from antiquity to the sixteenth century, showing how maps could decorate spaces in addition to constructing historical and territorial claims. As chapter 2 demonstrates, the combination of new printing technologies and increased exploration led to dramatic changes in mapmaking during the 1500s. Most significantly, patrons turned to monumental commissions to awe viewers through both size and accurate renditions. Rosen summarizes the commissioning of large-scale maps in areas across the Italian peninsula and even Tudor England, all aimed at the evocation of wonder. These first two chapters provide the context for the book’s central discussion of the Florentine Guardaroba, the most ambitious sixteenth-century map project.

The Guardaroba emerged from the ambitions of Duke Cosimo I and Giorgio Vasari to project Cosimo’s metaphorical control over the cosmos, an intentional pun on the duke’s name. Rosen’s third chapter briefly situates the space within the broader project of renovating the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio, a focus of much ducal patronage during the middle years of the sixteenth century. The fourth chapter argues that the Guardaroba represented a new kind of space situated between the private humanist studioli prized in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and the larger collecting spaces of later centuries, a distinction in collecting spaces previously described by Paula Findlen. Between intimate and sociable, private and public, the Guardaroba was to be a semipublic display of Cosimo’s cosmology, presented with unprecedented grandeur that included two globes (including a celestial one that would drop from the ceiling painted to mirror the star maps of Ptolemy), hundreds of portraits (now in the Uffizi gallery), cabinets for Medici curiosities, and, of course, detailed painted maps.

The book’s final three chapters focus on the maps themselves. Chapter 5 reveals new findings about the careers of the four men tasked with turning Vasari and the duke’s plans into reality. Two were particularly important. Egnazio Danti was increasingly well known as a mathematician and cosmographer, and completed several maps and the extant globe for the space. After the deaths of Duke Cosimo and Vasari, the new Duke Francesco removed Danti from the project and replaced him with Don Buonsignori, the same man who completed the 1584 city view of Florence, which is now at the heart of the online Decima project overseen by scholars at the University of Toronto. Buonsignori completed numerous maps for the room, although in a different style than that used by Danti. Buonsignori’s successor, Antonio Santucci, turned his attention to the completion of work for the Uffizi, a both real and symbolic statement that ducal interests lay elsewhere by the late 1580s. Chapter 6 analyzes and compares the maps completed by Danti and Buonsignori, showing that Danti was usually more critical of his sources and more scholarly in his approach than his successor. These different approaches can, in part, be attributed to the scaled-down goals for the space held by Duke Francesco and Duke Ferdinando as compared with those of Duke Cosimo. The book’s final chapter shows the influence of the original cosmographical plan for the Guardaroba on spaces in other parts of the Italian peninsula.
Mapping Power in Renaissance Italy provides a readable account of a space that continues to fascinate and amaze viewers. Readers will come away with a detailed knowledge of the changes in the planned program for this room, the artists involved in its creation, and the room's broader artistic context in the Italian peninsula. Its central points about the planning and execution of the room are convincing. In addition, the book's content is suggestive for other areas for potential research. For example, it might be interesting to explore reactions to the space from visitors, if such evidence exists. Another possible path for future researchers could be to examine the social and political world in which this room fit, and even a full treatment of how this particular act of patronage fit into the extensive relationship between Duke Cosimo and Vasari. These questions and topics are outside the purview of this book, but their pursuit by future scholars will be on solid footing from this fine study.


Reviewed by: Simon P. Kennedy
University of Queensland, Australia

The subject of Richard Hooker has enjoyed a recent scholarly renaissance. Scholars such as Torrance Kirby, David Neelands, and A. J. Joyce have emerged as leaders in the new wave of Hooker scholarship and they follow in the footsteps of A. S. McGrade and Peter Lake. Littlejohn joins these ranks with this companion on Hooker's life and work. Littlejohn recently completed his PhD at New College, University of Edinburgh, under Oliver O'Donovan and has a further, forthcoming volume on Hooker with Eerdmans. The little volume being reviewed here is one of Cascade's Companion series and serves as a pithy introduction to Hooker's thought. The author states that he has three primary aims for the volume. First, Littlejohn wishes to introduce Hooker to new audiences. Second, he wants the book to serve as a digest of recent Hooker scholarship for general and more academic audiences. Third, Littlejohn wishes to encourage further reading and scholarship on Hooker.

The book sets about these tasks by laying out three distinct sections. The first and second sections examine different aspects of Hooker's life, his work, and his aims. From the outset, it is clear that Littlejohn wishes to distance Hooker from the idealized “Anglican” portrait that emerges from some corners of Hooker studies and takes the opportunity to aim carefully worded criticisms at liberal and high church interpreters of Hooker. Ultimately, Littlejohn sides with Torrance Kirby in his reading of Hooker as standing in continuity with the magisterial reformers (12). The biographical account in chapter 2 is well composed and very easy to follow. Indeed, Littlejohn does a fine job of placing Hooker and his ideas in context throughout the entire volume, as he carefully works in historical context at key points in other chapters.

Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity is ably summarized in the following chapter, and the author places the work in context of conformist and nonconformist debates of the day, helping the reader to see Hooker's primary motivation and purpose for writing this massive work. It should be noted that this chapter also contains an illuminating discussion of Hooker's view of the relationship between holy writ, natural law, and divine law (42–45). This impressive section is probably the most fluent theological discussion in the volume.

Littlejohn tackles the controversial subject of Hooker's Protestantism in chapter 4. For Littlejohn, Hooker was thoroughly Protestant and also Reformed (56). To defend this position, the author examines some of the key planks in Hooker's theology, including