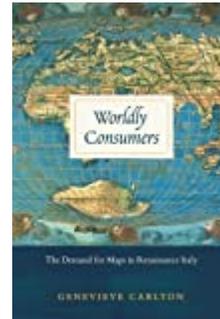
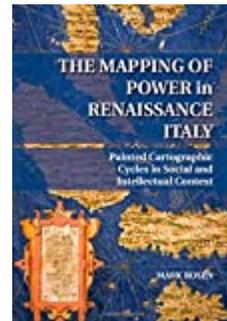


Genevieve Carlton. *Worldly Consumers: The Demand for Maps in Renaissance Italy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 240 pp. \$45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-226-25531-6.



Mark Rosen. *Mapping of Power in Renaissance Italy: Painted Cartographic Cycles in Social and Intellectual Context.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 318 pp. \$89.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-06703-5.



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Mark Rosen's *The Mapping of Power in Renaissance Italy* and Genevieve Carlton's *Worldly Consumers* are both emblematic of the way in which the history of objects has colonized the more traditional branches of historical research, respectively political and economic history. Mark Rosen's work demonstrates the ways in which classical and medieval lineages of mapmaking fused with sixteenth-century concerns for realistic cartography in the cycle of painted maps in the Medici Guardaroba, a *wunderkammer* designed as a propagandistic device aiming to display the Medici duke's knowledge of newly discovered worlds. Carlton's study, by contrast, is not concerned with maps in the halls of

power, but rather is focused on average consumers, who were far more likely to adorn their domestic space with cheaper, mechanically produced print maps. In both works, maps emerge as polysemous objects, which, even in an age increasingly devoted to accuracy and realism in mapmaking, continued to hold symbolic valences for the consumers who commissioned, bought, and displayed them, as well as used them to fashion their public identities.

Rosen's title might be a little misleading, since the study is concerned with the mapping of power only in an indirect sense, and very little of the text is directly concerned with issues of political power. Though the

main subject of the monograph, the Medici Guardaroba in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, was indeed commissioned by a Florentine duke aiming to display his mastery of the world, most of Rosen's monograph is devoted to understanding how the changing culture of mapmaking in the sixteenth century influenced the execution of the Guardaroba project. Nevertheless, in accomplishing this, the work is compelling and impressive.

Rosen divides the work into two parts. In the wide-ranging first and second chapters, he takes the reader from classical map theory to the advent of the printed map. In doing so, he reveals a tension in early modern mapmaking; on one hand, makers of painted maps had to respond to an increased desire and appetite for accuracy, a trend that broadly followed the lead of print mapmakers and which responded to the intellectual upheavals associated with global exploration. On the other hand, people continued to utilize their ever more accurate maps for such subjective and symbolic tasks as visualizing distant geographical settings for sacred history and framing their relation to a broader cosmological order (Rosen, p. 26). In the second part of the book, Rosen shows how the fusion of these conflicting impulses appeared in the evolving program for the map cycle of the Medici Guardaroba, a courtly chamber of wonders that relied for its success both on the multivalent messages that maps were particularly good at conveying as well as on the presumption of the accuracy of the prince's scientific and geographical knowledge of the universe or even more specifically, on his ability to impose order upon it.

Rosen's work has much to recommend it. He deftly interweaves analysis of map, text, and context to demonstrate the inadequacy of a narrative that reduces sixteenth-century cartography to a concern for accuracy. Rather, Rosen shows how both artist and patron continued to deploy maps to fashion and refashion identities. This tension between meaning and representation is most skillfully unearthed in the last chapter, in which he contrasts the striking differences between the Guardaroba maps of Ignazio Danti and those of Stefano Buonsignori, which were completed as part of the same cycle but under the very different concerns of two different patrons. Rosen also demonstrates impressively wide-ranging erudition. Indeed, the first chapter might well stand alone as an introduction to the history of maps in Western civilization from Greece to the Renaissance. On the other hand, this approach has its drawbacks, as Rosen occasionally sets up narrative threads that he fails to pick up in his more detailed analysis of the Guardaroba. Nevertheless, *The Mapping of Power* makes important contri-

butions in several fields, including art history, Florentine ducal history, the history of early modern court life, and the history of material culture.

Genevieve Carlton's *Worldly Consumers* focuses on the average consumer of maps in Renaissance Italy. Using the techniques of social historical analysis, Carlton argues that maps were both an affordable and widespread commodity in Renaissance Italy and that average consumers adorned their domestic spaces with the latest and most up-to-date maps in order to craft for themselves a cosmopolitan identity (Carlton, p. 20). In the early modern period, the technology of print put maps in the hands of an ever widening base of consumers, who bought and displayed maps in attempt to construct their own public personae, marking themselves out as educated people who were up to date on the latest in scientific and geographical knowledge. Like Rosen's monograph, *Worldly Consumers* argues that maps were a preferred vehicle of self-representation due to their ability to provoke wonder and amazement in the eyes of the beholder.

Carlton makes a tightly focused and compelling argument. Her use of sources, particularly household inventories, convincingly demonstrates the popularity of maps across a wide strata of Renaissance society. Moreover, her comparative use of Venetian and Florentine inventories points toward the manner in which choices in printed maps became a matter of both local and personal taste. In analyzing the demand side of map culture, Carlton has given us a work that ties together questions about markets and consumption with larger cultural shifts associated with science, technology, and global expansion. In bringing these stories together, Carlton has written a book that is worthy of exceptionally wide interest.

In these two different explorations of maps and the culture surrounding their production and consumption, notable common elements emerge. Both authors are acutely aware of the changes wrought by print culture and global exploration, specifically in the demand for more accurate and complete world maps. However, both authors repeatedly stress the importance of continuities in the polysemous character of premodern and early modern maps; in both authors' accounts, maps remained multivalent items whose meaning to the consumer remained as heavily dependent upon their representational and symbolic components as they did on their accuracy and novelty. In a manner, both of these works are also about self-fashioning, revealing fundamental con-

tinuities between aristocratic and middle-class Renaissance cultures. Though the painted map cycle of the Guardaroba was obviously more grand in both cost and scale than the printed maps that average people hung on the walls of their semi-public domestic spaces, both prince and common people used maps in strikingly similar ways: to craft a self-image that evoked wonder in the audience at the map owner's knowledge of the world.

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