The Mapping of Power in Renaissance Italy: Painted Cartographic Cycles in Social and Intellectual Context. Mark Rosen.
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In 1537, seventeen-year-old Cosimo de' Medici rode into a Florence that had been thrown into chaos and confusion by the assassination of his distant relation Duke Alessandro. Within a year, Cosimo had defeated Florentine exiles in battle and secured the ducal title from Charles V. He spent the next decades consolidating his power

through judicial, financial, and political means, but these in themselves did not necessarily give him legitimacy. For that he co-opted Florentine traditions, rituals, and sites to create the fiction that his rule continued them all. He rented the old Medici Palace, then expropriated the Palazzo della Signoria as his ducal palace, and then moved to another palace purchased by his wife Eleonora of Toledo because she saw the potential that its site afforded for more extensive additions and formal gardens. Henk van Veen and Konrad Eisenbichler have explored how skillfully Cosimo and Eleonora worked with the rhetorics and cultural politics of Florentine history, traditions, and spaces to create a firmer foundation for the ducal dynasty by emphasizing its continuity with republican Florence. Mark Rosen here turns in the other direction to show how Cosimo also used modern science, art, and innovation to underscore that he was a visionary who represented Florence's future.

In the period when Cosimo was reworking the old communal palace into a new ducal palace, he conceived of a semipublic room whose walls would be covered with maps of all parts of the world, and from whose ceiling two spheres could be lowered — one terrestrial and one celestial. This "guardarobba" was essentially an early wonder chamber in which the very extensive Medici collections of artifacts could be stored and displayed in two ranks of built-in cabinets that circled the room. Each cabinet door had a map detailing some part of the world, and the selection of fifty-three maps would be deliberately global, showing parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, and even illustrating the poles. In its original conception as sketched by Giorgio Vasari, each map also indicated the origins of the rare items stored in the cabinet behind it. On entering the room, one entered the world that Cosimo bestrode. As Rosen shows, Cosimo believed that his very name bespoke cosmic favor and destiny, and so the *guardarobba* was not just a storeroom for explorers' bric-a-brac, but the resonant center of his rule and the very symbol of his legitimacy.

It all gets a bit heady. And while Cosimo's ego may have predisposed him to see his name as signaling a cosmic destiny best symbolized by maps and spheres, he was not the first or only ruler to use large public maps to remind those passing through his palace just how far his reach extended. Rosen digs deeper into the late antique and medieval periods to show how frequently rulers used maps to decorate public spaces. No visual traces remain of these maps, so speculation stands in for visualization in many cases; but it is clear that the impulse to connect maps and power did not emerge with the cartographic technologies, discoveries, and printed atlases of the sixteenth century. That said, newly ambitious rulers found those innovations timely. Rosen reviews examples in the court of Mantua, in the papal apartments, and in public spaces within the doge's palace in Venice to underscore how the impulse cut across political lines. As he moves into the sixteenth century, the detail given to the Medici *guardarobba* increases significantly, and Rosen describes in considerable detail both the construction history of the space from 1563, and the fraught efforts to realize Cosimo's cosmic vision for it, particularly after his death in 1574. The two artists responsible for the painted maps, Egnazio Danti and Stefano Buonsignori, had quite distinct inspirations and outcomes. Cosimo's successors also had

distinct visions, ambitions, and financial priorities, and so the Medici *guadarobba* was wrapped up in 1589 without ever being truly completed. As attention shifted to the new ducal palace and the expanded Uffizzi as a wonder chamber on a vastly different scale, the *guardarobba* became a practically forgotten storeroom.

Rosen quickly describes some other Italian and European projects in a brief final chapter. The argument about mapping and power would be strengthened considerably if there was expanded comparative treatment of these. On one level, connections of mapping and power are obvious, and there is a certain repetition of basic observations that could be edited down. This would give Rosen the space to develop more fully his thesis that "local anxieties and concerns" shaped different programs differently. He could then also give to these other map programs some of the extraordinary archival detail and sensitive visual description that he gives to the ambitious but ill-fated Medici *guardarobba* in this fascinating study.

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