Capturing the World on Paper
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in Worldly Consumers: The Demand for Maps in Renaissance Italy

This chapter analyzes the ways mapmakers drew on the techniques of Renaissance artists to insert their works into an already vibrant visual tradition. While previous historians have argued that the rise of accurate maps coincided with a decrease in the symbolic and contemplative function of maps, by repositioning cartography in relation to trends in art this chapter demonstrates that altered expectations for the accuracy of maps did not lessen the meaning that consumers attached to them. However, this shift did leave the message of maps increasingly ambiguous and open to interpretation, which allowed buyers to fashion their own meaning for maps.