The Virtual Tourist in Renaissance Rome: Printing and Collecting the Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae

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Art History

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Abstract

In 1540 Antonio Lafreri, a native of Besançon transplanted to Rome, began publishing maps and other printed images that depicted major monuments and antiquities in Rome. These prints—of statues and ruined landscapes, inscriptions and ornaments, reconstructed monuments and urban denizens—evoked ancient Rome and appealed to the taste for classical antiquity that defined the Renaissance. Collections of these prints came to be known as the Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae, the “Mirror of Roman Magnificence.”

Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the University of Chicago Library’s Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae, the largest collection of its kind in the world, The Virtual Tourist in Renaissance Rome places these prints in their historical context and examines their publishing history. Editor Rebecca Zorach traces their journey from their creators and publishers to pilgrims, collectors, antiquarians, and dealers—“virtual tourists” who, over several centuries, revisited and reinvented the Renaissance image of Rome. A marvelous exploration of a rich collection of engravings and etchings, this illustrated volume will fascinate anyone interested in Renaissance Rome, the history of print collecting, the reception of antiquity, and tourism.

Fingerprint

Cite this

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