

The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Images of Iberia.

Ed. Piers Baker-Bates and Miles Pattenden.

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REVIEWED BY: Ana Grinberg

East Tennessee State University

The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy is a collection of essays exploring the interactions between the Italian and Iberian peninsulas during a period of intense political and cultural contact. The Spanish hegemony in a large part of the Italian peninsula lasted almost two centuries and had an important effect on both cultures. In order to understand the reciprocal influence between these two areas, the authors in this volume diligently consider the complexities of the Italian and Spanish identities by focusing on specific polities: Venice, Rome, and Naples being the most important. The articles included here approach the transcultural relationships and mutual influence through diplomatic, religious, and artistic exchanges.

After a brief introduction by Simon Ditchfield, the book is divided into three parts. Part 1, "The Spanish Presence in Italian Politics, Society and Culture," provides three case studies assessing the response of Italians to the Spanish. Catherine Fletcher's "Mere Emulators of Italy: The Spanish in Italian Diplomatic Discourse, 1492–1550" shows that Venetian diplomats portrayed the Spanish as inferior to themselves in terms of territory, character, and warfare. Fletcher also explains that these diplomatic sources contain early "seeds of the [Italian] 'black legend'" that condemned Spanish arrogance and cruelty (24). Furthermore, Italians considered themselves as an "improving influence" on the Spanish (23). In "Hispanophobia in the Venetian Republic," Nicholas Davidson proffers similar claims, looking at the Venetian patriciate's documents from 1530 to 1630. In this period, despite the apparent political and religious commonalities, Venice distrusted the Spanish, as is evident in the ambassadors' *relazioni* to the Senate. Part 1 ends with Stephen Cummins's "Encountering Spain in Early Modern Naples: Language, Customs and Sociability," which explores the perception of the Spanish as part of communal life surrounding the Piazza della Sellaria. Though lacking in focus, this chapter provocatively illustrates the intricate realities of identity formation in places of mixed populations such as Naples.

The essays in part 2, entitled "Spanish Religiosity and Roman Religion," study the complexity of religious networks during the Habsburg dynasty. Miles Pattenden's "Rome as a 'Spanish Avignon'? The Spanish Faction and the Monarchy of Philip II" analyzes the frictions between the Italian cardinals and the Spanish monarch, particularly in terms of Philip's client base as a response to Charles V's "imperial faction." Pattenden demonstrates that the power of Spain in Rome was limited. The Spanish monarchy was perceived in Rome as "the 'other,' to be exploited as much and as often as possible in pursuit of financial gain" (72). In "Rome and the 'Spanish Theology': Spanish Monarchy, Doctrinal Controversies and the Defence of Papal Prerogatives from Clement VIII to Urban VIII," Paolo Broggio contemplates papal attitudes toward the Jesuits as a response against the "excessive Habsburg interference in the ecclesiastical field" (87). Clare Copeland brings this part to a conclusion with "Spanish Saints in Counter-Reformation Italy." In this chapter, Copeland examines the canonization of several saints from Spain and the Spanish Empire in 1622. Considering the use of these saints in Italy, Copeland shows the adaptability of their identities in terms of religious orders vis-à-vis "a neat geographical loyalty" (116).

“Spanish Vision and the Visual Arts in Italy” is the last part of this volume. The four essays in this section deal with the role of artists and patrons in the early modern trans-cultural exchange. Piers Baker-Bates’s “*Graecia Capta Ferum Victorem Copeit*: Spanish Patrons and Italian Artists” provocatively explains that, despite the notions of Italian cultural superiority, the Spanish taste for sacred painting, portraiture, sculpture, and architecture generated complex, “cultural hybrids.” Robert W. Gaston and Andrea M. Gáldy, in their “The Stranded Tomb: Cultural Allusions in the Funeral Monument of Don Pedro de Toledo, San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, Naples,” turn to Don Pedro’s tomb as an example of the cultural hybridity posited by Baker-Bates. Gaston and Gáldy find such multicultural dimension in the “blending of Italian figural classicism with passionately felt Spanish notions of lineage, prayer and ferocious bravery” (166). Elena Calvillo instead looks into the relationship between artist and sitter in her “Inventive Translation, Portraiture and Spanish Habsburg Taste in the Sixteenth Century.” Though not strictly Italians or Spanish but Italophiles, Giulio Clovio and Francisco de Holanda serve as instances of cultural translation and adaptability in terms of their miniature portraits. “The Politics of Art or the Art of Politics? The Marquis del Carpio in Rome and Naples (1677–1687)” is Jorge Fernández-Santos Ortiz-Iribas’s contribution to the volume. Fernández-Santos explores the role of Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, Marquis del Carpio, and his exceptional “ability to adapt” to different public spheres. As a generous enthusiast of the arts in Rome and an austere viceroy in Naples, del Carpio embodies the “cultural hybridity” introduced by Baker-Bates earlier in this same section. The volume ends with conclusions; a thorough bibliography that separates manuscript sources, printed primary sources, and secondary literature; and a complete index.

The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy is a necessary read for scholars and students of this period, not limited to those interested in the Italian and Iberian peninsulas but also in the Mediterranean transcultural exchanges in general. The essays included offer a more nuanced approach to what was once thought to be the “Spanish plunder of Italy’s culture” (230). Moreover, the inclusion of material culture studies alongside inquiries of primary sources offers a fresh approach to this scholarly conversation.

There are few editorial observations to this volume, all of which are minor and could have been avoided with a careful revision of the notes to each chapter. Should this volume see a reprint, it could be useful to proofread the bibliographical entries in Spanish, French, and Italian for proper accentuation and capitalization. These issues do not detract from a well-conceived addition to the understanding of political and cultural exchanges in the Mediterranean.

