

In the third part of the book, Lenoci culls the expertise of a number of other scholars to produce an iconographic appendix documenting the cultural contributions and varying objects of devotion of a number of confraternities throughout Italy. The appendix, which includes photographs of altars, paintings, and sculptures, attests to the very broad approach signalled in the earlier part of the volume and provides an engaging visual record of the depth of devotion in lay religious societies.

Mary Watt
Italian Studies
University of Toronto

Howard, Peter Francis. *Beyond the Written Word: Preaching and Theology in the Florence of Archbishop Antoninus, 1427–1459*. Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1995. xi, 291 pp.

This volume devotes itself entirely to an analysis of a single text, the *Summa Theologica* of Antonino Pierozzi, better known as St. Antoninus, prior of the Dominican convent of San Marco and later archbishop of Florence (1446). Howard claims that Antoninus' *Summa*, a handbook and guide for effective sermonizing, can be used as a barometer for the social, ideological, and even political climate of the city in the mid-fifteenth century because Renaissance Florence remained, in spite of humanist literary and philosophical enthusiasm, a 'traditional society' characterized by an 'oral' and 'sermon' culture. Because preachers had to make theology both accessible and relevant to all the social strata of their audiences, Howard reasons that the structure and content of their sermons reveal as much about the audiences as they do about the preachers.

Beneath the very cautious 'thrust of this study ... that religion ... mattered in Renaissance Florence,' Howard claims that Antoninus' *Summa* indicates the existence of a strain of theology that originated neither in the scholastic mendicant convents nor in the humanist circles of biblical scholars such as Ambrogio Traversari. He argues that popular preaching in the city's piazzas generated a 'preacher theology' vitally important to civic life because, rather than concentrating on arcane scholastic disputes, it reflected and addressed the moral dilemmas encountered by Florentines in day-to-day life. Howard situates Antoninus' *Summa* squarely in this oral and context-oriented theology.

Howard insists that his study has implications for a proper understanding of the relationship between religion, politics, economics, and society. However, *Beyond the Written Word* focuses intensively and thoroughly on the *Summa* and only incidentally on the Florentine context in which Antoninus operated. We learn that, in the midst of growing discontent towards the conservative 1427 regime, caused in part by the agitation of the Medici party, Antoninus prepared a series of sermons that defended the regime by emphasizing an equation between political stability, public order, and salvation; there is no discussion, however, of Antoninus' role in the Medicean patronage system, nor of his cooperation with Cosimo de' Medici during the extension of the humanist library at San Marco or during the founding of the Buonomini di San Martino, the charitable confraternity for the shamed-faced poor.

Howard mentions that Antoninus played a decisive role in the 1458 *parlamento* that enabled the Medici regime to withstand a period of intense opposition; yet he provides no details on what that role was or even whom Antoninus supported. He argues that Antoninus' preached theology addressed the psychological needs of a society 'in crisis' because of rapid social change; yet there is no discussion of specifically how Florence was changing, what pressures were responsible, and how this change affected Florentine society. With the exception of Antoninus' positive views on interest-bearing loans (a delicate theological issue, but not one the Florentine had left unresolved in previous centuries), there is little discussion of exactly how Antoninus' sermons and theology addressed the 'psychological' needs of the Florentine congregation.

The strength of *Beyond the Written Word* lies in Parts I and II, in which Howard provides a thorough analysis of Antoninus' *Summa* and a detailed explanation of the technical aspects of the preacher's craft in Renaissance Florence. Part I, "The Making of the *Summa*" traces the intellectual pedigree and structure of Antoninus' work. Drawing on the summist tradition established by a writers such as Thomas Aquinas, John of Freiburg, Raymond of Peñafort, and Vincent of Beauvais (whose organization Antoninus borrowed wholesale), Antoninus compiled his manual with specific emphasis on the preacher's and confessor's flexibility and sensitivity to particular situations; Antoninus adapted the summist tradition to accommodate Florence, a city whose social complexity often confounded the maxims of older transalpine summists.

Part II, "A Preaching Mentality" examines Antoninus' methodology in his *ars predicandi*, the third part of the *Summa*, which sets out the mechanics of sermonizing: when and where one ought to give a sermon, the importance of attention to circumstances, how long a sermon ought to be, and the importance of teaching through persuasion rather than assertion.

Part III, "The Contours of Thought" discusses Antoninus' intellectual relationship to the Florentine church and the city's learned culture. In particular Howard disputes arguments made by Arnaldo della Torre and Alison Brown that Antoninus opposed humanist learning. Howard offers a persuasive counter-argument, reminding readers of Antoninus' notary father, who had constant exposure to Salutati's chancery, Antoninus' praise of Bruni as *eloquentissimus*, his friendship with Cosimo de' Medici and Niccolò Niccoli, and his incorporation into his *Summa historialis* of the histories of Bruni and Poggio.

Although essentially a study of a text, rather than a text in context as the title, introduction and conclusion imply, Howard's work contributes to Renaissance studies by providing a cogent interpretation and detailed analysis of the most important text of one of the fifteenth century's leading religious figures.

Mark Jurdjevic

Northwestern University (Chicago)