their taxes. Goudriaan notes these distinctive Florentine characteristics as critical to the patricians' notion of mutual benefit.

The book functions more as a series of linked individual studies than as a coherent study. In this it remains more like a dissertation than a monograph. Basic theoretical points sometimes get more abundant explanation than they need; episodic detail frequently overwhelms narrative structure; and there is generous citation of lectures or workshops attended during the dissertation-writing period, while some basic historical literature is missing. There are many citations to obscure sources on cultural production, but odd gaps in recent literature on familial networks, Medici politics, and Florentine and Tuscan historical development. These drawbacks are more unfortunate than they are fatal, no doubt driven by the need to publish quickly, and this work remains an impressive scholarly achievement.

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Promiscuous Power: An Unorthodox History of New Spain. Martin Austin Nesvig. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018. xvi + 252 pp. $45.

In this study of the imposition of secular and ecclesiastical authority and what the author calls "the banality of local imperial rule" (4) in the province of Michoacán, in New Spain, in the sixteenth century, Martin Nesvig's choice of title inevitably raises questions about the nature of his project. Is the history, or the people who take center stage in it, unorthodox, or does the adjective refer to the historian's approach? Nesvig writes that "power in Michoacán was promiscuous precisely because claims to competence and authority constantly overlapped" (181); according to that definition, promiscuity prevailed throughout Spanish America. He introduces his book with an interesting although sometimes contradictory discussion of his conceptual framework—within a few sentences, for example, asserting that "overall, one sees a deeply quotidian enforcement of imperial theory" but then noting that the book's "chapters portray the extent to which local interests pursued their own powers with few overarching political-legal theories of empire or colonialism" (4).

Notwithstanding Nesvig's possibly iconoclastic intentions and his embrace of a "Rabelaisian style," (5), he offers a well-researched study that sheds a good deal of light on how officials dealt with the challenges of imposing authority in a mostly rural setting, located at some distance from the center of Spanish institutions in Mexico City, while pursuing their own interests. Michoacán's situation may not be exceptional. Similar flouting of imperial (or viceregal) and ecclesiastical aims and control can be found in other parts of early New Spain and the rest of Spanish America. In many places the introduction of Christianity among the Indians was slow, fragmented,

and only partially successful, and often the Inquisition was far from popular or generally respected among Spaniards, even in a place as central as Puebla. Nonetheless, this history is an interesting and useful case study, reflecting a range of individual ambitions and sometimes-surprising interactions that shaped a particular region. Nesvig introduces some colorful (and frequently appalling) individuals whose checkered careers left an imprint on the chaotic politics of early Michoacán.

Nesvig's detailed discussion of Vasco de Quiroga's ostensibly utopian project in Michoacán, often romanticized as a rare instance of humanitarian treatment of indigenous people within the larger context of colonial exploitation and abuse, is welcome. In this instance, at least, Nesvig eschews exceptionalism, arguing instead that, as bishop of Michoacán, Quiroga was deeply committed to centralized power and royal policy and at odds with the Franciscans, who were the first missionary group to arrive in the province and were backed not only by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza but much of the *encomendero* group as well. Very likely Quiroga's indigenous subjects did not revere him as much as has been imagined. Nesvig points out that Quiroga's struggle with the Franciscans fostered "two conflicting versions of Catholicism: one based on friar-missionary complexes and a second overseen by a strong bishop and loyal parish priest class. Michoacán's Catholicism was born out of a primal struggle between these two visions of the Church" (10).

At times the author's conceptualization is perplexing. It is not clear in what sense *encomenderos* (holders of assignments of indigenous labor and tribute) formed a "corporate" entity (19). Some sweeping statements need documentation, such as the claim that "by 1530, large Spanish-held estates dominated Michoacán's landscape" and *encomenderos* had acquired "vast tracts of land" (31). Although this might have been true, in most of New Spain the transfer of land from indigenous to Spanish hands took place over a much longer period of time. There also are errors, such as the statement (47) that Nuño de Guzmán's conquest of western Mexico employed "a largely private armed force" (the expedition was funded by the *audiencia* in Mexico City, although admittedly under pressure from Guzmán). Nesvig also assumes that someone referred to as *mulata* must have had a Spanish father (98), although in New Spain the term equally could mean someone of indigenous and African parentage. And he insists that "Spanish political culture in Michoacán in the 1520s and 1530s was exceptionally male-oriented" (47); given the time period and context, one wonders where it was not. Yet, notwithstanding some caveats, Nesvig offers a vivid, accessible study that should be of interest to scholars and afford the basis for a lively classroom discussion.

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