

have good reason for loving their own parishes and will do the work to keep them alive. The history of Our Lady of Lourdes is evidence of this.

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***Science and Catholicism in Argentina (1750–1960): A Study on Scientific Culture, Religion, and Secularisation in Latin America.* By Miguel De Asúa. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022. 365 pages. \$118 hardcover.**

This is a historical study of the relationship between religion and science in Argentina. A relation that, when I tend to think has always been tense, De Asúa proved to be more nuanced and complicated than expected. From the very beginning, the first paragraph of the introduction, the aim is clear. The author will immediately go back to the title: by religion he means Catholicism. He will then take time to explain what he meant by “science,” empirical positivism, and the scientists that engaged in that research in different disciplines, mostly natural sciences and medicine. His point is that the idea of secularization, as a political and cultural program, shaped the interplay between Catholicism and positivist scientists.

The book is structured in chronological chapters, the first two about colonial times (the work of the Jesuits in the Rio de la Plata region) and the early Independence years (the time of the Bourbon reforms and the aftermath of the independence war, 1800–1820), the following three covering the nineteenth century (with the transition from the teaching of theology to natural sciences, and the impact of Charles Darwin's theories in Argentina), and the last three from the beginning of the twentieth century into the early 1960s.

The material is well structured, with a presentation of the matter of the chapter, contextualization of the discussion, the main topic of the chapter (usually with clear cases that show nuances and complexity), and a clear conclusion. The data are compelling, and the narrative is engaging and clear. If you do not know anything about Argentina's cultural history, you will learn a lot while journeying to the tension between scientists and religious figures. At some points, and perhaps this is an editorial decision, I missed some illustrations (like maps, depictions of plants and tools, and the like). Another editorial mistake is the lack of information about the author and the editors of the series. De Asúa teaches history at Universidad Nacional de San Martín, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and holds degrees in medicine and history. He is a member of CONICET, Argentina's government research agency, and of the National Academy of History, and has had different visiting positions in American universities.

My criticisms of this otherwise excellent book are two. Both have to do with the promise in the title. We know clearly, and early enough, what the author means by religion and science. However, I found the use of secularization problematic. De Asúa does not engage with local scholarship in his discussion about secularization in Argentina or Latin America. His assessment of this pivotal idea for his work is based on Jose

Casanova, Charles Taylor, and David Martin's works. Important authors all of them, but (except for Casanova) they have not influenced the debate in Latin America about Latin American secularization. Latin American criticisms of the secularization thesis have been many and diverse. A relevant one here has been the use of secularization as a normative principle: to be modern, a society must be "secularized"; that is, if a Latin American society wanted to be regarded as "civilized," religion should be reduced to the private sphere. That normative aspect of the secularization theory was called *laïcism*, after the French *laïcité*: a political regime that banned religious demonstrations in the public sphere. It is an idea that, following De Asúa's engagement with secularization as a political category, might have helped him to dig deeper into his thesis.

The other point is what the author means by "Argentina." This is a book about scholarly ideas, about the elites, and not about the people on the ground. It is not about how science and Catholicism interacted in the daily lives of the peoples, but about the intellectual debate of the elites, ecclesiastical and scientific, sometimes showing the personal connections of many of them who will later be in opposing positions. In any case, the book (that is not about Argentina but about some Argentinean elites) makes an important contribution when it explores the networks, the family connections, and the social infrastructure (universities, associations, acquaintances, magazines, circles) that allowed the debate.

However, it does so by looking almost exclusively at Buenos Aires. There are some references in colonial times to the Jesuits working in the Guaraní Missions and other places (relevant to the life of the main characters of the narrative), but the focus (perhaps because of access to the data?) is on the Buenos Aires elites. Missing other potential points (Rosario, Tucumán, Mendoza, Córdoba) are concrete secularization forces and historical circumstances that bring texture to the debate. The first Catholic university in Argentina, the one founded in Córdoba in 1956, started because Peronist professors were banned by the liberal government. I wish that, instead of putting aside these facts, the author had used them to explore the complexity of Argentina's cultural life.

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***Religion in Global Health and Development: The Case of Twentieth Century Ghana.* By Benjamin Bronnert Walker. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022. xix + 316 pp., with photos, tables, and map. \$44.96, (CAD) paper.**

"Is the WHO the center of Global Health?" (3). This is the main question that the book *Religion in Global Health and Development: The Case of Twentieth-Century Ghana* by Benjamin Bronnert Walker seeks to address, using religion and its social welfare provision activities in Ghana as tools of analysis. Through the book's six chronological but overlapping chapters, Walker challenges extant analysis of global health, which privileges a focus on what happens "in the offices of directors-general and departmental heads" over "transnational, regional, local, national, and international sources" (3).