Stacey Schlau. *Gendered Crime and Punishment: Women and/in the Hispanic Inquisitions.*
The Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World 49. Leiden: Brill, 2012. vii + 196 pp. $140.
ISBN: 978–90–04–23735–3.

Written by a notable literary scholar of early modern women, this book has laudable ambitions. Professor Schlau's expertise in finding and elucidating the writings of female religious in colonial Latin American is well known. Her aim here is "to illustrate, using specific case studies, how a gendered understanding of the written archive that documents the workings of the Hispanic Inquisitions enriches our knowledge of that institution and the people, especially women, caught in its grasp" (24). There is no doubt such a goal is worthwhile. We have spent decades counting the Inquisition's victims, tracing its officials' actions in local settings, and comparing its targets over different chronologies and geographies. We have moved from thinking about the Inquisition in legal and institutional ways, to an understanding of the particular contexts that hampered or helped its personnel, to an appreciation for the differences between its theoretical and practical authority. Scholars who read Inquisition sources know that gendered categories of masculinity and femininity were raised constantly in the language used by inquisition prosecutors, defendants, and witnesses, whether overtly or tacitly.

Up to now, investigations into questions of gender and the Inquisition have tended to be qualitative rather than quantitative, and this monograph follows that trend. In each of five chapters, Schlau addresses as many as three, but sometimes fewer texts written in either Spain or Latin America. She is after sources that reveal

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particular insights about gender: trials or investigations into Judaizing, illuminism, witchcraft, love magic, and finally, actions toward female sexuality that inform the other misdeeds attributed to women. The chapters follow a pattern of surveying earlier scholarship and then engaging in close readings of the primary sources. Schlau states up front that her work is not complete (13). She also recognizes that she is working with mediated texts that cast defendants' voices through the official language of the courts (14, 17). Her aim — an appropriate one — is to find and assess the accused's voice, to illustrate how "women masked formidable will and talent" (18).

Yet sadly, the conclusions that result from this investigation are neither very new nor even historical. Scholars in the field will not be surprised that "many women's drive toward self-empowerment through spirituality took a convoluted indirect path that involved misdirection, sidestepping, and dependence on otherworldly communication with sacred figures" (86). Pointing out that "inquisitional methodologies deviated from modern Western concepts of privacy and accused's rights" (80), and remaining "awed by the strength manifested by many defendants facing the unyielding and unwieldy apparatuses of the Holy Office" (174), raise the question of whether Schlau is pursuing a historical understanding of the Inquisition's treatment of women or instead is constructing a symbol to inform the contemporary world (174–75). If the latter is the goal, then the power of the Inquisition as an eternal teaching tool has to rest upon an accurate portrait of its work. Unfortunately, Schlau persistently misstates the Inquisition's language, processes, and development. Inquisitors and their prosecutors did not complete their investigations before arrests. Prisoners did not live under constant surveillance; their goods were not confiscated upon their arrest, but upon their conviction. The Spanish Inquisition was not created out of "social and ethnic tensions" dating to 1391 (5), nor was it controlled by the Society of Jesus in the last century of its existence (6).

Equally serious is the confusion between the Inquisition and the Catholic Church: contrary to the depiction here, the two were not interchangeable, and jurisdictional and philosophical battles between them occurred constantly throughout the early modern period. Treating exorcism as an Inquisition problem puts us on the wrong track; alleging that "the largest group of trials that involved women in all Tribunals [*sic*] was those in which the charge was witchcraft and/or superstition" (121) is inaccurate. Finally, the refusal to allow Inquisitors any religious motivation whatsoever flouts the best recent scholarship in the field.

Admonitions about obedience, humility, chastity, and the public airing of ideas — not to mention cautions about Latin learning and fears over social class — can be found in Inquisition trials for every offense, from solicitation in the confessional to blasphemy to *luteranismo*. The challenge lies in treating such injunctions within a frame that encompasses law and religion as well as gender, lest our work accidentally reduce the culture of our historical actors.

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