

dimensions of religious power. It also develops another key argument of the book: that the conflicts of parish life did not uniformly pit domineering priests against resistant Indians. Priests and parishioners had their own divisions and rivalries and were often allied with one another.

Chapter 5 develops a novel perspective on the much-discussed extirpation of idolatry trials by focusing on the Indians who were appointed to assist the extirpating judges. Charles argues that where one positioned oneself on the “Christian-idolater” divide had much to do with local politics, as opposed to fundamentals of faith. For instance, extirpation could serve *ladino* Indians who were commoners to challenge the power of nobles and also of parish priests who aided and abetted them. A final chapter, “The Polemics of Practical Literacy,” considers the petitions that initiated *causas de capítulos* as a genre that influenced and was influenced by high-level debates over clerical abuse and also as a form of political action that while not always successful had an impact on Church policies (for instance, the *causas* appear to have slowed down the activities of the machinery devoted to the extirpation of idolatry in the archdiocese of Lima).

Even a book as thoroughly researched as this one will leave some questions unanswered. Historians in particular may wonder about changes in the organization of Andean parishes over the 90-year period of the study that must have affected the relations between priests and indigenous assistants, in particular the tendency to form new *pueblos* via secession from the officially recognized settlements and the proliferation of Indian confraternities (*cofradías*). Both were key factors facilitating what Ken Mills has called “self-Christianization.” Oddly enough, we still lack a comprehensive study of colonial Andean parish life and organization of the sort we have for Mexico and Guatemala.

In sum, *Allies at Odds* makes a valuable contribution to the literature on Andean colonial cultural history through a subtle and innovative analysis of extensive archival materials. It also contributes to efforts to redirect the study of Andean colonial literature away from an exclusive focus on the great works to consider a broader archive of inter-related texts and forms of literacy.

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*Biography of a Mexican Crucifix: Lived Religion and Local Faith from the Conquest to the Present.* By Jennifer Schepher Hughes. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. 312.

Jennifer Schepher Hughes' first book makes an important contribution to the burgeoning field of Latin American popular religion. Inspired and guided by subaltern theorists and liberation theology, Hughes, a theologian, employs an interdisciplinary methodology to create a biography that spans five centuries of the *Cristo Aparecido* (Christ

Appeared) of Totolapan, a small town in the central state of Morelos. In relating the often surreal story of the appearance of the crucifix in Totolapan in the early sixteenth century, its three-century abduction in Mexico City, and its triumphal return home in the mid-eighteenth century, the author sets out to prove two interrelated theses. First, in accord with her subaltern and liberation-theology orientation, Hughes goes to great lengths to show that during the Spanish conquest and colonization of Mexico the Nahuatl people of Totolapan negotiated their own form of popular Catholicism, which to a large extent remains intact today. Second, Hughes posits that Totolapanenses, both past and present, express their devotion to their local Cristo Aparecido not in terms of suffering, as many scholars have argued, but through the motifs of beauty, tenderness, and power.

Proceeding chronologically, the author first develops her theses in the socio-religious context of colonial Mexico. In the first four chapters she makes a compelling argument that while the Nahuatl of Totolapan converted to Christianity rather rapidly, they did so on their own cultural terms. Unlike Spanish Catholicism of the time, Mexica (Aztec) religion didn't value suffering *per se*, so much of the missionary emphasis on Christ's affliction fell on deaf ears. Moreover, the first generation of Catholic evangelists made little if any connection between the suffering of Jesus and the holocaust visited upon the indigenous peoples, even though the latter were victims of one of the greatest demographic collapses in the history of humankind. Fray Antonio de Roa, the Augustinian missionary who first cultivated devotion to the Christ Appeared, serves as a prime example. The ascetic's theatrical self-flagellations in public stressed both the affliction of Jesus and his own without making any kind of connection to the misery of a people who were dying at unimaginable rates from smallpox and typhus and other diseases brought over by the Spanish and their African slaves. Thus, the lack of an evangelistic connection between the suffering of Christ and the trials and tribulations of the indigenous peoples, coupled with the Totolapanenses' own interest in Jesus as a powerful thaumaturge and a divine figure connected to their sacred staple of corn, resulted in an indigenous Catholicism in which the theme of suffering was secondary at most. The abduction of the three-foot crucifix at the hands of Augustinian friars based in Mexico City marks the advent of an endless cycle of contempt and disregard on the part of both church and state for the folk Catholicism practiced in Totolapan and much of the country.

It is in late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century Totolapan that Hughes fully expounds her thesis of devotion to Cristo Aparecido as rooted in beauty, tenderness, and power. And it is here that this innovative study of lived religion evidences minor flaws. While the author presents solid evidence to demonstrate that devotion to the local Christ figure is indeed expressed in such terms, she fails to explore the layered meanings and interconnectedness of beauty, tenderness, and power. Hughes tells us that Totolapanenses and working-class Mexicans in general frequently employ the adjectives "*bonito*" and "*feo*" (beautiful and ugly, respectively) to characterize the people, places, and things that are part of their lives. This is indeed the case, but without any discussion of why this is so or the definitions of the words, it isn't so clear why

or how devotees perceive the Christ as beautiful and thus primarily express their sentiments toward him in terms of tenderness. In my own recent study of a Mexican folk saint, Santa Muerte (Saint Death), I discovered that devotees also regard the skeleton saint as beautiful, but not so much in terms of aesthetics. Rather, Saint Death is beautiful because she is powerful—an omnipotent miracle-worker. Hughes rejects such linkage between power and beauty for the Christ Appeared, minimizing his role as a thaumaturge. This, however, is but a minor flaw in an otherwise highly engaging and illuminating study of a Mexican crucifix.

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*Ideology and Inquisition: The World of the Censors in Early Mexico.* By Martin Austin Nesvig. New Haven: Yale University Press. 2009. Pp. xiv, 366.

In their thesis on the role of acculturation and thought control during the age of the Counter-Reformation, the French historians Pierre Channu, Jean Delumeau, and Robert Muchemledt depicted a deeply divided society, two disconnected worlds: “the superior,” to which belonged jurists and the Republic of Letters, and “the inferior,” the uncouth, that by nature required control and suppression. In the age of the post-Tridentine Church, the term “acculturation” indeed signified repression—of sexuality, thoughts, magic, popular religion, festivals, and language. Nevertheless, in his 1984 response to these authors (“Against the Acculturation Thesis”), the French art historian Jean Wirth challenges their views by proposing that the Catholic reformists directed their moral reproach specifically towards the cultivated, the lettered, and the wealthy echelons of European society and that the criticism was focused on sexual and moral permissiveness among the priesthood and the nobility rather than on the “madding crowds.” According to Wirth, Church elites endeavored to protect themselves against, and ward off, all those who criticized them concerning their bad habits and their ill performance, “far more than they ever wished to acculturate other peoples.”

Would Wirth’s hypothesis have any bearing on Martin Nesvig’s present book, then? The answer to this is positive. Nesvig’s erudite, thought-provoking, and meticulously researched study on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mexico examines the inner workings and local debates “about the ideological justification for censorship from the points of view of the censors themselves” (p. 6). This study is divided into three parts: the first part, titled “Theories of Inquisitional Authority,” addresses the theological, scholastic, and ideological upbringing of the Iberian and Mexican censors (namely, the *credo*). The second part is titled “Practice of Censure in Mexico” (namely, *praxis*), while the third is entitled “Censors and their Worlds.” However, the latter embodies the issue of control, which would have fit much better into the second part of the book, while its other contents, namely the mental world of the Mexican censors (though nothing of their clientele’s) could well have been placed in the first part of the book. The world of the Mexican censors indeed intersects in many direct and indirect