Maya life. Spanish and indigenous imperatives and perspectives are carefully interwoven in this beautifully balanced picture of Malintzin's world. In her use of Nahuatl sources in particular, Townsend brings a fresh dimension to the story of the Spanish invasion. The inclusion of the Nahuatl *Chalca Woman's Song*, with an accompanying translation, offers the general reader a direct and fascinating insight into the beauty and subtlety of the indigenous perspective, while also appealing to the increasing audience of Nahua scholars.

Building bridges between worlds and translating not only language but also ideas, the interpreter or 'go-between' has been the subject of much recent interest, as historians have sought to find the places between worlds of understanding. Townsend's insightful and elegant book stands out amongst recent work in this field, expertly weaving a story of negotiation, accommodation and resistance. Painting a rich picture of this turbulent period, Townsend has undoubtedly returned Malintzin to her rightful place as a complex, intelligent and influential woman but, as the author herself admits, 'real lives always encompass more than one truth' (p. 211), and the reality of Malintzin's experience remains a shadowy one. Townsend argues persuasively for the interpreter's courage, intelligence and force of personality but, as first a slave and then a 'mistress', one wonders how far Malintzin's 'choices' were sometimes entirely her own. In the use of their bodies, for work, sex or marriage, the ability of indigenous women to choose their path was inevitably circumscribed by the demands of their circumstances. For a slave such as Malintzin, the life of a translator at times offered both status and respect, but she rarely found security, and the uncertainties of her position are evident in the long battle her children fought to restore her reputation after her premature death.

A controversial figure since the sixteenth century, Malintzin's life has been dominated by the question of reputation. Townsend excels at unravelling the many conflicting stories and if, in places, an academic reader might have wished for slightly more detailed references to some of the secondary historiographical debates, this is more than compensated by the readability and elegance of this well-informed book. Townsend breathes life into Malintzin and her world, tracing her steps through the history and culture of sixteenth-century Mexico. *Malintzin's Choices* is an engrossing and beautifully written story, but it is more than the biography of an individual, fascinating though she is. Through the life of one woman, Townsend has also written the history of a transient world. Accessible and enjoyable, as well as scholarly, *Malintzin's Choices* is an important and original history of the familiar story of the conquest of Mexico.

Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge CAROLINE DODDS

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **40** (2008). doi:10.1017/S0022216X07003677

Ellen Gunnarsdóttir, *Mexican Karismata: The Baroque Vocation of Francisca de los Angeles, 1674–1744* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. xii + 305, £19.95, pb.

Francisca de los Angeles, Franciscan mystic and prolific letter writer, achieved a prestigious position among cultural, social, and religious elites in Querétaro at the turn of the eighteenth century, despite her origins in the urban mestizo underclass and her position as a *beata* or tertiary, rather than a professed nun. Her writings give expression to what *criollo* society came to prize as a highly esteemed visionary and

mystical vocation, as they voice lofty spiritual strivings joined with ambitious practical goals as founder of a religious institution for women. Francisca's accounts record notable supernatural experiences, such as an apostolic role in evangelising indigenous peoples in northern New Spain (New Mexico), through bilocation. As Ellen Gunnarsdóttir elucidates, these writings have particular value precisely because no hagiographical biography of Francisca was ever completed or circulated; not having been 'tidied up' for official presentation, they reveal 'the more mundane, problematic and often heretical elements of her life' (p. viii). Indeed, this life's successes also reward our attention. In her 'New World' context, Francisca notably re-enacts the Teresian blend of reform and rapture.

Using the methods of contemporary biography, Gunnarsdóttir richly evokes Francisca's cultural and social milieu. She examines late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Querétaro as (in the Eurocentric colonial view) a frontier city, a vital commercial, agricultural, and at the same time spiritual centre intent on distinguishing its achievements in these arenas from other urban centres such as Puebla or Mexico City. *Mexican Karismata* portrays a society ruled by a *criollo* elite concerned to make their own contributions not only to prosperity, but also to piety, in the 'New World', while being watched carefully by governing interests from distant Spain. Gunnarsdóttir depicts community-wide religious observances, from the wave of evangelical enthusiasm that swept Querétaro with the arrival of influential Franciscan preachers of the Propaganda Fide movement to the complex melding of indigenous and Spanish feast-day observances in the syncretic practices that abounded in colonial New Spain. She also gives rich examples of the religious art found in local churches that helped to shape the young Francisca's sense of the theatrical expression of interior spiritual states that characterises 'Baroque spirituality'. The early chapters address Francisca's home life, and we learn much about Francisca's family relationships, in particular with her mother and her sisters, who all followed Francisca to become tertiaries after her father's death. This solution benefited their fragile finances and ensured the women's survival. Francisca further steered this family arrangement into her 1699 founding of the *beaterio* or tertiary community of Santa Rosa de Viterbo, which would eventually gain recognition and support as a Royal College in 1728.

Having set forth this social and religious context in the first part of the book, Gunnarsdóttir traces the complex nature of Francisca's relationships with the series of confessors to whom she wrote regarding her inner and outer life, as they directed her devotional and institutional endeavours and variously either empowered and collaborated with, or else constrained, her undertakings. In a 48-year span of writing for and to these men, Francisca's writing reveals a great deal about navigating conflict and managing collaboration with male superiors. Taken together with recent work, especially by Kathleen A. Myers and Asunción Lavrín, this book deepens our often overly simplistic assumption of the subservience or resistance of nuns and abuses of power by their confessors. Gunnarsdóttir treats these complicated relationships with tact and sensitivity. As the letters demonstrate, Francisca at times simply did her best to manage difficult interpersonal dynamics. In other relationships we see her passionately invested in learning from, expressing herself clearly to, and offering guidance for her spiritual directors. Gunnarsdóttir is alert to the ways that a spiritual mentorship could go awry through misunderstanding and personality conflict or else blossom into creative collaboration; she also delineates passionate avowals in some letters without imposing anachronistic psychological labels. While

Francisca clearly invested herself deeply, for her own spiritual development and the forwarding of the tertiary community that she led, much depended on the personality and gifts of each confessor. One addressee was the charismatic Antonio Margil, a personality as apparently contradictory, ambitiously humble and ardently practical as her own. This relationship and set of letters hold particular interest, not only because of his subsequent fame, but also for the combination of unswerving vitality and swooning shared ecstasies that they reveal.

Francisca was renowned from the age of fifteen for her spiritual raptures, visionary accounts, and gifts of prophecy, bilocation and consolation of souls. As those familiar with the seventeenth-century religious context in either Spain or its colonies know, such aptitudes carried with them acute peril, as they were bound to stir the interest of the Inquisition. Indeed, Francisca came to the attention of the Holy Office on more than one occasion, but her case never proceeded. Gunnarsdóttir suggests that this apparent immunity to censure or punishment by the Inquisition was due above all to Francisca's popularity with the influential Franciscan friars at the Convent of the Holy Cross in Querétaro, who offered her protection.

Mexican Karismata makes a useful and interesting addition to the study of spiritual *vidas*, chronicles, *afectos*, *cuentas de conciencia* and other writings by early modern Hispanic nuns and *beatas*. The book handles a wealth of primary materials: Francisca's letters from convent archives, Inquisition records, and supporting documents, including letters from confessors, found in Mexico and Rome. With all its strengths, the book does fall short in placing Francisca in a now recognisable tradition of spiritual writing by women in the Spanish colonies. Gunnarsdóttir sees remarkable manoeuvrings as evidence of 'agency', whereas Francisca's writings are in fact fairly standard statements of a kind produced to allow confessors and other male ecclesiastics to carry out 'discernment of spirits', tracing the authenticity or falsity of supernatural experiences. Indeed, from the perspective given to us by her writings, Francisca is highly representative of nuns and *beatas* in Spain and its American colonies, where the inexplicable was not infrequent (as in the case of María de San José Palacios Berruecos, the Madre Castillo, and many others). Similarly, Gunnarsdóttir alludes to possible 'heretical elements' in Francisca's writings or life, displaying some confusion in distinguishing what was deemed heresy from what constituted a transgression of norms. While Francisca demonstrates remarkable savvy in negotiating challenging relationships to achieve spiritual and pragmatic goals, it was crucially important to her survival that her confessors, their superiors, and the Inquisition did not identify any failure to adhere to Catholic doctrine in Francisca's writings or behaviour. However, Gunnarsdóttir's treatment does usefully draw our attention to the assertive ways that this *beata* mustered a successful life as mystic and founder, exceeding what one would expect for her based on gender or class.

Another disappointing aspect of this otherwise strong book is that we have no access to Francisca's words in the original Spanish, even in excerpt. While Gunnarsdóttir states her goal as allowing Francisca to 'speak in her own words', the translation here, though usually serviceable, falls at times into inaccurate replication of Spanish syntax or lexicon. An excessively direct rendering of Spanish syntax presents the writer as more 'primitive' than the original might suggest. For example, we have a description of the *beatas* in Holy Week observance, 'the days and the nights, they used to accompany His Majesty in the early hours of his sorrowful

passion' (p. 63); the sentence could have been translated more gracefully as 'by day and by night, they would keep His Majesty company … '. Some instances are simply inaccurate, as when 'Divine Office' (the liturgy) is given as 'Holy Office' (the Inquisition) (p. 33), two very different but present realities in Francisca's life.

Gunnarsdóttir's epilogue comments insightfully on the divergent posthumous treatments of Francisca's life story (written but then lost) and that of her most famous mentor, Antonio de Margil (published in many editions). Within the transforming context of the eighteenth century Baroque spiritual graces came to be seen as irrational excess; writings by celebrated holy women were banned; miraculous gifts and mystical prowess were looked at askance or forgotten. This book brings to light the 'sociability, complexity, and stubborn determination' of one woman, no less remarkable for being representative of what is, by our cultural criteria, an astonishing period.

University of Oregon AMANDA POWELL

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **40** (2008). doi:10.1017/S0022216X07003689

Silvia Hunold Lara and Joseli Maria Nunes Mendonça (eds.), *Direitos e justiças no Brasil: Ensaios de história social* (Campinas, SP, Brazil: Editora Unicamp, 2006), pp. 543, pb.

A popular explanation for many of Brazil's current problems is the failure of the judicial system to ensure that criminals get behind bars and that poor people get fair trials. How law is implemented, rather than the traditional study of formal legislation, is also at the core of this collection of articles, most of which summarise more substantial research by the authors. The authors in this important contribution to the social history of Brazil no longer see legislation as only imposed by elites on passive masses, but rather as a framework providing social actors with tools that help them claim what they consider to be their rights.

Patrícia Melo Sampaio undertakes a fresh look at the complex relationship between Indian chiefs and the colonial administration. The 1798 law abolished the previous framework ('Directório'), leaving less room for indigenous people to be recognised as separate communities. It also resulted in a realignment of the role of native chiefs. No longer formally in charge of their villages, which adopted the formal structure of a Portuguese town with an elected council, most of them were nevertheless appointed officers of the new militia regiments.

Silvia Lara examines multi-layered intra-elite conflict in Campos dos Goitacazes in the captaincy of Rio de Janeiro. When the *ouvidor*, the highest magistrate of the district, complains to the crown that a rich landowner and his sons had failed to comply with the law and got away with it, it looks like a zealous administrator trying to impose the rule of law. Yet the local strongman also manages to make his voice heard, showing that the hierarchical relationship between colony and metropolis worked through various channels. In his version the *ouvidor* appears to be part of a gang of three monopolists who control local sugar and slave prices, and who abuses his power to bend the law in his favour.

During the nineteenth century the Brazilian parliament passed a number of significant new laws regarding slavery: the first, never implemented, was the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1831 (the origin of the famous expression 'a law for the English to see'), the second the effective abolition of the trade in 1850, and the