

RELIGION & RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Allies at Odds: The Andean Church and Its Indigenous Agents, 1583–1671. By John Charles. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010. Pp. xi. 293. Map. Index. Bibliography.

Allies at Odds examines the conflictive relationship between the priests of Indian parishes in colonial Peru and their indigenous assistants, with an emphasis on how the latter negotiated the legal system and mediated ecclesiastical policies. The book deals primarily with the archdiocese of Lima, making excellent use of the court records held at the Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, particularly the *causas de capítulos* in which parishioners sued their priests. In addition to their key role in determining how Christianity was actually practiced in the Andes, parish assistants were the main cadre within a broader class of *indios ladinos*, Spanish-speaking and often literate Indians who mediated between what the authorities imagined as two separate republics. Literate Indians were generally the product of parish schooling, and many had acted at one point or another as assistants to priests. Also, it is in the ecclesiastical archives that we most often find their writings, and the Spanish legal literacy of Indians is a central theme of the book.

After an introductory chapter on the routes of acquisition of Spanish literacy, Charles examines four key sites of conflict in parish administration. The first of these is Quechua-language religious instruction. Here Charles focuses on the church's policy of using a single standardized form of Quechua in official catechetical materials, suggesting that native assistants, along with an important segment of the clergy, attempted to circumvent a linguistic one-size-fits-all policy and even that they were hostile to the standard. While this was surely often the case, *indios ladinos* thrived in (and were defined by) diglossic situations such as the one that developed between ecclesiastical or pastoral Quechua and local vernaculars. Arguably *ladino*-ness, and much of the power of the parish assistants, resided not just in their knowledge of Spanish but also of the form of written Quechua favored by the Church, in which they wrote letters and legal petitions.

The following chapter discusses conflicts over *kipus* (knotted cord records). For a time Indians were encouraged to use *kipus* to record sins for confession as well as catechetical materials. Some priests felt, logically enough, that this facilitated doctrinal error and gave indigenous intermediaries too much power. *Kipus* were also used by parish assistants to keep track of parishioners on behalf of priests, and as evidence when priests were sued for economic exploitation. Charles suggests that the way Indians were initially encouraged to use *kipus* to record their own sins for confession also made them more inclined to record the "sins" of their priests on *kipus* and present the information to church officials. This pertains to a key argument present throughout the book: that only a "porous boundary . . . divided sacramental practices from legal action" (p. 99). Charles suggests that we should not view "religion proper" (whether it be Christian liturgy or Andean "idolatry") in abstraction from the messy politics and power plays that, judging from the *causas de capítulos*, characterized parish life. The fourth chapter develops this theme, examining clerical violence and the punitive

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