

The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536–1820: A Documentary History. By John F. Chuchiak IV. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012. ix + 428 pages. \$35.00 (paper).

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John F. Chuchiak's book is to be welcomed in the study of Catholic theology for its flawless presentation of the historical record of the Inquisition in colonial Mexico (New Spain). While little in the book qualifies as "theology," the context supplied is indispensable for examining the historical evolution of Catholic theology as it intersects with heresy, divination, bigamy, homosexuality, and other problematic areas of lived religion.

There is no exaggeration of this book's merits in the laudatory introduction by Asunción Lavrin. Chuchiak's clarifying "Introductory Study" is, for me, a concise summary of the Inquisition's purposes, what its procedures were, and how Spain and Mexico differed in the application. I could envision a profitable use of these initial pages alone as worth the price of purchase.

The author goes beyond this essay, however, to provide three major categories of primary sources, each with its own detailed general introduction and notes on the particular documents reproduced in English translation. The primary sources of the first category concern the instructions of the Holy Office. Regulations are always a dull subject, but the other two categories concerning operations and procedures (category 2) and especially trials and *procesos de fe* (category 3) are more lively reading. The latter include descriptions of how to torture, including details of what to do and say with each turn of the rack; what witches said before the court; the Spanish texts for curses; and a list of measures to forestall the sexual perversions of clerics hearing women's confessions.

Scholars with a sophisticated understanding of the period in general and the Inquisition in particular will be indebted to this author for assembling a representative sample of primary documents, translating them into readable English, and publishing them in a clear and accessible format. The book provides a welcome insight into the mutations of European-origin institutions as they crossed the Atlantic. Because in colonial times the legal process was guided by the same laws throughout the Spanish empire, the differences in adaptation provide insight into how social processes affect church policy.

Inquisition investigations in Mexico are contrasted with those in Spain in chart format throughout the book. Chuchiak shows that formal heresy charges were more common in Spain than in New Spain. Similarly, sexual crimes in Spain were not brought to the Inquisition with the frequency found in New Spain. The author cites Henry Kamen (5), who had suggested

that the Inquisition expanded its jurisdiction beyond the focus on formal heresy of Calvinists and Lutherans as lesser courts declined to prosecute issues like bigamy, polygamy, masturbation, and sodomy. In other words, the intrusiveness of the Inquisition grew as the direct threat of heresy diminished. This also explains why the curtailing of its powers during the 1700s was so popular. For those interested in classroom discussion of historical patterns, the book provides ample evidence of the limitations of theology when it is focused on intimidation of the faithful by strictures about orthodoxy and sexual behaviors.

This book illustrates the multiple “trickle-down” effects of theology on pastoral practice. New social circumstances are met with new interpretations. For instance, the Inquisition treated the use of peyote by Mexicans not as “recreational use” but as the survival of pre-Columbian religion. Peyote was not used at that time in Spain, where instead the use of cards in fortune-telling was more common.

The impressive scholarship of the book helps refute a popularized caricature of the Inquisition in some anti-Catholic rhetoric. It is probably not always appreciated that the inquisitors were instructed to avoid severe penalties and rather to rely on intimidation to prevent future violations. Even in the small percentage of cases when the death sentence was delivered, it was more often performed “in effigy,” meaning that the accused was tried in absentia and the mortal punishment was inflicted on a mannequin; the execution of the real person in New Spain is reported as 1 percent of all cases. The Inquisition also considered ignorance of the law an excuse and would not convict without two corroborating witnesses. It is interesting to note that in Mexico a book was not totally destroyed when prohibited, as was common in Spain; instead, in New Spain a passage would be expunged rather than the whole book being destroyed.

The layout of the book is superior, the glossary extensive and the appendix highly useful. The illustrations of torture and of the *sanbenito* worn by the guilty complement a text like this and help demonstrate the litigious nature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain. I found only one misspelling in the book, in a footnote on page 380.

The wealth of detail in the book, however, is also its chief liability. After a lengthy description of the Inquisition’s procedures, do we really need the full text with exactly the same information? Do we need footnotes (378 n. 21) to translate *in absentia* as “in absence of”? I cannot imagine students being overjoyed to buy this book when they are not specialists in colonial Spanish America. Its practical value in the classroom as contrasted with the library shelf may be in linking Chuchiak’s essays of explanation with one or two documents of the proceedings to give undergraduates a taste of historical

context. These well-founded documents evidence that the theology of orthodoxy and sexuality can produce counterproductive effects when applied indiscriminately to pastoral practice.

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Sacred Dread: Raïssa Maritain, the Allure of Suffering, and the French Catholic Revival (1905–1944). By Brenna Moore. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. 2013. xiii + 293 pages. \$30.00 (paper).

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Today, Raïssa Maritain (1883–1960) is known to a small number of academics, and a few Catholics, as the wife of an eminent Thomistic philosopher and human rights advocate. What little recent attention she has received has depicted her as an archetype of suffering Catholic femininity or as a prospective candidate for sainthood with her husband, Jacques. This new book by Brenna Moore recasts her as a key figure in France's early twentieth-century Catholic Revival. This *renouveau catholique* was marked by celebrated conversions, signal contributions to arts and letters, and a "suffering-centered *imaginaire*" (3) that reinforced "an association of Catholicism with femininity that was derogatory from the republican perspective" (68). This association still influences scholarly interpretations that relegate women like Thérèse of Lisieux, Raïssa Maritain, and Simone Weil "to the ranks of the pathetic and the bizarre" (7).

Moore traces the Russian-Jewish-born Maritain's life (this is the rare study in which Raïssa is the default Maritain) from the eve of her and her husband's conversion to the end of their wartime exile in America. Repelled by the positivism of the Sorbonne and the laicizing French Third Republic, she and Jacques sought Catholic baptism in 1906 with novelist Léon Bloy as godfather. Bloy's focus on female and Jewish abjection greatly influenced Raïssa, and both Maritains embraced his philosemitism, tainted as it was with supersessionism. A remarkable openness to Judaism, Russian Orthodoxy, and the disparate strands of the artistic avant-garde made the Maritains' home in the Paris suburb of Meudon both a center for spiritual retreats and a vibrant *salon* presided over by Raïssa, whose own burgeoning poetic gift was encouraged by Jean Cocteau. Her many serious illnesses and accompanying visions also inspired a certain reverence in her husband and others, making her "frail and powerful" body (93), as Moore puts it "the site where the divine entered and acted, a power that could be felt and appreciated by those around her" (74). Moore, in contrast to other scholars, resists relegating the Maritains'