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.

Virginia Commonwealth University R. ANDREW CHESNUT
Richmond, Virginia

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

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ways with the issues challenged by the Catholic Reformation and its agents in continental Europe as well as in its overseas colonies. The major issues dealt with in the present study are a direct continuation of the very same concerns deliberated within the confines of the convents, universities, Inquisition chambers, and reformed colleges back on the old continent, from where many of the Mexican censors rose to fame. Moreover, the responses produced for such concerns were also generally on the same lines in Mexico as in the Old World. The censors in Mexico were an inseparable part of a whole apparatus of Spanish inquisitors, secular clergy, and mendicant superiors who concerned themselves with the goals set out for them by the Tridentine reforms and ordinances. Apart from endeavoring to establish clear-cut definitions as to what was considered heresy, blasphemy, sin, or simply immorality in accordance with the new morality, they were also deeply committed to a new definition of literacy. All these agents, including the censors, sought the best possible channels through which to curtail, curb, and purge such sins, as well as all the various kinds of printed materials that reverberated through the processing of such major or minor offences. However, questions of the solidity or effectiveness of their control or the degree of the independence they maintained in their judgments of the cases brought forward before them are thoroughly treated here, throughout the period concerned. Nesvig thus effectively demonstrates the feeble state of the censors' control of their likely "clientele" in the cities and the countryside and in particular, in the port of Veracruz, where special inspections were held.

Yet another point which is worth a discussion here: Nesvig's proclaimed goals. On the one hand, he aims "to reverse the investigative focus from those who were affected by the Inquisition to those who fashioned and created it" (p. 6). Nevertheless, on the other, and in a manner wholly unorthodox to his own field of the history of ideas, he seeks to find the traces of the Republic of Letters and the identities, paths, and backgrounds of its disseminators. Using both Spanish and Mexican archives, he is indeed able to trace peninsular and creole "clan connections" among censors, inquisitors, bishops, and royal officials and learns that these "ran wide and deep in colonial Mexico" (p. 215). He investigates also the entire careers of censors operating in Mexico throughout a period of nearly 200 years. And for this and other novelties he should be commended.

However, on this long and winding road of ideas, theories and ideologies, the critical issue of literacy and the reception and consumption of readership in Mexico, in counterpoint to its censorship, is only vaguely considered. These are significant questions when it comes to the case of Mexico and how it might compare to the Iberian scene. Take, for example, Nesvig's statement that, "While only a small fraction of the population was literate (perhaps as low as 5 percent), the public reading of books was extremely common" (p. 249). One's first response to this would be that if only 5 percent of the population in Mexico (presumably, the urban population) was literate, the presence of a reading public was extremely dim in comparison to European standards of the time (around 30 percent in the cities). But, on what sources does Nesvig base this? We do not have a clue. But it is important here, in the context of a possible debate

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over the raison d'etre of censorship in Mexico, in light of a near-nonexistent literate clientele and a similarly feeble infrastructure of printers or booksellers in Mexico. It was only in the 1760s that Augustin Dhervé's one bookshop was opened in Mexico City.

A number of significant secondary sources are surprisingly absent from the bibliography for this book. Among them are Carlo Ginzburg's classic study "High and Low, the Theme of Forbidden Knowledge during the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries" (1976), Bartolomé Bennassar's extensive study on book printing in Valladolid between 1481 and 1600 (1967), and Lucienne Domergue's *La censure des livres en Espagne a la fin de l'Ancien Regime* (1996). Still, this book is highly recommendable for both its research and eloquence.

University of Haifa
Haifa, Israel

AMOS MEGGED

The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico. By David Tavárez. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 400. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations.

The "invisible war" in the title of this book refers to changing Spanish efforts to eradicate native religious beliefs and practices in Mexico—a complicated matter for the Spaniards and an intellectual challenge to any scholar. David Tavárez admirably meets this challenge in this systematic and thoroughly documented work. This book covers a great deal of territory geographically, temporally, and conceptually. Geographically it focuses on Nahuatl-speaking communities in central Mexico (the Basin of Mexico, Toluca, the Cohuixca-Tlalhuica region) and Zapotec speakers in Oaxaca, comparing and contrasting these regions in terms of religious extirpation efforts and native practices and responses (some interpreted as resistance) during the colonial period. The period considered extends from the 1530s to the late eighteenth century and the many changes in Spanish policy, the activities of high-level Spanish officials, and the practice of native religions. Tavárez usefully divides this broad period into four distinct cycles, based on notable changes in Spanish approaches to the treatment of native idolatries. Beyond regional contrasts and temporal dynamics, this book offers useful conceptual approaches. Primary among them is the contrast between collective and elective spheres in native devotions. Spaniards attempted to absorb collective (community-oriented) devotions into Christianity while they sought to suppress elective beliefs and activities centered on calendrical, life-cycle, healing, and other ritual knowledge and activities enacted at a personal level. Tavárez also examines his vast documentary corpus in terms of gender differences in native ritual practitioners and assumes local diversity in native beliefs and practices. These approaches enrich the book in providing meaningful interpretations of complicated processes and interpersonal interactions.

Tavárez anchors his discussion in a myriad of documented historical actors and liturgical cases, revealing not only ideological stances but also fascinating social and political

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