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**From the Selected Works of Jason Dyck**

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## Review of Linda A. Newson, ed., *Cultural Worlds of the Jesuits in Colonial Latin America*

Jason Dyck

larger claims that dissent, political rivalry, moral compromise, and self-seeking were the prevailing themes of the early history of the church in Michoacán.

A short review can't do justice to the rich portraits of the sadists, weirdos, losers, and cranks that Nesvig has unearthed in the archives and resurrected in chapters 3 through 6. What is most notable about these chapters is that Nesvig keeps examining these people long after most others would have passed a harsh judgment on them, bringing their complexities and unexpectedly sympathetic traits, the tragedies and ironies of their life stories, into view. In this sense the book brings to mind essays from Bernard Bailyn's *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence* (1990), which found affecting human drama in the lives of obscure men.

Some may object to Nesvig's lively translation of the blasphemies that he found in the archives. But translating an insult as "thieving, knavish traitor, highway bandit, punk-ass bitch" serves the same purpose as Nesvig's meticulous research, lucid prose, and careful contextualization: it brings the subjects closer to us and brings them alive while respecting the profound alienness of their cultures and times (p. 92).

Scholars of colonial Mexico, the Spanish empire, and comparative borderlands should read *Promiscuous Power* and assign it to students at all levels.

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*Cultural Worlds of the Jesuits in Colonial Latin America.*

Edited by LINDA A. NEWSON. London: University of London Press / Institute of Latin American Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2020. Photographs. Maps. Figures. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. x, 291 pp. Paper, \$30.00.

*Cultural Worlds of the Jesuits in Colonial Latin America* is the result of an international conference marking the 250-year anniversary of the Jesuit expulsion from Spanish territories in 1767. Edited by Linda A. Newson, the 12 essays of this volume largely turn away from Jesuit conversion efforts to the order's other cultural contributions to Portuguese and Spanish America. The black robes in this book develop language tools, introduce technologies, promote new artistic styles, study the natural world, and teach music. They may occasionally baptize and offer spiritual instruction, but they rarely, if ever, pray, practice the *Spiritual Exercises*, or promote Marian devotion. While one book clearly cannot cover the entire history of the Society of Jesus in the Americas, as Newson openly confesses in her introduction, it must be emphasized that *Cultural Worlds* is primarily an account of Jesuit activities in South America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A few chapters offer some comparisons with New Spain, but overall this volume is focused on the southern Atlantic.

While *Cultural Worlds* is largely concerned with Jesuit legacies, transculturation—a familiar theme in mission historiography—still drives the analysis of a few chapters. Kate Ford highlights the ways in which Chiquito painters drew on their own artistic traditions

of rock painting, tattooing, and body painting to decorate their mission churches. She reads mission art not as the work of ingenious Jesuits but rather as a “fusion of European decorative imagery and indigenous memory” (p. 65). Clarissa Sanfelice Rahmeier studies the introduction of the potter’s wheel among the Guaraní, which altered how ceramics were made, who crafted them, and how they were conceptualized as objects. Instead of only looking at how Jesuits modified traditional forms of pottery, she argues for the coexistence of Guaraní and European elements in the material culture of the missions in Paraguay. These examples of cultural hybridity in the visual and plastic arts mirror other ceremonial changes taking place on Jesuit missions because of disease. In one of the few essays dealing with demographics, Oriol Ambrogio compares perceptions of baptism on the frontiers of Chile and northwestern Mexico. He concludes that Christian rituals and local healing practices merged because Indigenous peoples did not see Jesuits and traditional healers as mutually exclusive in their worldviews.

Another important theme in *Cultural Worlds* is the circulation of ideas, goods, and peoples in the Atlantic world and beyond. Samir Boumediene offers a fascinating look at the Jesuit drug trade and how their apothecaries formed part of medical marketplaces on both sides of the ocean. He shows how Jesuit *procuradores* played important roles in circulating plants and pharmacopoeia through systems of exchanges that they established in Madrid, Seville, and Rome. Turning our focus away from ships as the mainstay of early modern transportation, William G. Clarence-Smith shines the spotlight on the millions of mules on Jesuit estates. They bred them, sold them for cash, and used them in their operations, thus sustaining their educational and architectural programs and fueling the colonial economy. While most studies are rooted in Atlantic entanglements, Gavin Alexander Bailey extends his gaze to the Pacific to reflect on the global character of the Society of Jesus. The fusion of European and Indigenous styles is a familiar story in studies of colonial art, but Bailey demonstrates that in certain cases in Brazil the Jesuits turned to Chinese-inspired works to decorate their churches.

Most chapters in *Cultural Worlds* are based on Spanish and Portuguese texts, but a select few turn to Indigenous-language sources. Barbara Ganson and Capucine Boidin draw on an expanding corpus of works in Guaraní, which, as they point out, is increasingly available today in online databases. Concentrating on cases of adultery and grammatization respectively, they demonstrate that the Guaraní—much like Indigenous intellectuals and rulers in central Mexico and the Andes—created a “Euro-Amerindian legal and political space” in which they were able to voice their concerns to local authorities and the Spanish crown (p. 141). Vivien Kogut Lessa de Sá and Caroline Egan highlight another important aspect of access to Indigenous-language texts: many were never published and ended up in European repositories as curiosities. They follow the travel itinerary of the “Christian Doctrine in the Brazilian Tongue,” a manuscript composed in Tupi between 1549 and 1591 that is today housed in the Bodleian Library. This early catechism represents the transatlantic connections between Indigenous Brazilians, Portuguese Jesuits, and English privateers.

Transculturation, transatlantic circulation, and archival access are only three of many important themes emerging in *Cultural Worlds*. The volume rightly confirms that

being a Jesuit missionary was more than just preaching Christianity to Indigenous neophytes. When combined with older narratives of evangelization that are centered on spiritual dialogues, this enlarged focus on other cultural spheres allows us to construct a more holistic vision of Jesuit-Indigenous encounters across the colonial Americas.

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*Bartolomé de las Casas, OP: History, Philosophy, and Theology in the Age of European Expansion.* Edited by DAVID THOMAS ORIQUE and RADY ROLDÁN-FIGUEROA. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2019. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xx, 485 pp. Cloth, \$166.00.

After more than five centuries since Bartolomé de Las Casas's arrival to Hispaniola, research on this central actor undoubtedly requires approaching carefully the vast corpus of transnational scholarship reframing his legacy within and across disciplines. This new volume's selection of themes and authors, as well as its overall design, makes it one of the last decade's most significant contributions to research on the sixteenth-century Dominican and bishop of Chiapas. Its detailed introduction and 16 essays (authored by leading colonial scholars) collectively offer new perspectives on Las Casas's theological thinking, humanitarianism, and critique of Spanish colonialism while also presenting new questions on landscapes of colonization.

The introduction carefully maps three "waves" of research on this central figure of the contact era. The first includes the nineteenth-century Spanish scholars who published the first collections of Las Casas's writings to support new interpretations of Spanish colonialism and ideologically laden biographies and histories. In their assessment of the ex-inquisitor and historian Juan Antonio Llorente and the statesman Antonio María Fabié, David Thomas Orique and Rady Roldán-Figueroa ably explore the politics of publication. The second wave is exemplified by US historians Lewis Hanke and Benjamin Keen, who emphasized Las Casas as key to transatlantic negotiations to end the *encomienda* and war against American Native populations. Orique and Roldán-Figueroa discuss French and Latin American historians to examine tensions leading to both the hagiographic scholarship on Las Casas and his demonization. This volume's authors shape a third wave, led by Rolena Adorno and other US-based scholars, that demonstrates how Lascasian scholarship has escaped the disciplinary bounds of history.

While the incisive introduction navigates 250 years of Lascasian scholarship, it missed critical interventions fueled by the mid-1980s postcolonial turn, subaltern studies, and the decolonial approach. Enrique Dussel's pioneering work cannot be ignored, his critique of political hegemony having origins in sixteenth-century theological and juridical disputes. Other notable omissions are Luis Rivera-Pagán and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, who also examine Las Casas's ideas within urgent calls for decolonization. The work by Diego von Vacano, Rubén Sánchez-Godoy, and Manuel Jiménez