

*municipio* or *policía* have been addressed by the literature of legal history and political history in recent years, which the author did not consult.

The book's second part is the most relevant for the historiography because it concentrates on the local conditions of the northern coast of Peru. In the third chapter, the author recounts the environmental conditions and social relations developed in the periods prior to the *reducción*, from the Moche, Chimú, and Inka administrations to the *visita* of Gregorio Gonzales de Cuenca. The fourth chapter is, in my opinion, the most important of the book. It is a methodological example of using data collected in archaeological research in dialogue with archival sources. The study of three colonial occupations (Carrizales, Mocupe viejo, and Chérrepe viejo) shows the set of interests and objectives, both imperial and particular, in dispute during the location of the reductions in that particular context. The fifth chapter shows, in the long perspective, how the discourse introduced with the *reducciones* permeated the relations among the native populations and between the native populations and colonial institutions in the years following this process, even where the original *reducciones* had been depopulated.

In conclusion, I consider Van Valkenburgh's book to be an innovative research achievement on the process of *reducciones de indios* in the viceroyalty of Peru during the late sixteenth century, and it is built on solid empirical foundations. It is a book that every scholar researching the Spanish empire or Colonial Latin American history should consult.

*Max Planck Institute for Legal  
History and Legal Theory  
Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
[damian.gonzales13@gmail.com](mailto:damian.gonzales13@gmail.com)*

DAMIAN AUGUSTO GONZALES ESCUDERO

## EARLY MODERN CATHOLIC DEVOTION

*The Stations of the Cross in Colonial Mexico: The Via crucis en mexicano by Fray Agustín de Vétancurt, and the Spread of a Devotion.* By John E Schwaller. Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 2022. Pp. x, 262. Illustrations, Appendixes. \$45 cloth.  
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For centuries, the Passion of Christ has been the subject of representations in art, a recurrent motive in sacred oratory, and the theme of public performances throughout the Catholic world. It is better known as a commemoration of the steps leading from the trial to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, often involving group participation. Through meditation, worship, and prayer, the pious can embrace those events as an intimate, individual experience. John E Schwaller sets out to explain how the remembrance of this core story of Christianity was introduced in Mexico in the form of a devotion. The

focus of Schwaller's study is the translation into Nahuatl of a devotional book, *Via crucis en mexicano*, by Augustín de Vetancurt, a creole Franciscan friar and leading historian and chronicler who lived in seventeenth-century New Spain.

The original Spanish version of *Via crucis en mexicano* that Vetancurt translated into Nahuatl was written by a Spanish Franciscan friar resident in Cádiz in the seventeenth century. The Nahuatl manuscript that Schwaller studies in this book was copied in the eighteenth century by an indigenous scribe, Mateo de San Juan Chichahuastla. The transcribed manuscript belongs today to the Academy of American Franciscan History, and no printed copies of the Nahuatl version are known to exist.

Schwaller offers a detailed and profusely documented study of the history of the manuscript and the significance of its translation into a major indigenous language. This study is set within a historical account of the devotion from a perspective that embraces Western Europe and the Americas. Although one might mistakenly assume that the devotion of the Stations of the Cross had its roots in the Middle East, closer to the geographic and chronological roots of Christianity, Schwaller demonstrates that its beginnings were in early modern Europe. Even though the Franciscans had implanted the devotion in Mexico and labored to make it thrive among New Spain's Spanish and indigenous populations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the devotion would receive papal sanction and become widespread in Europe only in the eighteenth century. With the goal of helping the devotee to visualize themselves accompanying Jesus as he walked to his final sacrifice, the Stations of the Cross involve prayer, meditation, pilgrimage, embodiment, and movement to bring about a holistic and deeply emotional religious experience.

Through carefully crafted chapters, Schwaller guides the reader through the history of the devotion, with descriptions of its steps and their significance, Vetancurt's biography and place within New Spain's intellectual world, and the built and artistic environments that surrounded the performance of the Stations of the Cross. Those most familiar with the history of early modern Catholicism may think that some passages do not bring new material to light, but the author has chosen to thoroughly contextualize the varied components of the devotion and explain their links to other religious practices and ideas that were being consolidated at that time. Readers are thus given the means to better understand the magnitude of the religious experience encompassing the Stations of the Cross and thus appreciate the enormous challenge involved in translating the *Via crucis* into Nahuatl.

Schwaller suggests that long-established Mexica religious and civic practices facilitated the adaptation of rituals such as the Stations of the Cross. The skeptic may think that the book has not demonstrated the spiritual and intimate aspects that the devotion was meant to elicit. However, Schwaller's descriptions of performances and his fine observations about the choices that Vetancurt made as he translated the text, in addition to the

illustrations by the indigenous scribe Mateo de San Juan, allow us to sense how the Mexica received, taught, and enacted this powerful devotion.

*University of Cambridge*  
*Cambridge, United Kingdom*  
[gr266@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gr266@cam.ac.uk)

GABRIELA RAMOS

## NARRATIVES ABOUT SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

*Disputas de altamar. Sir Francis Drake en la polémica española-inglesa sobre las Indias.* By María Gracia Ríos Taboada. Madrid/Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2021. Pp. 261. \$24.00 paper; \$24.00 e-book.  
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This book is a unique contribution to a subject that has been widely studied from different historical perspectives. María Gracia Ríos Taboada presents an original approach to well-known facts, but now seen from another kind of evidence: Spanish and English literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The book reveals the effects of piracy in discussions about the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of America. Francis Drake personified the colonialist rivalry between Spain and England; therefore, Spain attacked him as best it could in many different kinds of texts, including literary ones. On the British side, consciously or not, the colonialist project sought to counter the attacks by appropriating the arguments given by Spanish literature. Indeed, as the author demonstrates, both Spanish and English colonialist propaganda used similar images of Drake.

Drake carried out numerous and precise blows to Spanish interests, putting in jeopardy the Spanish colonial system by trying to establish “alliances” with the native populations and maroons (societies of escaped slaves); eliminating the natural, geographical protection of the Peruvian viceroyalty; and challenging Catholicism in the New World. That is to say, his actions provided more than sufficient reason to earn Spanish animosity and his portrayal in Spanish literature in very negative terms.

Despite the attacks, Drake acquired global dimensions as a sailor, pirate, corsair, explorer, discoverer, and conqueror. The sinuous and apparently chaotic path of the argumentation exposed in the literature has a logic that the author presents in a clear and very didactic way. He shows how the exaggerations of Spanish authors made Drake the Protestant hero of the seventeenth century, and then dedicates the other three parts of the book, respectively, to Drake’s portrayals in late sixteenth-century English literature as the champion of future British expansionism; the impact of Drake’s attacks on the American coasts in the evangelization of the Amerindians and its reflection in English literature; and the detailed study of Lope de Vega’s epic poem *La Dragontea*, which