

were filled with vivid imagery of these lands, as well as those of the north Patagonian border, to underscore the importance of maintaining “buena armonía” (good harmony) with the indigenous people of the region. This was done by continuing to trade information on the unexplored territory for gifts, as well as sustaining other systems of exchange and bartering. The *Semanario* and the *Correo de Comercio* outline the treatment of the indigenous people in these negotiations, as well as the support the Crown received against foreign attacks. This begs the critic to ask: Was the indigenous person truly accepted as part of this society?

Navallo’s monograph is a valuable addition to the corpus of critical texts that examine early nineteenth-century print culture in the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. As she herself notes, this area of research has received little attention among scholars until recently, as evidenced by the more current works by William Acree, Víctor Goldgel, Jaime Peire, Mariano Di Pasquale and Arrigo Amadori, among others. Navallo’s text distinguishes itself from other scholars’ work for its detailed researched style, which relies upon unedited archival material, manuscripts, and print articles from important archives in Argentina and Spain. Furthermore, her background in travel literature, colonial women’s writing, and contemporary historical fiction provides a unique interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of discourses in the texts she has chosen for her corpus. Navallo’s monograph will certainly contribute significantly to academic discussions on the print culture of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata by shedding some much needed light on this time period and the process for defining its cultural, geographical and ideological borders.

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ALENA ROBIN. *Las capillas del Vía Crucis de la ciudad de México: Arte, patrocinio y sacralización del espacio*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2014. 309 pp.

Alena Robin’s *Las capillas del Vía Crucis de la ciudad de México* chronicles the history of a series of chapels built in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to celebrate the Way of the Cross in colonial Mexico City. Over the course of six chapters, the author brilliantly immerses the reader in every aspect of the complicated and fascinating pasts of these now-destroyed structures.

The opening chapter thoroughly describes the religious devotion to the Vía Crucis as the symbolic pilgrimage reenacting Christ’s final walk

through Jerusalem, including retracing the number of Christ's steps through precise locations within the city. The chapter then identifies the devotion's association with the Franciscan Order, summarizes the literature that permitted armchair travelers to perform the walk without traveling to the holy land, and explains the cult's arrival and manifestations in New Spain.

Having contextualized the belief and brought it to the Mexican context, the book next chronicles the construction of the fourteen Vía Crucis stations (eight station chapels along the Alameda Park, three stations within a local convent, and a Calvary chapel with three more stations) in an area of the city Robin convincingly demonstrates to have been controlled by the Franciscan Order. This chapter begins her meticulous review of archival resources to examine the building permits, funding, construction history, and ornamentation of each of the new structures. Continuing this thread into the eighteenth century, the third chapter enters profoundly into the records associated with patronage. The chapter takes the donations by Domingo Ferral as a case study, contextualizing the donor and his life as member of the Franciscan Third Order, which was responsible for the Vía Crucis chapels.

The fourth chapter plumbs the archival record for what it has to say about the artists and architects responsible for the chapels, and how they were contracted and remunerated. This included the famous Mexican architect Cristóbal de Medina Vargas, who was at the height of his fame as the city's *maestro mayor*. Pedro Maldonado, the altarscreen maker responsible for the grand *retablo* in the Church of Santo Domingo in Puebla also outfitted several of the chapels, as did painter Antonio Rodríguez of the famous Rodríguez Juárez family of artists. The chapter then examines the details on donations to these projects, returning to Domingo Ferral as the exemplary patron. The chapter ends with a provocative yet entirely convincing analysis of the chapels within the specific spaces surrounding the Alameda Park, arguing that this site on the edge of the city operated as a moralizing precinct. Here the author returns to the Franciscan dominance of this zone. She argues that the Vía Crucis stations and Calvary chapel and their connection to Holy Week processions-cum-pilgrimage also "Franciscanized" an area of the city that already had two Franciscan monasteries, a Third Order Franciscan hospital, two Second Order (female) Franciscan convents, and a Third Order chapel. These embodied not just the beliefs and practices of the Order, but also the power it exercised in viceregal politics.

The fifth chapter sees that power challenged as other prospective builders of Vía Crucis chapels threatened the exclusive domain of the Mexico City Third Order. These were thwarted but the awkward location

of the Alameda Park Vía Crucis chapels in the middle of a major road and the decidedly secular activities that shared space with religious processions would soon pose a greater risk. The remainder of the chapter addresses the continued ornamenting of the chapels and the funds spent on the celebrations that took place within and around their walls. To do so, the author reviews account books to reveal the costs associated with maintaining and using these sacred spaces.

The sixth and final chapter traces the slow decline and eventual disappearance of Mexico City's Vía Crucis chapels in the nineteenth century. The threats came from many quarters: religious reforms seeking to rein in unwanted behaviors during holy events, the modernization of Mexico City's streets and sidewalks to improve communication and trade, the decline of the Third Order, and the nationalization of religious properties. The chapter chronicles the progressive destruction of each of the chapels and the arguments and politics that either encouraged or allowed it to happen. Although the practice of walking the Way of the Cross continued, the chapter ends with the destruction of the last chapel, the crowning Calvary Chapel, amid the political reforms of 1861.

Robin's study of the Vía Crucis station chapels is an exemplary exercise in archival investigation and brilliantly upholds the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas' tradition of publishing seminal research conducted with the highest degree of rigor. She meticulously scoured the archives for a diverse array of primary sources that she studied masterfully. Her deep analyses of the documents are accompanied by thorough contextualization of all relevant issues. She furthermore bolstered the documentary material with a wealth of visual and textual data addressing regional and international comparative examples. The reader finishes with the feeling of being completely informed on the topic. But rather than bury this reader with facts and figures, Robin manages to transform the documents into a compelling story in which the buildings come alive with the participation of an interesting cast of characters ranging from nuns and lay brothers to merchants and politicians. The reader follows the Vía Crucis structures with anticipation through the full panorama of their existence, lamenting their slow destruction as times changed. In doing so, Robin helps the reader to appreciate the complex mix of personalities, events, coincidences, and circumstances that converged to create these buildings, providing a fascinating glimpse of these living monuments.

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