

eclesiásticas por los cofrades mestizos e indios proporcionan una rica información sobre la relación que estos grupos establecieron entre vecindad y ciudadanía cristiana.

Para el estudio de los moriscos de Granada se basa en la información del Archivo Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife (Granada), en particular la documentación de la guarnición militar de la Alhambra, y en las peticiones de permanencia presentadas por los moriscos del Archivo General de Simancas. Particularmente importante para la elaboración de la tesis central del libro fue la recopilación y consulta de los concilios y sínodos elaborados para los reinos españoles en la península y en ultramar que vistos en conjunto permitieron al autor entender el proceso de formación de la política de ciudadanía cristiana que la Corona estableció para sus vasallos a los dos lados del Atlántico. Por último, un amplio número de estudios antiguos y recientes son incorporado a la discusión a lo largo de los nueve capítulos que componen el libro.

Este libro es sin duda una importante contribución al conocimiento de la historia social y política de los reinos españoles a los dos lados del Atlántico.

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## HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND THE HISTORY OF CATHOLICISM AND COLONIZATION

*Sacred Habitat: Nature and Catholicism in the Early Modern Spanish Atlantic.*

By Ran Segev. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023.

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It has been almost five hundred years since Bartolomé de las Casas wrote the *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*, inaugurating “the Black Legend” about the Spanish conquest. Nevertheless, his legacy continues to be a reference for scholars. This book is the latest scholarship responding to the idea that Spain was reactionary compared to its European rivals during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. This text specifically questions the notion that Spain not only eschewed the scientific revolution that enveloped Europe beginning in the sixteenth century, but also worked against it with a commitment to Catholic orthodoxy. The author argues that the opposite was true: Spaniards in the New World, specifically the religious, both embraced the scientific knowledge under production in Europe and contributed to that knowledge themselves. Ran Segev argues the motivating factor for engaging in scientific discourse and contributing to it was the goal of sacralizing the new geography that the Spanish encountered in the territories named after the mapmaker Amerigo Vespucci. Thus, Segev argues against the notion that Catholicism did not evolve

through the period of the Counter Reformation. On the contrary, the Spanish confrontation with American geography, plants, and animals led to new Catholic identities that integrated new bodies of knowledge into Catholic ways of understanding the world. Catholic thought, therefore, was not against modernity. Segev bases his arguments on the writings of Franciscan, Dominican, Hieronymite, Jesuit, and Carmelite writers. The book explores the intersection of the histories of science, Catholicism, and colonization. At five chapters, it is itself *breve* and enjoyable.

To explore how Catholic thinkers reconciled science, scripture, and the landscapes of the New World, this book covers three topics: cosmography, descriptive geography, and zoology. Chapter 2 documents how Catholic writers responded to puzzles that arose at the time about the role of Mary, the influence of the stars, a.k.a. astrology, and the question of free will, as new information about the cosmos could challenge the hierarchy promulgated by Catholicism. Here thinkers made distinctions about the use of new knowledge, which, contrary to popular ideas about the conservatism of Catholicism, was fine so long as writers did not challenge the idea that God was Supreme, that men had free will, and that Mary was the immaculate mother of God. In other words, Catholic writers figured out ways to coopt new knowledge and make it fit under the superstructure of Catholicism.

The narrative in the third chapter is gripping for someone like me, unfamiliar with “famous” visionary Catholics, like Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda (23). Although cloistered her whole life, the sister was a mystic who claimed to have traveled to the New World, and thus converted the Jumanos of New Mexico to the faith between 1625–35, a story that the Franciscans amplified with unbridled enthusiasm. According to Segev, Sor María was acquainted with European speculation about the size of the earth, which she wrote about, presenting herself as a cosmographer in her earliest writing. Although a fascinating story of trying to reconcile faith, mysticism, and new knowledge, the chapter falters when it abandons her writing to focus on how the Franciscans utilized her ideas about out-of-body travel to compete with other orders for royal patronage in their mission to convert Indigenous peoples.

The next two chapters review the writings of well-known religious men who wrote the first descriptions of the New World. Segev examines how these friars interpreted what they saw by way of flora and fauna in such a way that their strangeness still fit within Catholic frameworks of thought, although for a moment one writer came very close to suggesting an idea of evolution hundreds of years before Darwin. All around a fascinating book.

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