

David Endres and his collaborators have made a welcome contribution to the on-going work of re-conceptualizing the American Catholic past.

Leslie Woodcock Tentler
Catholic University
doi:10.1017/S0009640724000672

The Stations of the Cross in Colonial Mexico: The via crucis en Mexicano by Fray Agustín de Vetancurt. By John W. Schwaller, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press and The Academy of American Franciscan History. 2022. 252 pages. \$45 hardcover.

There is no shortage of works about Christ's Passion from the early modern Catholic world, but the one studied here stands apart. It is probably the only surviving copy of a book by notable author and Franciscan Agustín de Vetancurt. It was also written in Nahuatl, yet popular enough to have been published in at least two editions at a time when printing focused on Spanish-language audiences. This surviving version offers an additional layer of interest as a manuscript copy with images added by its indigenous scribe.

According to the title page, Vetancurt's book is from 1680 and according to the final page Matheo de San Juan Chicahuastla made his copy some forty years later in 1738. Their work guides readers through the stations of the cross, a devotional practice that was, during this time, developing a wide audience and coalescing into its canonical form of fourteen moments that led up to Christ's death and resurrection.

Schwaller's book provides a transcription and English translation of this fascinating work and offers explanations of how and why Vetancurt might have created it. Schwaller opens with a short introduction that offers background on Catholic practices, church structures, and the Gospel and traditions that served as sources for the stations. Four body chapters follow. In a chapter on the European origins of the stations, Schwaller argues that the devotion arose out of three "historical streams": attraction to the Holy Land, the *devotio moderna*, and late medieval efforts to build imagined landscapes.

A chapter on Mexico's religious and literary culture centers printed devotional works about the Passion and especially those on the stations, which, Schwaller argues, helped standardize the number of stations and what they portrayed. Among the most important of these works was the Franciscan Francisco de Soria's *Manual de ejercicios para los desagraciados de Christo*, which was published in at least 27 editions between 1686 and 1793 (62). Its titular devotion was an image of Christ in the Mexico City Franciscan convent's San Josef de los Naturales chapel, where Vetancurt served as priest. Schwaller notes that some editions of Soria's work conclude with two different sets of meditations and prayers for the stations of the cross, one of which – that by Fr. Antonio de la Anunciación – he thinks is the source for Vetancurt's translation.

Schwaller then turns to Vetancurt's work itself in a meaty chapter that offers close readings of the text. For each of the fourteen stations, he compares English translations of the Anunciación and Vetancurt texts, notes where Vetancurt followed or made

changes to the content, and analyzes where Vetancurt made direct translations into Nahuatl and where he used neologisms. Schwaller finds that although Vetancurt kept much of the same content as well as a “baroque” emphasis on emotion and superlatives, his version was unique in both approach and language (106). For example, in station thirteen when Christ was removed from cross, Vetancurt used the word *xipe* or flayed (“Let His honored flaying be my food”), a choice that recalled the Mexica deity Xipe Totec, who was associated with rebirth and the flaying of sacrificial victims (148). Or, how in station nine when Christ fell for the third time Vetancurt’s wording avoided having Christ’s face hit the ground, as it had in the Spanish original. Schwaller explains this as a way of avoiding associations with the Nahua ritual of *tlalcualiztli* (eating dirt), “a very common gesture of greeting and showing respect for a lord” by putting fingers in the dirt and then in the mouth (109).

The manuscript also includes ten major images associated with stations 1, 7–11, and 13–14, notably excluding station 12, which depicts the crucifixion. In chapter 5, Schwaller observes that these images, likely drawn by Matheo de San Juan Chicahuastla, focus on Christ but lack other context, such as crowds, architecture, and so on. Schwaller argues that rather than using engravings or paintings as model for these inspiration, the artist found inspiration in the sorts of figures seen in parish churches, such as the “puppets” that used in processions.

The result is an accessible book about a fascinating text. The comparisons of the Spanish and Nahuatl versions are especially enlightening in that they show how a priest who worked with indigenous faithful thought they should understand a devotion that was becoming more widely known and practiced.

Karen Melvin
Bates College

doi:10.1017/S0009640724000118

***The Bible in Early Transatlantic Pietism and Evangelicalism.* By Ryan P. Hoselton, Jan Stievermann, Douglas A. Sweeney, and Michael A. G. Haykin. Pietist, Moravian, and Anabaptist Studies. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022. 206 pp. \$109.95 hardcover.**

Historians who write about the use of the Bible among German Pietists and Anglophone evangelicals face a difficult task: how to write about a book so often used to turn readers away from their own historical context. The fourteen essays collected here make a start at that task. Staying close to published and unpublished Bible commentaries, devotional guides, and Bible-related publishing ventures, the essays show that evangelicalism did not emerge from the awakenings of the 1730s alone but was nurtured from the beginning by the Bible reading practices and writings of early German Pietists, who were themselves influenced by earlier Dutch critics of the Bible and English Puritans (4). Ryan Hoselton’s concise, carefully cited introduction to the collection is excellent. Crawford Gibben, in an especially good essay, contends that