



Colonial Angels: Narratives of Gender and Spirituality in Mexico, 1580-1750

Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela

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Spain's attempt to establish a "New Spain" in Mexico never fully succeeded, for Spanish institutions and cultural practices inevitably mutated as they came in contact with indigenous American outlooks and ways of life. This original, interdisciplinary book explores how writing by and about colonial religious women participated in this transformation, as it illuminates the role that gender played in imposing the Spanish empire in Mexico.

The author argues that the New World context necessitated the creation of a new kind of writing. Drawing on previously unpublished writings by and about nuns in the convents of Mexico City, she investigates such topics as the relationship between hagiography and travel narratives, male visions of the feminine that emerge from the reworking of a nun's letters to her confessor into a hagiography, the discourse surrounding a convent's trial for heresy by the Inquisition, and the reports of Spanish priests who ministered to noble Indian women. This research rounds out colonial Mexican history by revealing how tensions between Spain and its colonies played out in the local, daily lives of women.

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