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Rowe, Erin Kathleen. Black Saints in Early Modern Global Catholicism

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Direct interactions between male doctors and female patients challenge the assumption of gender segregation in Islamicate medical practice.

Cogently introduced by Sara Ritchey and Sharon Strocchia, the essays in this collection effectively apply the conceptual and methodological insights of feminist scholars. The concept of “bodywork,” for instance, captures the range of caregiving techniques carried out by women. The growth of household medicine, a traditional domain of women’s expertise, is thoughtfully documented with sources that mirror broad historical processes such as the vernacularization of medical texts, the development of print technology, and the rise of pharmaceutical science. Thoughtfully concluded by Naama Cohen-Hanegbi, this collection documents a movement to adopt a more inclusive framework of health and healing, rather than emphasizing intellectual and institutional structures associated with early medical professionalization. By doing so, the contributors give full account to the unique lives and experiences of women.

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Rowe, Erin Kathleen.

Black Saints in Early Modern Global Catholicism.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. 293 + 40 ill., maps. ISBN 978-1-108-42121-8 (hardback) US\$49.99.

This monograph by Erin Kathleen Rowe is a remarkable and wide-ranging study of Black sanctity in the early modern world. Rowe utilizes hagiography, iconography, letters, and confraternity records to examine Black saints and their devotees in Iberia and the New World. The author begins by introducing a modern Portuguese clerical interlocutor, who memorably denies that any dark-skinned religious icons exist within the church under his care: “No, no, no, there is no black saint in that church,” the interview subject insists (1). This memorable opening gives way to an excavation of Black holiness. Rowe argues that by the seventeenth century, Black saints had reached a pinnacle of popularity, a development primarily obscured by later racist ideology. While

this book succeeds at revealing a forgotten history, it sometimes lacks everyday voices, the ordinary Black Catholics caught between religious idealization and oppression.

Rowe tells her story across six chapters, which she divides into two parts. Part 1, "Devotion," gives basic definitions of Black spirituality, as provided by medieval White Christians. Chapter 1 considers prominent Black saints who were also the foci of hagiography, iconography, and liturgical feast days. White medieval clergy constructed the cults of Ethiopian saints Elesban and Efigenia, as well as the Sicilian Benedict of Palermo, for a White audience as a promotion of Black holiness. Chapter 2 considers how those saints, and others from the later Middle Ages, were viewed by devotees. In doing so, Rowe turns towards confraternities of African slaves and free people of colour, and their promotion of Black sanctity in the New World. This chapter conveys the importance of lay brotherhoods in maintaining spiritual links between the saintly pantheons of Spain, Portugal, Peru, and Mexico. Chapter 3 focuses on a particular historical change, as emergent racial theory overturned the golden age of Black sanctity. By the eighteenth century, the need for oppressive race-based hierarchies made it difficult for cults of Black saints to retain their immense popularity in the Americas.

In turn, part 2, "Illumination," considers applications of sacred Blackness within different types of source material. Chapter 4 looks at representations of Black saints within early modern sculpture, specifically when commissioned by the Carmelite Order. Chapter 5 considers the role of the Black holy figure within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hagiography. In their construction of Black holiness, White hagiographers played with light and dark metaphors, ultimately illuminating black saints for a theological purpose. Finally, chapter 6 is devoted to Black holy women and their spiritual authority. In both the Iberian Peninsula and the New World, holy women of colour moved between Black and White social spheres, and their hagiographic treatment reflected this physical and spiritual transience.

One of this book's many admirable features is its varied use of source material, allowing Rowe to demonstrate the significance of Black saints from multiple perspectives. In focusing each chapter on one type of source, Rowe shows that Black saints were not simply peripheral but central to Atlantic Catholicism. In her early chapters, she discusses the medieval hagiographic

basis for later early modern devotion. Subsequent chapters turn to confraternity records, notably criminal court proceedings involving confraternal brothers, which provide Rowe with ample material for how individuals formed communities based on their devotion to Black saints. The author then engages in a rigorous interdisciplinary investigation of baroque devotional sculpture, showing how representations and models of Black holiness were transmitted through visual innovations.

Importantly, Rowe succeeds at bridging different subfields, including the histories of Catholicism and race. In its discussion of Black Catholic identity, Rowe accomplishes a difficult feat. Through the connections she makes, she reveals that the cults of Black saints were mainly constructed from above by White clerical authorities, which were then received from below by Black devotees. Through reconstructing this process, she exposes a complicated system of identity shaping through modelled holiness and confraternity creation. However, while Rowe's book transcends traditional interdisciplinary boundaries, at times the full picture of ordinary Black piety remains obscured. Rowe's analysis of confraternity sources provides some hints of this relationship, but her historical method could have better accounted for the gaps in her source material. Reconstruction of the social networks centred on confraternities might have provided a broader picture of the grounded, everyday piety of Black Catholics on both sides of the Atlantic. It would be beneficial to see if devotees of African origin venerated the same saints, or if confraternity membership overlapped with other kinds of collective activity. An investigation of pious bequests left by confraternity members might reveal even greater devotion to Black saints.

Furthermore, while the chapters of this book are presented more or less chronologically, a sense of real diachronic cause and effect is missing. Devotions to Black saints changed between the medieval and early modern eras, but information about how certain facets of the cult of Black saints changed is lacking. For instance, it remains unclear how Elesban and Efigenia, two early-medieval Ethiopian saints Rowe investigates in the first chapter, were viewed by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century slaves, free people of colour, and White Catholics in the New World. While Rowe does explore the iconographic tradition of these earlier saints, it would be interesting to see how the attitudes of their devotees changed over time and what broader historical events or crises

precipitated such transformations. Despite these minor issues, this book is an indispensable contribution to Black Catholic history.

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Shakespeare, William.

***The Tempest*. Ed. J. F. Bernard and Paul Yachnin.**

Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2021. Pp. 250. ISBN 978-1-5548-1495-4 (paperback) \$13.95, (e-book) \$9.95.

Broadview Press deserves credit for publishing editions of Shakespeare that are useful to students, directors, actors, and general readers. This edition of *The Tempest*, edited by J. F. Bernard and Paul Yachnin, is well presented, and the Introduction, notes, and appendices are clear, informative, and helpful. Students at all levels will benefit from the clarity and the care that the editors take, as well as from the additional material on Shakespeare's life and theatre provided by one of the leading editors of our time, David Bevington. Despite there being many fine editions of this play, past and present, this one is a good choice for both the classroom and the study, and one that scholars should consult when considering editing, interpreting, or teaching *The Tempest*, a play that has been a favourite of many, including one of its editors, Northrop Frye.

Many outstanding editors, including G. Blakemore Evans and Frank Kermode, have shed light on the play—on its text, staging, reception, and interpretation—but this edition makes its own contribution to the teaching and editing of this comedy, which appears as the initial play in the First Folio, a drama that some later critics would call a romance or tragicomedy. In that folio, Heminge(s) and Condell divided Shakespeare's plays into three genres: comedies, histories, and tragedies. *The Tempest* was long considered an allegory for Shakespeare's art and retirement from the stage, and more recently—especially in Daniel Wilson's *Caliban: The Missing Link* (1873) and beyond—a matter of the colonial and postcolonial. This political Shakespeare gathered strength in the age of decolonization, particularly after the Second World War. The tension between aesthetic and political interpretations has been part of the