

Holy Organ or Unholy Idol? The Sacred Heart in the Art, Religion, and Politics of New Spain. Lauren G. Kilroy-Ewbank.

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This work traces the development of Sacred Heart devotion in eighteenth-century Mexico. As an art historian, Kilroy-Ewbank deftly analyzes the changing imagery of the Sacred Heart, but also places the advocacy firmly within its burgeoning devotional literature. Although focused on the Sacred Heart's trajectory in New Spain, the author situates the devotion within the larger context of the early modern Catholic world.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart blossomed in New Spain after 1732, when the Jesuit Juan Antonio de Mora published the first treatise printed in Mexico about the advocacy. Mora's work helped spur the creation of Sacred Heart confraternities, prints, and paintings. The Jesuit Order also played a leading role in promoting the advocacy. Jesuit support, however, entangled the devotion in theological and political quarrels. Eighteenth-century Catholic reformers critiqued the Sacred Heart as Baroque and overly mystical and affective, and Charles III would even order the destruction of its images. But the Sacred Heart survived these entanglements to emerge as a particularly prominent devotion in Mexico.

Kilroy-Ewbank argues that Mexican artists did not simply copy European iconography. Instead, they made choices that reflected local concerns and embedded their works within arguments over the Sacred Heart. For most of the eighteenth century, two pictorial options for the Sacred Heart existed. One, a valentine-shaped organ, represented the Sacred Heart emblematically. The other depicted an anatomically correct heart, usually bleeding from a gash (Christ's wound caused by the spear's thrust), encircled by a crown of thorns, and topped by a crucifix emerging from the aorta. Mexican artists opted for the latter, a choice that emphasized the organ's fleshiness, heightened the devotion's affective tenor, and aligned them with Baroque Catholicism and the Jesuit Order.

To defend the Sacred Heart against Jansenist critiques, Mexican artists associated the advocacy with venerable devotions. They portrayed female mystics, Jesuit saints, the Holy Family, and instruments of the Passion alongside Christ's heart. The most important association, however, was the Eucharist. Kilroy-Ewbank contends that the decision to represent an anatomically correct heart emphasized the devotion's connection to Christ's flesh and blood and, in a way, substituted for the Eucharist, allowing viewers to commune through the eyes. Artists also depicted the Eucharistic wafer superimposed on the heart or housed within a monstrance that supported the organ.

Mexican pictorial representations of the Sacred Heart also responded to the cultural context of New Spain. Kilroy-Ewbank rejects arguments that link the popularity of the Sacred Heart in Mexico to subversive associations with pre-contact Mesoamerican

human sacrifice through heart excision. Depictions of the Sacred Heart show no correspondence to pre-Columbian heart representations. She does, however, suggest that the importance of the heart in Aztec thought as the seat of the *teyolia*, or divine fire, became entwined with European emphasis on the heart as container of the soul. More significant, she points out that Catholic evangelists associated Christ with the sun, also important in pre-contact religious thought. Mexican artists highlighted this connection through pairing Christ's heart with monstrances, which displayed the Eucharistic wafer within a sunburst, and by limning Sacred Heart images on copper plate rather than canvas. Copper reflected light, emphasizing the luminosity of Christ's heart.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Sacred Heart imagery began to change. Rather than a disembodied heart mystically floating amid cherubs, artists portrayed Christ holding his illuminated heart. This new depiction rendered Christ's heart in proportion to his body and became standard over the nineteenth century. Kilroy-Ewbank argues that the later ubiquity of this imagery reveals the eventual victory of the Sacred Heart over its Jansenists detractors. On this point, I think she underestimates the fundamental change in pictorial representation. The standardized nineteenth-century imagery foregrounds Christ rather than his heart and thus lessens the Sacred Heart's mystical and emotive connotations. The Sacred Heart likely survived because it changed to fit a new, post-Baroque context.

Although this work cogently analyzes messages devotional promoters broadcast about the Sacred Heart, I wish it offered more about how a varied populace received them. Nonetheless, it is a sophisticated, sympathetic, and elegantly written account that will appeal to scholars of early modern religion and colonial Mexico.

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Devotional Portraiture and Spiritual Experience in Early Netherlandish Painting.
Ingrid Falque.

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Devotional Portraiture and Spiritual Experience in Early Netherlandish Painting: Catalogue. Ingrid Falque.

Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 299; Brill's Studies on Art, Art History, and Intellectual History 38. Leiden: Brill, 2019. 660 pp. \$360.

This two-volume set—study and catalogue—in Brill's Studies in Intellectual History series is a monumental achievement. The catalogue (available online at <https://brill.com/view/title/55785>) is a comprehensive census of all preserved Netherlandish religious paintings with devotional portraits from 1400–1550. It is, as