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Review of: Erin Kathleen Rowe, *Saint and Nation: Santiago, Teresa of Avila, and Plural Identities in Early Modern Spain*

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Erin Kathleen Rowe. *Saint and Nation: Santiago, Teresa of Avila, and Plural Identities in Early Modern Spain*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011. 264 pp.

Saint and Nation explores the little-studied debate that emerged in early seventeenth-century Spain over the contested elevation of Teresa of Avila to the status of national co-patron alongside the long-standing Santiago (St. James, *Matamoros*). The choice of patron saint was not a simple matter, as Rowe clearly demonstrates, and as supporters of Teresa of Avila soon learned. The Cortes' decision to elevate a beatified Teresa to the status of co-patron alongside Santiago sparked a controversy that occupied religious and political officials across the peninsula and beyond from 1617 to 1630. Teresa's elevation marked not only the "first substantial challenge to Santiago's position since the High Middle Ages," but also suggested a "shift in Spanish political, spiritual and ideological culture (2). Central to Rowe's work is the "negotiation of plural identities" in a time characterized by general anxiety through the interplay between traditional binaries: local and extra-local, tradition and modernity, church and state, and masculine and feminine among others (5). Within this binary framework where Santiago represented tradition and Teresa modernity, for example, Rowe suggests that these constructed narratives of the Spanish nation and the historical memory of "Spain" still had the power to unify despite the political reality of distinct kingdoms.

In the first two chapters, Rowe establishes the basic terms of the debate and the place each saint held in the imagination of his or her supporters and detractors. This issue of co-patronage was not the sole purview of political and spiritual leaders; it also attracted the interest of painters, poets, humanists, and *arbitristas*, as well as many others across the geographic expanse of the peninsula. Rowe explores the debate from both the *santiaguista* and *teresiano* perspectives through her analysis of an impressive and broad array of sources including sermons, letters, pamphlets, poetry, minutes of the Cortes and royal communiques, among others. Although Santiago's identity as patron saint was constructed and reconstructed at various points in the Middle Ages, his pivotal role in the historical narrative of the founding of Spain, particularly his evangelical role and his intervention at the Battle of Clavijo, encouraged supporters to assert his superiority as a national patron over Teresa who was certainly popular, yet a woman and a *novedad*. Questions about the veracity of

Santiago's activities in Spain, which emerged both within and beyond the peninsula, coupled with the difficult political climate created a space for the elevation of Teresa as co-patron in some eyes, including those of the Cortes and both Philip III and Philip IV. Teresa's supporters asserted that a new saint was necessary to combat contemporary problems facing the nation; therefore, it was precisely her modernness that made her an especially strong choice for national patron. Teresa's status as a native, the widespread popularity of her cult, the personal contact she had with many Spaniards, her efforts to combat heresy, and even her gender were cited as elements in her favor by her staunch supporters. Interestingly, both *santiaguista* and *teresiano* supporters adopted a similar strategy of placing the saints and their activities within a broader historical narrative that reinforced the Christian, militaristic and messianic heritage of Spain, while recasting key moments in that traditional history to best support their case. Both camps tethered the saints to an accepted historical narrative and sense of "Spanishness" embraced by contemporary Spaniards.

Despite the fact that counted among those devoted to Teresa were the most eminent theologians, prelates, magistrates, princes, kings, and even popes, Teresa failed to maintain her short-lived status as co-patron of the nation. This failure is indicative of the political, international, and regional forces at play in the debate that Rowe maps out in the rest of the monograph. For example, in spite of Philip IV's support of Teresa's elevation, political tensions aroused by Olivares worked against Teresa's favor. Additionally, while *teresianos* proclaimed her sex as an asset, *santiaguistas* maintained that a woman was not acceptable as a national symbol, particularly given the difficulties Spain faced on the international playing field. Most impressive is Rowe's ability to weave together into a coherent, engaging story the distinct strands of the political, religious, social and intellectual concerns voiced by parties invested in the debate. Not since *Lucrecia's Dreams* and *The Avila of Saint Teresa* have I felt so compelled to attempt to introduce students to the complex intersection of early modern religion, politics and identity. Rowe's well-written, engaging, and thoroughly researched work offers a new angle from which to approach the matter and will be of significant interest to scholars and students alike.

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