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Relacion de la vida y milagros de San Francisco Solano
(review)

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Relación de la vida y milagros de San Francisco Solano. By Luís Jerónimo de Oré, O.F.M. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1998. Pp. xxxix, 78. Notes. Index. \$7.00 paper.

Gerónimo de Oré's biography of the life of his fellow Franciscan, Francisco Solano, was written to promote the cause of the latter's beatification. Both the author and the subject of this colonial classic, published in 1614, were well known: Oré was an accomplished man of letters, and Solano was a popular preacher and a man revered as a saint. Solano was one of the five canonized saints who lived in Lima around 1600. The others are Rose of Lima, Martin of Porres, Toribio de Mogrovejo, and Juan Masías. Solano, like Toribio and Masías, was born in Spain, where he had already won fame for his preaching and asceticism before going to Peru in 1589. He spent many years working in Tucumán and Paraguay before establishing himself in Peru. When he died in 1610, he was widely esteemed for his asceticism, works of charity, and preaching. Oré, originally from Huamanga, won recognition for his pastoral manuals, dictionaries, and grammars in Quechua and Aymara. In 1613, while visiting Spain for the purpose of recruiting volunteers for America, he was commissioned by his order to write a biography of Solano.

His *Relación* is a blend of factual objectivity and baroque hagiography. With meticulous detail, Oré narrates Solano's life and includes many testimonies from people who knew him. He is also careful to note that Solano came from old Christian blood. But when it comes to miracles, Oré, the critical man of letters, becomes a collector of popular beliefs. The medieval-baroque world of miracles, relics, apparitions, and mystical raptures comes vividly alive in Oré's portrayal of his fellow Franciscan. In Lima alone, Oré claims, Solano was responsible for 195 miracles. Most of all, the author is at pains to cast Solano as a new St. Francis. According to one miracle story, he healed a dove that had been attacked by a fox. In another, Solano's saintliness is demonstrated by the power of his relics: a group of fishermen calmed the raging sea by casting a bit of cloth from Solano's habit upon the waters.

Yet, all of these miracles alone would not have made Solano a saint. As professor Noble David Cook points out in his introductory study, Solano's beatification process was actually an important test case based on new procedures laid down in Rome. Smitten by the reformers' criticism of popular Catholicism, and moved by misgivings over its own naiveté in accepting miracles stories, the post-tridentine church established new and more rigorous criteria and procedures, such as calling for a lengthier time to elapse between death and the initiation of the beatification process. The purpose, of course, was to review a person's life more carefully and dispassionately. In this case, miracles stories, entertaining though they may be for the modern reader, were not sufficient. Solid testimony about one's virtue and charitable works was crucial to the process. In this case, Oré drew upon the testimonies of the archbishops and bishops of Seville, Granada, Lima, Córdoba, and Málaga, and that of the general of the Franciscan order. The Franciscan order did well in appointing an accomplished author to write Solano's biography, and Oré was under

pressure to argue his case well. In fact, Solano was not beatified until 1675. Canonization followed in 1726.

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El mesianismo y la semiotica indigena en el Alto Peru. La gran rebelión de 1780-1781. By Nicholas A. Robins. Translated by Silvia San Martín and Sergio del Río. La Paz: Hisbol, 1998. Pp. 219. Bibliography. No price.

This new book on the famous and often studied late colonial Indian uprising in the Andes is relevant mainly because it concentrates in the southern area of Charcas, where the rebellion, led by Tomás Catari and his brothers, started half a year before the Tungasuca events, and probably without a link with Tupac Amaru, who at the time was locally unknown. Although after November 1780 the references to the Cusco leader became common, and his uprising was substantial for the spread of the movement also in southern Charcas, references to the Catari brothers remained important, especially from the Indian point of view.

The bibliography displays abundant primary documentation from the Sucre and Sevilla archives—strangely ordered alphabetically according to the first word of the document—which provides many factual details on the whole movement in that area as well as on the motivations and local interpretations of the actors, especially in its first part (pp. 19-99). However, it seems that the author did not have access to the clarifying manuscripts of Ignacio Flores, made available to the MUSEF in La Paz by Danielle Demelas, and previously used in the thesis of Patricia Hutchins on the same area of Charcas.

The second part of the book (pp. 101-168) is a nativist millenarian interpretation of the movement, including for this purpose additional material from other areas such as Oruro, La Paz, and even Cusco. This part emphasizes the destruction of the previous order, such as the massive (and often times ritualized) killing of white people, the imposition of Indian cloth upon the survivors, the growing radicalization against priests and Christian symbols, specially at the grassroots, or—from the other perspective—the influence of some Andean myths and prophecies. Robins is not the first one to stress these aspects (see, for instance, Hidalgo 1983), but Robins adds some new information without providing a significantly new interpretation.

Unfortunately both the translation and the editing are very poor. Besides numerous misprints and mistranslations, the reader must remain constantly alert for other major mishaps. In the introduction on we find the word *antimonio* (a well known local mineral) systematically instead of *antinomia* (antinomy), even in the title of chapter 8. Then amaristas (that is, related with Tupac Amaru) become *ayrnaristas*, related with the Ayrnara ethnic group (p. 25). In page 169 it is said that Tomás Catari went to Buenos Aires “a petición del virrey” instead of “a pedir al virrey,” etc. Changes in names some times go beyond misspelling and can lead to quite mistaken interpretations. For instance, in page 57 it is said that the Carangas province was the cradle of