

Short Notices

Colón Mendoza, Ilenia, *The Cristos Yacentes of Gregorio Fernández: Polychrome Sculptures of the Supine Christ in Seventeenth-Century Spain* (Visual Culture in Early Modernity), Farnham, Ashgate, 2015; hardback; pp. 220; 16 colour, 54 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409430681.

The objects that are the subject of this book are early seventeenth-century sculptures of the dead Christ in repose. Concerned with the corpus of *Cristos yacentes* sculptures made by or attributed to the prominent sculptor Gregorio Fernández of Valladolid and his workshop, Ilenia Colón Mendoza highlights networks of artistic exchange and patronage in Spain as well as cataloguing Fernández's contribution to this unique sculpture genre. As a work of art-historical cataloguing, this is a useful volume. It also serves as an accessible introduction to the *Cristo yacente* genre. Colón Mendoza explains the main iconographical elements of the *Cristos yacentes*, examines some medieval and early modern sculptural precedents, and suggests that early modern print media also influenced the genre's development.

The book's four chapters mostly provide descriptive and contextual information regarding individual sculptures or this sculptural tradition. Colón Mendoza compares exemplars, charts iconographical similarities, points to their emotive aspects within Counter-Reformation piety, and argues throughout the volume that these sculptures can best be read as coded Eucharistic symbols. Some sculptures served as tabernacles or contained an inbuilt monstrance component, either of which explicitly connected the Consecrated Host with these sculpted bodies of Christ. These sculptures underlined the theology of Incarnation and Transubstantiation, and implicitly also the Resurrection. This is interesting material, although the connections are mostly pointed to rather than explored in significant theological detail.

Unfortunately, while Colón Mendoza's sub-arguments are generally convincing the work strays very little beyond Colón Mendoza's 2008 dissertation of the same title, although it potentially brings that research to a wider audience. This is a bit disappointing because some of the material about the theological and liturgical uses of the *Cristos yacentes* could be further developed. Similarly, a more effective copyedit may have ironed out some idiosyncrasies. The Christian faithful longing for 'spiritual resurrection' (p. 108) rather than *bodily* resurrection particularly stood out as an obvious disconnect with the subject matter and arguments. Nevertheless, with extensive appendices, excellent illustrations, and an interesting subject

matter, there will certainly be something of interest here for scholars looking at this Spanish sculptural tradition in the early seventeenth century.

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Parker, Greig, *Probate Inventories of French Immigrants in Early Modern London*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 348; 1 map; R.R.P. £80.00; ISBN 9781472420855.

The volume that Greig Parker has compiled makes a valuable contribution to the discourse on material culture circulating in early modern London. It also adds to the thinking on lifestyles of French immigrants to early modern London. His well-considered introduction reflects upon the evidence probate inventories provide, offering pros and cons for understanding French immigrant domestic material culture. I found his thoughts around the use of these documents insightful and reflective of his archaeological background. Challenges of providing a balance sample, given the paucity of such evidence for women, has been addressed, as far as possible, and the resulting probate transcriptions of ninety-two inventories include fifteen for women. The sample spans the dates from the 1660s to 1740s, and the transcriptions are arranged chronologically. The spread of wealth and investment in material goods is well demonstrated by the inventories Parker has chosen to include. The volume includes a number of appendices that support the inventories. These appendices start with lists of names; firstly of the deceased, followed by the compiler of the inventory, names of debtors, and finally other names mentioned. This arrangement is valuable for quick reference. The list of occupations, too, assists in providing context for the reader. Finally, the glossary of terms used within the probate inventories is a welcome addition. With the progress towards digitizing manuscript material by archives for mass consumption, the importance of publishing transcriptions within a contextual framework remains crucial to the continued progress of scholarly enquiry in the field. This book is a useful reference volume for those of us interested in the material culture of early modern London and the difference immigrants brought with them when they settled in their new homeland.

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Books Received

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