amounts to one of the book's strengths. We can look forward to any future scholarship by de Winkel on those costumes and accessories in Rembrandt's paintings that remain yet unpacked.

Elizabeth Teresa Howe. *Education and Women in the Early Modern Hispanic World*. Women and Gender in the Early Modern World, 7. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008. xiv + 240pp. + 11 b&w ill. 50.00. Review by Hilaire Kallendorf, Texas A&M University

This fascinating study draws upon a wide variety of source materials–from catechisms and primers, to treatises and *novelas*, to library inventories and paintings–to address an understudied topic: just exactly what was the level of education for women of early modern Spain and New Spain? Obviously, there is no single answer to this question. Elizabeth Howe does a good job of taking a nuanced approach to an ideological mine field where reliable information is often scarce. She differentiates among rich and poor women, lay persons and religious, royalty and the socially marginal. She largely avoids the trap of generalizations by sticking to specific examples. We may not always agree with her interpretations of these examples (a particularly tricky one being the use of handwriting analysis to determine which women had tutors and which did not), but her grounding of the project in *imitatio* of classical role models is hard to argue with. She begins the book with an explanation of the principle of *imitatio* (a pedagogical technique using exemplary women as role models who were supposed to inspire students to lead upright moral lives) and then uses this theme to develop organizational categories reflected in subsequent chapter titles: "Athena and the Amazons," "The Spanish Zenobia," "The New Judith," etc.

Her decision to lump Spain together with its New World colonies is not uncontroversial. Although there is a growing effort (and not just by comparatists) to look at the big picture of the Iberian empire–witness such book, course and even job specialization titles as "The Early Modern Atlantic World"–traditionally survey classes are taught in such a way that Spain and Mexico remain hermetically sealed inside closed little airtight compartments. The cynic might

suspect another motivation for Howe's decision here, besides ideology: did she choose to end with a chapter on Sor Juana because if she had limited her study to Spain, she would not have had enough material? The Mexican nun takes pride of place not merely because the book's trajectory moves logically from geographical center to periphery. Unfortunately for the early modern women involved as well as for the scholars who study them, Sor Juana is quite simply the most erudite early modern Hispanic woman to be found. She is rightfully the poster child for any discussion of Renaissance women's education, its potential and its limits.

Howe's strategy of starting with continental Europe was also not a given. For reasons ranging from the Inquisition to Franco, Spain is often considered *sui generis*. For example, some European Studies departments find it relatively easy to ignore Spain. It is widely known that the Spanish Golden Age occurred well after the Renaissance first began in Italy. This sense of belatedness erroneously leads many scholars to look elsewhere for explanations of Spanish cultural phenomena: in the Arab world, perhaps, or even in Jewish tradition. While these were important influences in Spain's unique social melting pot, the rebirth of the classics on the Iberian Peninsula should not be underestimated. As Howe rightly asserts, "The history of women's education in the Spanish Golden Age begins in ancient Greece" (1). This book thus reinforces a sense of connectedness for Spain with its European neighbors and, indeed, the western classical tradition.

Chapter 1, "Athena and the Amazons: Examples of/for the Education of Women," begins with Plato and Sappho, continues with Plutarch and Quintilian, stops to consider patristic writers, and eventually focuses on Boccaccio and Christine de Pizan. This whirlwind tour of educational theory finally takes a Hispanic turn with Álvaro de Luna's *Book of Illustrious and Virtuous Women*. There is room in this chapter for practice as well as theory. Here we meet such figures as Sor Teresa de Cartagena, a fifteenth-century Spanish woman whom Howe hails as Christine's heir "in spirit if not in fact" (24). Lamentably, Sor Teresa only authored two books, and little is known of her life. It is hard to escape the impression that for this earliest phase of the early modern period, this historian is (as any other inevitably would be) grasping at straws.

The next epoch gives Howe considerably more to work with. Chapter 2, "The Spanish Zenobia: Isabel la Católica and Her Court," describes the actual academy the queen established within the walls of her palace. She searched high and low for humanists to educate herself and her offspring. She generously made these opportunities available also to daughters of the nobility. The fact that she acknowledged deficiencies in her own early education, and sought to remedy them–even to the point of studying Latin as an adult–makes the earnest humility of her endeavour all the more striking. Isabel really comes to life in this chapter, with even a few glimpses of her personality showing through. Here we learn that the Catholic Queen valued her needle as well as her pen; she even went so far as to mend Ferdinand's clothing herself! This, perhaps more than any other detail in the book, serves as a reminder of just how far early modern women started behind men. No one could imagine Ferdinand of Aragon tending to his knitting. . . .

The third chapter focuses on Saint Teresa of Ávila, the foremost Spanish mystic and a very prolific author. Her rhetoric of submission/humility, however, would prevent her from being much of a feminist role model. To her credit, Howe does not try to fit the peculiar saint into this or any other Procrustean bed. Accepting Teresa on her own terms, she also takes the opportunity to discuss convent culture and what level of learning might have been expected from the choir nuns versus the abbess. It appears from instructions preserved for these women that they were encouraged to read devotional texts alone in their cells. This not only tells us that they could read but also offers insight into reading practices behind the cloister's enclosed walls.

The rather complicated title of Chapter 4 contains within it the gist of its argument: "Anne and the Virgin Mary: Home (and) School(ing) for Girls in Spain and New Spain." In this section of her study, Howe makes the point that many young girls in the early modern period were educated almost exclusively at home. She uses portraits of the Virgin and her mother to illustrate the burden placed on mothers' shoulders as the first (and often only) teachers of their female children. In this chapter she also explores what other learning opportunities were available to women, such as boarding schools within convents and *colegios* for orphans.

Chapter 5, "Muse(ings) on Women's Learning," offers the reader a stark dichotomy between prescriptive treatises circumscribing women's roles and popular literature subverting these expectations. Here we find Fray Luis de León and Juan Luis Vives juxtaposed to Miguel de Cervantes and María de Zayas. Although she briefly alludes to Cervantes' enlightened view of women, it is of course to Zayas that she devotes most of her attention. Zayas is joined by Ana Caro in sounding the clarion call for women's liberation (well, at least as far as possible before the suffrage movement . . .). One of the most subversive aspects of their early modern feminism may well be their intentional use of metaphors derived from sewing and cooking.

Howe's last chapter on Sor Juana has already been mentioned. In this chapter as with the book as a whole, some readers might find redundancies or complain of imprecise translations. But this is a well-developed and surprisingly unpolemical study which shall endure. In addition to presenting the full spectrum of women's varying degrees of educational attainment, Howe manages to situate Spain both diachronically as heir of the European Renaissance and synchronically as a sprawling colonial empire. Sadly, one wonders whether Sor Juana could have written anywhere but in Mexico. Did the colonial environment, oppressive as it was, nonetheless offer her a certain freedom which would have been unthinkable in Spain itself? If she had lived in Spain, would she have been silenced sooner, later, or not at all? Those are questions we can never answer. We can only mourn the loss of so many other words which could have (at least potentially) flowed from her pen. But Howe's book is, justly, a celebration of women's educational accomplishments, not merely an ode to women's writing that might have been. The fact is that a few early modern Hispanic women did manage to cultivate the life of the mind, and it is their legacy we can pass on to our female students. That well-worn principle of *imitatio* is not without current uses.