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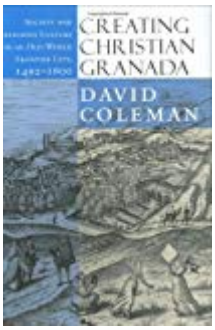


**David Coleman.** *Creating Christian Granada: Society and Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492-1600.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003. ix + 252 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8014-4111-0.

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The triumphant entry of Ferdinand and Isabella, Spain's "Most Catholic Kings," into the city of Granada in 1492 is one of the most powerful symbolic moments in Spanish history. It represents, with the surrender of the last Muslim kingdom on the Iberian peninsula, the completion of the centuries-long process of Christian reconquest. Within days of their triumph, Columbus began negotiations with the monarchs about a possible voyage west, ultimately turning reconquest into conquest anew and initiating an age of empire. The victory in Granada also set in motion the process of religious consolidation, which would lead to the expulsion of both Muslims and Jews and the establishment of the Inquisition to safeguard religious uniformity as a pillar of the emerging TrastÃ¡mara-Habsburg state.

While the creation of Christian Granada is often viewed as a bookend dividing the principal stages of Spain's development, David Coleman's goal is to examine it not as "an event but rather an historical process, and a gradual and incomplete one at that" (p. 1). This book is not a study of faith or belief, but of the creation of a local community in the wake of the reconquest that happened to be predominantly Christian. Its focus is on the development of Granadan social structure and politics as much as religion; in fact one of its strengths is that it reminds us of the extent to which the three are closely interwoven. To this end, Coleman makes thorough and effective use of local records to determine the choices made by Granada's residents relating to migration, cooperation, conflict, and involvement in local government, as well as religious activity. Throughout the book, he is careful to view these in light of the larger context of the Spanish empire, consistently pointing out the ways in which Granada was representative of larger social and religious patterns, as well as the ways in which its experience was unique.

Chapter 1 presents Granada as a cultural, religious, and political frontier, characterized by a high degree of fluidity and opportunity for the thousands of Christian immigrants who entered the city in the first decades of its incorporation into the Spanish crown. Coleman combines brief vignettes of individual experiences, such as that

of a Basque soldier whose shrewd networking and marriage alliances earned him wealth and political influence, with data from notarial, judicial, and census records to determine the general patterns of origin, gender, social status, occupation, and prospects of the people who were drawn to Granada. Chapter 2 continues this overview of the city's population, this time from the perspective of the native mudÃ©jar and morisco inhabitants. Here, Coleman's demonstration of the range of possibilities open to those who chose to remain in the city adds nuance to the stereotypical view of a population unified by its resentment of Spanish religious and political control. The two populations come together in chapter 3, which seeks to identify the physical and symbolic boundaries between the immigrant and native populations through the stages of coexistence, rebellion, and forced conversion of Muslims. Again, though this relationship is usually portrayed in dichotomous terms, Coleman's attention is drawn more to the ways in which these boundaries were "blurred, permeable, and constantly revised and renegotiated" (p. 53).

Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that as a newly conquered city, Granada did not have the medieval tradition of municipal autonomy and well-established local elites that characterized most other Spanish cities. Although new secular and ecclesiastical institutions were created by the crown, they were soon adapted to suit local interests, particularly in the case of the administration of faith. Mendicant orders, hospitals, and confraternities earned the loyalty and support of local citizens much more than parishes and clergymen were able to, and Coleman argues that this provided fertile ground for religious reform.

Chapters 6 and 7 unravel and analyze the process of this reform through the careers and ideas of key individuals who served as links between Granada and the broader channels of reform culminating in the Council of Trent. Here the focus is on the negotiations and exchanges between local reform experiences and institutional concerns. The accomplishments of the judeoconverso preacher Juan de Avila and the slightly unhinged but saintly Juan de Dios demonstrate that their popularity and influence were directly tied to their responsiveness to local spiritual and civic concerns. Pedro de Guerrero, the archbishop of Granada who became a key figure in institutional reform, provides the link between these local concerns and the accomplishments of Trent. His experience also shows how the influence worked in the other direction, as the very success of the mendicant orders in Granada resulted in Guerrero's insistence on pulling them more firmly under the arm of ecclesiastical supervision.

While the focus of the book throughout is on the importance of local interests in shaping the new community of Granada, the final chapter brings this period of flexibility to an end with the crown's growing insistence on curtailing local Arabic customs, the rebellion of the rural moriscos of the Alpujarras, and the subsequent expulsion of Granada's urban morisco community in 1569. The paths to social and political advancement began to narrow as well, as the municipal elite consolidated their position and the rate of immigration declined. As Granada lost the characteristics that had made it a "frontier" city, so it ceased to generate the innovation that had made it so important in the process of religious reform. (Local initiative was still clearly evident, however, in the discovery of the religious "relics" of the Sacromonte. Though these were later judged to be forgeries, they were enthusiastically appropriated by the community for its own particular ends.)

Each chapter is guided by the same kinds of questions: Who were the principal actors in this process of creating Christian Granada; What were their interests; What did they accomplish, and how? Coleman tackles anything that looks like a facile stereotype or overly simplified categorization and teases a wealth and variety of individual stories out of the archives to reveal its internal

complexity. He is also attentive to current historiography relating to nearly every possible facet of this study, from religious culture, to migration, to colonial expansion, and notes throughout when his conclusions support existing understandings or nudge us to view them in a new light. This book does not aim to overthrow any paradigms; in describing current historical interpretations, its most common position is "this is mostly true, *but*..." The "buts" are what enrich the story and lead us to see the creation of Christian Granada as a real and complex process lived by real and complex people.