



Pedro Moya de Contreras: Catholic Reform and Royal Power in New Spain, 1571–1591 Second Edition

Stafford Poole

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For a brief few years in the sixteenth century, Pedro Moya de Contreras was the most powerful man in the New World. A church official and loyal royalist, he came to Mexico in 1571 to establish the Inquisition and later became archbishop and viceroy for the region. This new edition of Stafford Poole's definitive portrait of Moya de Contreras, first published in 1971, now offers an expanded understanding of this enigmatic figure's influence on the development of New Spain.

In tracing the career of a sixteenth-century church official and administrator who was more notable for what he did than for who he was, Poole offers a rich source of information about Spanish rule in colonial Mexico and the evolving relationship between the Spanish monarchy and the Catholic Church. For this second edition, Poole draws on newly available sources to fill in gaps regarding Moya de Contreras's shadowy early career and final years in Spain. He also explores in greater depth the churchman's influence as Grand Inquisitor in light of the plethora of new research and recent publications on the Spanish Inquisition.

Poole shows that Moya de Contreras was as diligent at carrying out the tortures of the Inquisition as he was at exposing government and church corruption. His reforming zeal reached its culmination in his leadership of the Third Mexican Provincial Council of 1585, which enacted a legal code for the Mexican Church that lasted more than three hundred years.

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