

“Of Imperial Genealogies and Royal Exequies: Legitimizing monarchical rule in the Spanish Habsburg Empire”

Osorio examines the themes of representation and material culture asking a bold question: the way the Spanish monarchs maintained their sovereignty over realms they never visited and subjects they never encountered. Her main argument is that kingly ceremonies were the most significant aspect of these absent rulers. The Spanish kings' techniques of imperial management centered on assuring their presence through their absence. The tools of imperial management Prof. Osorio therefore analyzes are ways for the monarchs to be seen, heard, and touched in their distant colonies. While doing so, she concentrates on portraits and royal simulacra; printed histories, ceremonial books, art treatises; and centers of power and spaces such as palaces and cities. Intellectualizing her venture as one that strives for placing the non-western world at the vanguard of cultural development, she contends that far from being a periphery, Spanish Peru was the precursor of modernity centuries before “the west” arose, and did so without the legitimacy of the ancient world, in many ways as a *tabula rasa* of imperial technique. Through a well-grounded historiographical and archival research, she proposes that, by examining architecture and ceremonies the king ruled in *absentia* through what she calls “a common imperial physical-material structure for the empire.”