plemental information. This thorough attention to detail makes the text invaluable to some and perhaps too dense for others. It is also repetitive at times, but this repetition may be necessary to continually track the volume and detail of information presented from chapter to chapter. Another strength of the text that could have been made even stronger would have been to provide more critical insights into the films and work of John Marshall as the authors seemed to dance around this in places, likely out of respect for the great legacy of Marshall's work. The text also cries out for a companion study detailing the changes throughout this period occurring at the other major Ju/'hoan study site in Botswana.

In conclusion, "The Ju/'hoan San of Nyae Nyae and Namibian Independence" serves as an illustrative model for the anthropology of development and indigenous activism accomplished through an interpretive narrative of the insights and experiences reflecting Biesele's and Hitchcock's multiple roles and lifelong interactions with this group. The text holds broad appeal in a number of key areas. It provides a much needed update to the historic work of the Marshall family and specifically John Marshall's films, as well as offering hope for this amazing group of people that goes beyond the gloomy and perhaps overstated portrayal of the Ju/'hoan future offered in "Death by Myth," John Marshall's final installment of the five-part "A Kalahari Family" film series. Citing the various successes resulting from the combined efforts in self-government, advocacy, education, literacy, and resilience outlined in "The Ju/'hoan San of Nyae Nyae and Namibian Independence," perhaps it would be better to replace "Death by Myth" with "Life through Advocacy" as a theme for the Ju/'hoansi to go forward. The book also provides an updated complement to the historical work of other anthropologists documented in textbooks, research articles, and in ethnographic readers. Instructors of both introductory and advanced courses in anthropology can use this text to locate the study of the Ju/'hoansi effectively in the present.

The Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi book also offers a very realistic and much-needed account of anthropological activism, indigenous land and human rights issues and grassroots movements, and the potential of cooperative and interactive partnerships foraged between anthropologists and indigenous groups. Finally, it serves as a terrific example of an ethnographic case study in anthropology, based on thoughtful and rigorous interpretive analyses gleaned through extensive fieldwork in naturalistic settings. It is hard to think of another ethnography quite like this one. Wayne A. Babchuk

Chesnut, R. Andrew: Devoted to Death. Santa Muerte, the Skeleton Saint. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 221 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-976465-5. Price: £ 15.99

This book illuminates one of the signature events of recent Mexican narco-culture. Over the last twenty years, but particularly under president Felipe Calderón's ill-fated "War on Drugs," a folk saint cult has emerged that venerates a Grim Reaper protectress and has turned into Mexico's second largest devotion beyond the Virgin of Guadalupe herself. La Santa Muerte, or "Saint Death," as her devotees have taken to calling her (among other, more adoring and feminized monikers), has in turn deserved much better from academics North and South, who are generally prone to ignore or to dismiss such superstitious and criminally associated irrelevancies; in R. Andrew Chestnut's ethnography, we finally have more than a passing reference to this fascinating outbreak of popular effervescence. The great merit of "Devoted to Death" lies with its thoroughgoing overview of La Santa Muerte's followers, ritual practices, and Catholic historical associations. Chestnut follows this devotional cult across the "religious marketplace" (his phrase, p. 172) of Mexico, a country historically sundered by neocolonialism, extreme poverty, and labor exploitation that is presently being carved up by warfare over drug monopolies in the hardest-hit cities of the Gulf Coast and borderlands with the United States.

Under Calderón's political regime, many large-scale public displays of homage to Santa Muerte such as roadside shrines have been identified as "satanic," narco-related, and quickly demolished, and several of the founding members of the cult have been persecuted and/or imprisoned. A major part of Chestnut's writing strategy is to cast doubt on liberal media representations of this supernatural skeleton as merely the "patron saint of criminals" (188) – a textual goal that he achieves both in form and in content. "Devoted to Death" emphasizes the rich, multifarious lived practices of venerating this supernatural figure. The book divides into seven chapters. The rhetorical conceit of each is to explore a different standard "color" of Santa Muerte's ex-voto candles, along with their devotional rationale; the narrative strategy works quite well, in my opinion, as these idealized "functions" of veneration help to illuminate possible relationships and conflicts with this popular saint. Such ex-votos include: "Brown" (History and Origins of the Cult); "White" (Beliefs and Practices); "Black" (Protection and Harm); "Red" (Love and Passion); "Gold" (Prosperity and Abundance); "Purple" (Healing); and last but not least, "Green" (Law and Justice). The book's concluding chapter, "Seven-Color Candle," provides a helpful, if somewhat repetitive summary of the author's findings. Overall, "Devoted to Death" is a crisply written work that, for better or worse, does not systematically probe the more deeply buried, intercultural problems that animate the author's own interest in this "illicit cult." What we have instead is a colorful, all-points-explored "culturalist" survey of the phenomenon at large. "Devoted to Death" indulges in Santa Muerte's similarities and differences to Mexican folk Catholicism and particular Spanish American cults, from Mexico's saintly bandit Jesús Malverde and the Virgin of Guadalupe, to Spain's La Parca and Argentina's San La Muerte, among many others, that helps to situate Santa Muerte's place in the licit and illicit *santoral* of Latin American Catholicism.

The book's unmistakable contribution to Mexican Studies, however, is the way in which Chestnut shows how drug warfare and ethno-racial hyper-incarceration have doubled back, and refracted the spiritual lives of working class citizens, serving as the unconscious foun-

dation for this iconoclastic folk religiosity. The book's best moments of ethnographic exposure lie not with demonstrating that Santa Muerte veneration borrows, as all folk saint devotions do, from a "quid pro quo" dynamic between the Catholic believer and her supernatural intermediary. More powerfully, Chestnut's multiple visits to working class shrines and *botanicas* reveal a religious community overburdened with the problems of survival in a day-to-day state of mortal fear and economic precariousness from which no one can extract oneself. From one "great leveler" to another, Santa Muerte both embodies and helps Mexican devotees to make sense of their fraught moral, political, and intimate existence under conditions of open warfare, civic alienation and/or exile.

For Mexican police, drug mafia, and ordinary citizens alike, venerating this feminized figure of death (alternately cast as maternal or seductive) lends a certain meditative, all-encompassing quality to her devotion; some municipal police, for example, have stitched a Santa Muerte patch onto their uniforms above captions reading "Fear not wherever you may go, since you'll die where you're supposed to," "When death appears in our path, she is welcome," or "Any day is a good one to die" (107). Not only does Santa Muerte's devotional complex map onto the Mexican neocolonial imaginary of death and sacrifice so roundly analyzed by Claudio Lomnitz, but it also corresponds to topsy-turvy conditions of internal warfare and the unpredictable forms of life and death wrought by it. I was particularly struck by how petitions to Santa Muerte often sought to free or to protect the imprisoned (14 f., 38, 59, 93, 151 f.) – including the guards of such prisons themselves (108). (Prisons are purgatories that literally "disappear" select individuals from their home communities, and incarceration rates, along with the grim index of civic death they represent, are on the rise throughout Mexico and Latin America more broadly.) The book's strongest chapters ("Brown Candle," "Black Candle," and "Green Candle"), each deal with the symbolic inversion of civic life in the wake of the drug war's balkanization and paramilitarization of ordinary state functions. In a telling moment, Chestnut claims that Santa Muerte "approximates the God of the Old Testament who punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous" (184) – an allusion to the communitarian, us-against-the-world logic of being "devoted to death." Similarly, Chestnut's ethnography reminds us that Catholicism and "Catholic sects," too, are shot through with mythical, worldly death-drives that intensify under daily conditions of civil war.

For all the scholarly merits of "Devoted to Death," this reviewer would be remiss not to draw attention to interpretive lacunae that show up time and again – repeated whenever the book throws a bridge across the worlds separating the North American reader from the working-class Mexican subject. Chestnut's project generally translates mundane aspects of venerating Santa Muerte for a US-based Anglophone student audience. The compulsion to "explain" how Mexican citizens can be "devoted to death" often develops a certain interpretive inertia, avoiding self-critical analysis of how North American *in addition to* Mexican middle-class beliefs and expectations remain part of the process of stigmatizing this fast-growing devotion. The author writes largely in a confessional and autobiographic style, a mode of narrative representation that openly invites readers' co-identification with easily digested cultural statements, yet often fails to explore the very conditionality of "understanding" any "religious" form of difference. Some examples will suffice.

At times, the simplified rhetoric of overcoming cultural distance was nothing short of jarring, as, for example, when the author relies on the logic of financial markets to describe Santa Muerte's devotional appeal (e.g., "Since stock in her only recently went public, many have come to her after unsuccessful investments in other saints," p. 59) – a way of describing the popular saint's cult that naturalizes a naïve, state-centric utilitarianism. Other suspect passages in this ethnography (e.g., "Mexicans adore flowers almost as much as they love balloons …", p. 71; e.g., "A couple of feet away from me, tears streamed down the cherubic cheeks of a teenage goth dressed in black from head to toe and clutching her Santa Muerte as Bride statuette in both hands. Trouble at home, I wondered?" p. 88 – and many other choice examples could have been recruited here) were likely intended as lighthearted humor or local color, but come across as a misuse of space better dedicated to exploring the author's sustained interactions, or getting to know the subjects of his research, instead of offering summary judgments and ethnographic observations from afar. Indeed, for all "Devoted to Death"'s admirably broad survey of popular visualities, newsprint, archival, and ethnographic data on Santa Muerte, there is also a curious, unfortunate thinness to the argument itself.

Nevertheless, "Devoted to Death" provides one of the most alluring long-form treatments of the way in which Mexican narco- and folk-culture have mutually informed and recently coproduced each other. I will happily teach this work as an object lesson in how to carry out, and how not to carry out, meaningful ethnographic work on a topic as sensitive as the criminalization of religious practices in a period of open warfare. Chris Garces

Danforth, Loring M., and **Riki Van Boeschoten:** Children of the Greek Civil War. Refugees and the Politics of Memory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. 329 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-13599-1. Price: $ 25.00

A devastating Civil War tore Greece apart between 1946 and 1949. As fighting intensified, both sides recognised the danger for children caught in the crossfire. The Communists evacuated some 20,000 children from territory under their control in the north and distributed them to centres in Eastern Europe. The Greek state opened a network of homes to care for a similar number of children within Greece. The rescuing of children from war zones can be compared to the evacuation of children to the countryside during the bombing of London, or the *Kindertransport* from Germany. Such evacuations need not necessarily be controversial, but it has proven to be a hugely divisive topic in Greece.

The anti-Communist account, long promulgated by the Greek state, has maintained that the children evacu-