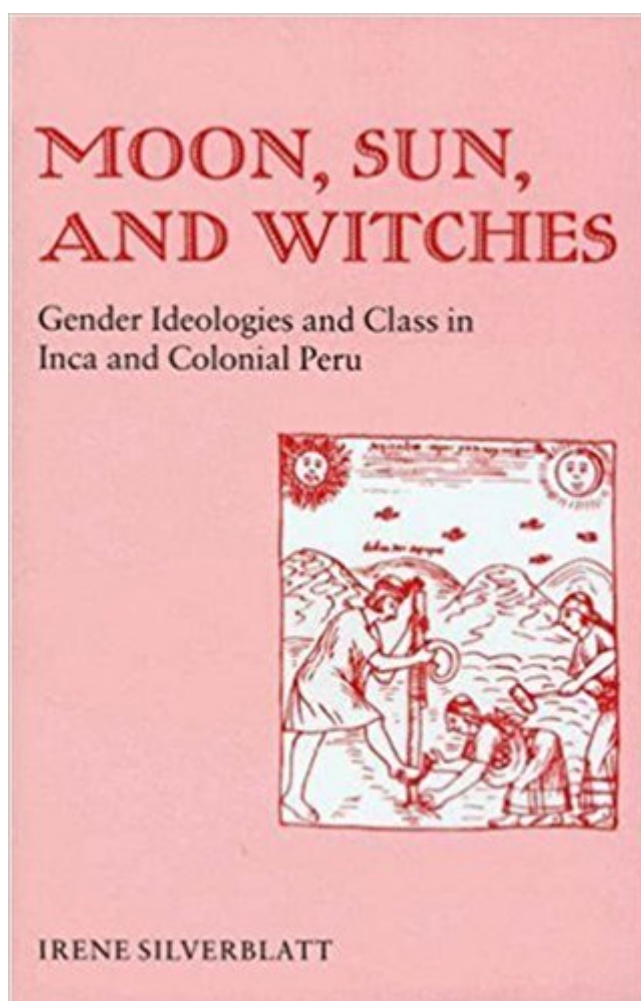


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Moon, Sun And Witches: Gender Ideologies And Class In Inca And Colonial Peru



Synopsis

When the Spanish arrived in Peru in 1532, men of the Inca Empire worshipped the Sun as Father and their dead kings as ancestor heroes, while women venerated the Moon and her daughters, the Inca queens, as founders of female dynasties. In the pre-Inca period such notions of parallel descent were expressions of complementarity between men and women. Examining the interplay between gender ideologies and political hierarchy, Irene Silverblatt shows how Inca rulers used their Sun and Moon traditions as methods of controlling women and the Andean peoples the Incas conquered. She then explores the process by which the Spaniards employed European male and female imagery to establish their own rule in Peru and to make new inroads on the power of native women, particularly poor peasant women. Harassed economically and abused sexually, Andean women fought back, earning in the process the Spaniards' condemnation as "witches." Fresh from the European witch hunts that damned women for susceptibility to heresy and diabolic influence, Spanish clerics were predisposed to charge politically disruptive poor women with witchcraft. Professor Silverblatt shows that these very accusations provided women with an ideology of rebellion and a method for defending their culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is a rich and compelling analysis--well conceived, innovative, and dealing with important frontiers in several fields. It will stand as a very important contribution to anthropology, ethnohistory, Latin American studies, and women's studies."--Kay B. Warren, Princeton University

Irene Silverblatt examines the effects of the Spanish conquest on women's place in Peruvian society. In a straightforward and uncomplicated way, Silverblatt lays out the material using a basic 'before and after' approach. She spends the first half describing pre-conquest Andean life, concentrating on women and their roles in society. Then she shows how life changed for the Andeans after the arrival of the Spanish. Again, she focuses on how those changes affected women, arguing that not only were women affected by the Spanish conquest but that they suffered far greater loss of position than their male counterparts.

I first read this book in 1990, when I was a college student. It galvanized my interest in pan-American indigenous-white relations. Now that I am a university professor myself, I teach this book regularly. It's fascinating to most undergraduates -- often mentioned as one of their favorite books of the semester -- without losing any of the intricacy and delicacy of argument necessary to treating the subject of cultural contact and conflict in the Americas. I highly recommend it for any reader; I've given it to people travelling to Peru on vacation and it has greatly deepened their understanding of the land they are visiting and history of their own presence in the Sacred Valley. A great read, highly informative, elegantly written and deeply researched.

She just keeps repeating herself. Read like a couple chapters, and you pretty much got it. All the Gods and Goddesses parts are very repetitive.

This book is a extremely verbous book that discusses the political and economic rights of andean women through out history.

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