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*Maria Martin's World: Art & Science, Faith & Family in
Audubon's America* by Debra J. Lindsay (review)

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BOOK REVIEWS

Maria Martin's World: Art & Science, Faith & Family in Audubon's America. By Debra J. Lindsay. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2018. 302 pp.

Maria Martin (1796–1863) of Charleston, South Carolina, lived a quiet, secluded life in an upper middle-class, antebellum slave-owning household as a beloved aunt and family caretaker who later became, toward the end of her life, the second wife of the Reverend John Bachman, the prominent pastor of Charleston's St. John's Lutheran Church. She also became, quite accidentally, a talented artist who produced exacting illustrations of plants, flowers, trees, and more, in collaboration with the famed naturalist John James Audubon, helping to produce art for one of the most important volumes in the natural sciences of the nineteenth century, *Birds of North America* (1830–1838). In this new book, Debra Lindsay places the one set of realities of Maria Martin's life clearly within the context of the other.

Maria Martin's role in providing many of the backgrounds for Audubon's works remained little known in her own time, and, as Lindsay makes clear, that relative anonymity was by her own choice. This is a biography about a woman who intentionally led an unobtrusive, private life and left very few documents behind. Lindsay makes a convincing case that for Martin, her artistic and scientific career stood merely as a piece of a larger life defined by willingly accepted duty, rooted in both a faith and a culture that gave Martin meaning and purpose.

A chance encounter on the streets of Charleston in 1831 between Bachman, the "straightlaced Lutheran pastor [originally] from New York" and Audubon, the "risk-taking French émigré" (4), first brought Audubon within the Bachman family orbit. Early on, Audubon recognized in Maria Martin an amateur painter whom he shaped and molded into an exceptional artist and trusted collaborator. Martin began to paint many of the finely drawn flora

which showcased Audubon's famous birds and other creatures in their native habitats. Later, as scientific protocols evolved, she served as a careful researcher and assistant for text written for Audubon and Bachman's later co-authored work, *Quadrupeds of North America* (1851–1854).

Important as such work was, however, Lindsay demonstrates that it always stood in a subordinate place to other commitments. Family always came first, whether that involved overseeing the education of children or standing watch over the all-too-frequently occupied household deathbed. When familial duty called, which it often did, it always took precedence over Audubon, science, and art. Lindsay grounds this devotion to family and duty directly in Maria Martin's "German ancestry and Lutheran faith" (xix). In so doing, Lindsay sometimes attempts to draw too-straight a line from the sixteenth-century Reformation to nineteenth-century South Carolina. It is probably more accurate to trace a trajectory from the Reformation to eighteenth-century Lutheran pietism, and from there, through pietism's larger influence on the broader evangelicalism which shaped much of nineteenth-century American piety and culture. She is on more solid footing drawing connections between Martin Luther's emphasis on education for all, including girls, and the resulting strong emphasis placed on education within the Bachman household itself and the larger Charleston German Friendly Society.

Lindsay balances a critical lens that enables her to identify the patriarchal system that confined and constrained Martin's place in her world, but at the same time, to locate Martin in the context and limits of that world fairly, on Martin's own terms. She also does not shy away from presenting the reality that Martin was part of a household that contained enslaved persons, and that she benefitted from a system built on the work and labor of others who had no choice. Martin had time to paint, and even to sit at the bedside of the dying, because enslaved persons assumed other more mundane tasks required in the running of the large household.

Lindsay's book is well-researched, both in the primary sources and the secondary literature that required acquiring expertise in areas ranging from art and religion to medical terminology and scientific

taxonomy. She acknowledges the historian's difficulty in writing about women for whom little direct documentary evidence exists and the need often to make inferences from the sources available. By design, this is a physically beautiful book, with artistic plates expertly rendered by the University of Alabama Press on heavy paper, allowing Martin's talent and work to be on full display. Scholars of the under-documented and often under-appreciated role of women in the antebellum South, of women artists, and of Lutheran life and piety will all find in this work much to admire.

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COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Spirituality of Wine. By Gisela H. Kreglinger. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 282 pp.

That a universe of significance flows from the topic of wine should come as no surprise, least of all to Lutherans, whose piety is formed significantly by the sacrament of the altar and its material elements. Gisela Kreglinger has gathered together a cornucopia of oenological interpretation, from Noah the first vintner down to the eschatological grapes of wrath.

One hundred and two Hebrew words, Kreglinger notes, refer to the world of wine in the Old Testament, and thirty-seven in the New, to say nothing of the rich vintage of monastic and scholastic reflections on the subject. Wine is useful for exorcism (according to John Chrysostom), for prayer (according to Hildegard of Bingen), for lowering cholesterol or for drawing up from the murky past a well of memories. All of this is discussed at length.

Chapters on the Bible, church history, the Lord's Supper, and feasting lift up the ways in which wine sustains God's people in their bodies and fills their spirits, too. Further explorations lift up the current craft of wine-making, along with the uses and abuses of technology in so doing. Kreglinger explores the links between wine and human health—as well as discussing the threat of alcohol abuse.