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HUMANITIES

Religion

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The following review appeared in the October 2011 issue of CHOICE:

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Schultz, Nancy Lusignan. **Mrs. Mattingly's miracle: the prince, the widow, and the cure that shocked Washington City.** Yale, 2011. 274p index afp ISBN 9780300118469, \$30.00

In the spring of 1824, Ann Carbery Mattingly, the sister of the Roman Catholic mayor of Washington, DC, was healed of terminal breast cancer through the cooperation of local clergy with an aristocratic German healer-priest named Prince Alexander Hohenlohe. Schultz (English, Salem State Univ.) tells the story of this seemingly miraculous healing in nonlinear fashion, alternating dramatic, vividly written set pieces with historical background, multigenerational family intrigue, analytic reflection, and anecdotes about the research project itself. Schultz argues that the ensuing struggle over the interpretation and, thereby, the "ownership" of "Mrs. Mattingly's Miracle" involved the conflicting viewpoints of supernaturalistic European Catholic clergy and their more empirically minded American counterparts, as well as hostile Protestants and Mattingly herself. A major focus is the issue of the control of women's bodies, and Mattingly, though extremely devout, had ideas at odds with those of her clerical advisers. The miscegenetic marriage of Mattingly's errant nephew introduces a racial angle, but attempts to draw analogies between Mattingly's drama and contemporary issues of national identity are underdeveloped. While not always persuasive, the book is engaging and raises important questions about supernaturalism in religious practice. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-level undergraduates through researchers/faculty; general readers. -- *P. W. Williams, Miami University*