



## Teresa of Avila's Autobiography: Authority, Power and the Self in Mid-sixteenth Century Spain (Legenda)

By Elena Carrera

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The Spanish mystic Teresa of Avila (1515-82), author of one of the most acclaimed early modern autobiographies ( *Vida* , 1565), has generated a wealth of literary, historical and theological studies, yet none to date has examined the impact of textual models on Teresa's self-construction. In looking at the issue of the self, Carrera draws on revisions of the hermeneutic process (Ricoeur) and on analyses of the connections between discourse, power and the subject (Foucault), and applies a valuable historical perspective. Through a close reading of contemporary Spanish devotional books and confessors' manuals, she establishes important connections between Teresa's autobiography and the practices of meditative reading and sacramental confession in sixteenth-century Spain.

Elena Carrera is Senior Lecturer in Spanish at Oxford Brookes University. She holds a doctorate from the University of Oxford, and has taught at the universities of Zaragoza, Nottingham, Oxford and Birkbeck College, London.

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#### **About the Author**

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