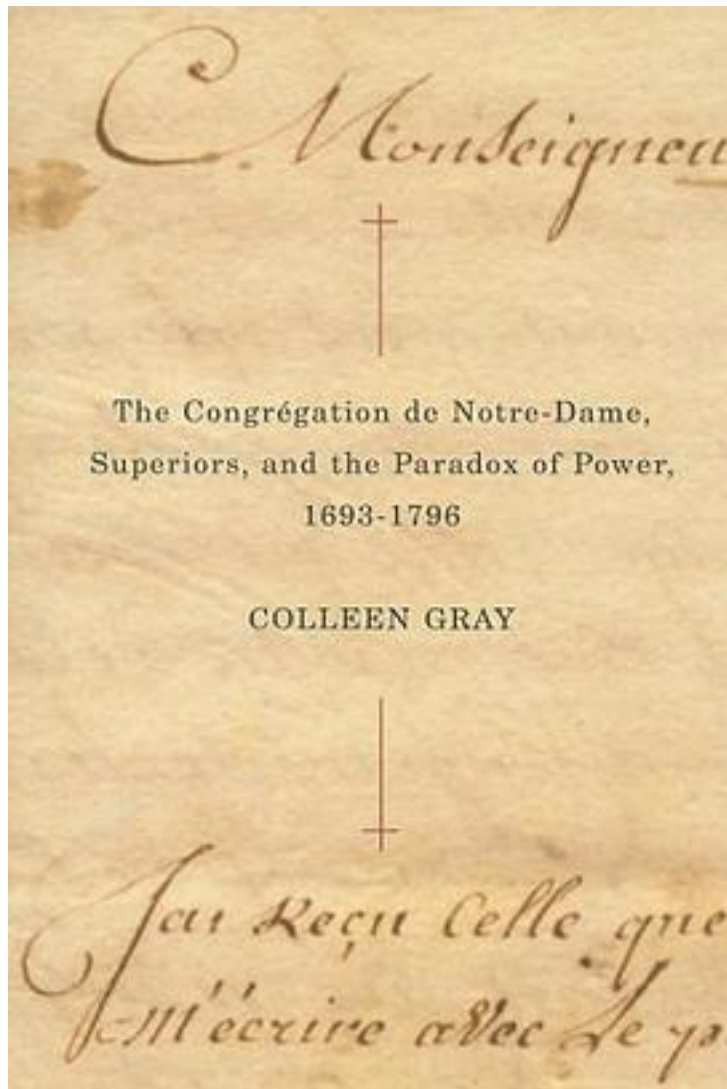


The Congregation de Notre-Dame, Superiors, and the Paradox of Power, 1693-1796



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Nuns have often been portrayed as nascent feminists wielding an exceptional amount of power. In this formative study of the Congregation de Notre-Dame - a religious community of uncloistered women established in Montreal in 1657 - Colleen Gray presents a more nuanced view of the foundations and exercise of power within the convent. Gray focuses on the social, administrative, political, and spiritual dimensions of the lives of three Congregation superiors - Marie Barbier, Marie-Josephe Mangué-Garreau, and Marie Raizenne. By exploring the implications of the hierarchies of power within the convent and providing a thorough analysis of the convent's relationship with the social, religious, and governmental structures that surrounded it - taking into account both medieval and Catholic Reformation Europe and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Canada - Gray reveals the paradoxes inherent in the position of a female superior within the male-dominated sphere of both the church and the larger secular community. "The Congregation de Notre-Dame, Superiors, and the Paradox of Power, 1693-1796" not only reconstructs a vanished world but also provides great insight into the organization of institutional structures and the complex aspects of power within them.

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