

Independence Wars in the early nineteenth century has been grossly oversimplified. Taylor provides a full reevaluation of the devotion's trajectories and shifts in this time period, but does not ignore the astonishing amount of new evidence that points in many new and different directions. A particularly delightful section at the end of Part II presents a robust critique of the traditional nationalist view of Our Lady of Guadalupe as the opposite of Our Lady of Los Remedios during the Independence Wars.

Part III constitutes a completely fresh perspective on shrines and devotions in the nineteenth-century Mexican landscape. While the history of major shrines in the early national period is yet to be written, Taylor provides a strong foundation for future study in terms of both archival research and key methodological issues.

*Shrines & Miraculous Images* is written with an eloquence, competence, knowledge, and authority that reminds this reader of professor Edmundo O'Gorman's book *Destierro de sombras* (UNAM 1986). It changes the historiography of religious images in Mexican culture and will force scholars to rethink the history of Mexican religious practices and culture from an innovative and provocative perspective. The book is an instant classic and significant contribution to the understanding of Mexican culture.

———Juan Javier Pescador, Michigan State University

John R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620–1914*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

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John McNeill's *Mosquito Empires*, the deserved winner of the 2011 Albert J. Beveridge prize of the American Historical Association, is a very important contribution to the burgeoning literature in the field of environmental history. It certainly merits a review in a journal devoted to comparative studies because it crosses both disciplinary and geographical boundaries. It unites research in military history, political history, parasitology, virology, meteorology, and ecology in support of a simple but compelling hypothesis, namely that differential immunity to yellow fever and malaria, both diseases spread by mosquitoes, gave people who were already resident in the New World an advantage over new arrivals. McNeill demonstrates convincingly that this advantage benefited the established Spanish colonial regime in the New World against invaders from north European countries like Britain and France until about 1770. Thereafter, it helped revolutionary movements all over the Americas in their struggles for independence from the Old World. McNeill shows that the ecology of diseases transmitted by mosquitoes made a difference to the

battle of Yorktown in 1781 (the culmination of the American War of Independence), the struggles of Toussaint Louverture in Haiti, and the campaigns of Simon Bolívar in South America. By bringing all these conflicts together, *Mosquito Empires* succeeds in uniting the history of regions such as the United States and the northern parts of South America, which are frequently studied separately, into a single historical-ecological framework provided by the concept of the Greater Caribbean.

To this reviewer, a specialist in European history, McNeill's book invites still wider geographic comparisons, in particular with broadly similar phenomena in earlier periods of European history that are unfortunately less documented than the period covered by *Mosquito Empires*. In the medieval period, French and German armies, coming from countries in northern Europe where there was not so much malaria, repeatedly invaded Italy and besieged the city of Rome to try to gain control of the Papacy. Rome was surrounded by lands infested with mosquitoes and intense falciparum malaria, which time and again forced the invaders to withdraw. The medieval Papal State was too small to be described as a mosquito empire, but it certainly qualifies as a mosquito state—a state protected by mosquitoes. It is clear that people of the time recognized the part played by malaria in these events, since Godfrey of Viterbo in 1167 explicitly praised the role of Roman fever in defeating foreign invaders.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, McNeill shows that participants in the events he describes were often well aware of the role of disease, even if modern historians have frequently ignored explicit statements to that effect in the New World sources, just as some historians choose to ignore malaria's role in Italian history.

———Robert Sallares, Manchester, UK

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Robert Sallares in *Malasia and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 225.