

Vernadsky donne un meilleur exemple en signalant au lecteur la référence originelle, les autres recueils dans lesquels le texte peut être retrouvé et les principales traductions disponibles.

Néanmoins, ce genre de recueil présente toujours une utilité, surtout comme soutien à l'enseignement, car il regroupe des textes parfois difficiles à retrouver et permet à l'étudiant un contact direct avec les principaux débats d'une époque.

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JOHN ROBERT MCNEILL — *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985. Pp. xvii, 329.

When all the reviews of this book are in, the author will be able to undertake another comparative study, this time comparing reviewers who know something of Louisbourg and nothing of Havana against those whose situation is reversed. Approaching from the former perspective, I was first struck by how much the comparison in the book flatters Louisbourg, a town of a couple of thousand people in a barely larger colony, which is here compared to Havana, twice the size of any city north of the Spanish colonies, and to Cuba, which had more than twice the population of all of New France. McNeill explains that he chose to compare them "not because their internal histories are especially similar... but because their assigned roles within their respective imperial systems were nearly identical, as were the problems of economic and defence policy (p. xv)." He shows that Louisbourg and Havana, two ports at the eastern approaches to major colonies, were both fortified by empires which lacked control of the sea. Furthermore, both cities were centres of important commerce intended to benefit the imperial powers that had established them. McNeill uses these as the basis for a comparison of imperial theory and practice in the two empires.

McNeill's military comparison of Havana and Louisbourg shows that Spain and France built substantial fortifications to defend these towns but left both of them inadequately supported by seapower. Similarities in the strength attributed to them and in their eventual capitulation to siege lead McNeill to inquire how France and Spain could have protected their overseas interests when they lacked (and effectively could not acquire) command of the sea.

The question is well put but less well answered. McNeill's treatment of Louisbourg makes plain that, for all the emphasis put on its sieges, no adequate military history of Louisbourg has been written. McNeill ascribes this to "the negligence of three generations of historians (p. 96)" — and quotes some of our less careful statements — but he accepts some of the least credible things, so that we read once more of corruption and crumbling walls. Reference to F.J. Thorpe's 1974 dissertation, published in 1980 as *Remparts Lointains*, could have improved this section, but in any case McNeill relies so much on A.T. Mahan's nineteenth-century theories of seapower that he finds the fortification of Louisbourg simply pointless and even alleges that it was naval blockade that caused the fall of New France (p. 97). In fact, if the eighteenth-century Royal Navy had been capable of effective blockade, the British army campaigns in New France would hardly have been necessary. The evidence McNeill gives on Havana and Louisbourg suggests that the relationship between seapower and siegecraft needs more study, but it is clearly complex enough to have made Maurepas more perceptive than McNeill will admit when he predicted (correctly) that no enemy would enter the St. Lawrence as long as Louisbourg remained in French hands.

Most of McNeill's book, however, deals with colonial economics and imperial economic policy, and he tartly corrects the traditional emphasis on war rather than trade in the histories of both Havana and Louisbourg. He gives an unavoidably brief but useful survey of Louisbourg's fishing and trading economy and Havana's much more complex sugar, tobacco, ranching, agriculture, and

entrepot trades. Again a strong theoretical framework shapes the analysis. Here the key theory is mercantilism, which McNeill uses to judge not just the two cities but the two imperial systems. The French earn a failing grade for tolerating foreign trade and other deviations from mercantile faith, while the Spanish are found more successful in directing Havana's economy.

There are grounds for skepticism here. If Louisbourg was able to "violate basic tenets of mercantilism (p. 201)", this hardly proves "indifference" or "lassitude (p. 208)" on the part of the French Ministry of Marine, for there is scant evidence that it wanted to impose rigorous mercantile theory on its colony. If Louisbourg could help France prosper by selling cod to Spain and Italy, why should it not also sell rum to New England? And perhaps there was more to Cuba's shift from tobacco to sugar than simply the application of mercantile theory by the Spanish authorities, who in other respects seem less efficient than their French counterparts. Despite his own warnings about the term, McNeill often bases his judgments on an assumption that mercantilism was a living doctrine whose adherents acted upon central principles and orthodox precepts. His evidence does not always require such an explanation.

The most spectacular example here of theory actually supplanting evidence is a calculation about the hectares of dairy land needed to match the protein in a metric ton of cod, which leads McNeill to the impression that Louisbourg cod was not far from being the basis of European diet. Yet even a cursory examination of European markets for cod would show that price, dietary habits, and transportation problems greatly limited distribution and consumption of cod. More attention to the details of the European and Caribbean cod trade might have revised McNeill's theory about Louisbourg's alleged shift to entrepot trade as a substitute for fishing.

The risk that theory will sometimes overwhelm evidence is perhaps inevitable in a comparative study that must judge two discrete places by a single set of criteria. Nevertheless McNeill's comparison of Louisbourg and Havana within their respective empires is generally valid and illuminating. He raises interesting questions about military strategy, imperial policy, and colonial commerce, and if his answers sometimes seem hasty, that should only encourage better local work. And simply by introducing New France specialists to the Spanish comparison and vice versa, *Atlantic Empires* performs a valuable service.

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BRIAN MOERAN — *Okubo Diary: Portrait of a Japanese Valley*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. Pp. vii, 257.

For a long time western study of Japan was confined to a rare breed of people. Not that the investigation of Japan was a late-comer to the scholarly scene; already at the end of the seventeenth century the Westphalian physician Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716) compiled an encyclopaedic work covering in detail such diverse topics as acupuncture, legal codes, botanical rarities and social stratification after his two years of service with the Dutch East India Company there. But while the West was eager to import Japanese porcelain and lacquer ware, there was, apparently, no market for scholarly knowledge of the country. Kaempfer was unable to find a publisher for his two-volume work during his lifetime. Only after his death, when his nephew succeeded in selling the manuscript to Hans Sloane in London, did the work eventually appear as English translation.

Later scholars fared marginally better, but the club of so-called "Japanologists" remained an exclusive one. The American occupation of Japan after World War II produced a new crop of academics, many of whom started their studies in the service of the army. As Ph.D. theses went into print the foundations were laid for a solid body of Western scholarship on Japan. Generally speaking,