

as E-Verify, the REAL ID Act of 2005, the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, and cross-deputization of law enforcement under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act—to make life much more difficult for southern Latinos. This shift provides a good context for understanding why so many Latinos are now describing life in the region in more ambivalent and contradictory terms than they used to, since they have come under increasing attack from natives (especially politicians and working-class whites and blacks, as the various chapters illustrate) for their allegedly harmful cultural and criminal attributes.

The fourth key feature is muted optimism. While the chapters alert us to important problems faced by Latinos in the south at the end of the 2000s—most notably poverty, illegal status, and growing resentment among natives—they also identify ways in which various stakeholders have organized to assist Latino newcomers in local “place-making” projects. These stakeholders include, but are by no means limited to, employers, business and community leaders, unions, immigrant rights and race-based coalition organizations, faith-based organizations, journalists and newspaper editors. As such, the various chapters in this book not only document the kinds of complex local contestations that are taking place over Latino immigration at a crucial moment in the U.S. south’s history. They also provide an abstract blueprint for how individuals and communities throughout the nation could respond to immigration—one of the most salient consequences of globalization—in a more practical and humane way, should they decide they want to.

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*Crossing Borders with the Santo Niño de Atocha.* By Juan Javier Pescador. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. Pp. xxiv, 256. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$34.95 cloth.

Historian Juan Javier Pescador presents a well-researched account of an important religious icon of the Mexico-U.S. borderlands, the Santo Niño de Atocha. He traces its journey from a symbol of Spanish imperial power, to a symbol of resistance among northern Mexico’s migrants, bandits, captives, prostitutes, sick, and other impoverished peoples, to a patron of safe border crossings in Mexico and the United States. The research is largely based on archival materials, including parish records, private letters, church inventories, property records, and official state documents. Also analyzed are impressive quantities of religious media.

Chapter 1 begins the story of the Santo Niño in sixteenth-century Spain, as a mother and child statue known as Our Lady of Atocha and the Holy Child. A symbol of Spanish military, political and economic power, worshiped by royals and wealthy elites, the image came to Mexico and was revered exclusively by Spaniards as a symbol of Spain’s hegemony. With the Mexican Independence War (1810-1821) and its aftermath, Spanish elites fled or were expelled from Mexico and the icon began to be seen as a savior of the poor. By the late nineteenth century, the Niño, previously a mere attachment to Our

Lady of Atocha, became a freestanding saint. Readers are left wishing for more details on how and why the Niño's image became separated from its mother and why it apparently grew more popular than her in the Borderlands. In a country with prodigious levels of veneration for the Virgin Mary, why was the child's image more appealing for some? And was this "divorce" of mother and child a unique occurrence, or were there similar instances elsewhere?

Chapter 4 details the spread of the Niño's image northward to the United States, following the growth of the railroads, and its metamorphosis from a Borderlands saint to a border-crossing religious icon. Attempting to put the icon in the context of other border-crossing saints, the author provides discussions of a Guatemalan "saint" known as San Simón and the image of Juan Soldado in Tijuana. Yet, this is more distracting than helpful, as the text launches abruptly from the Santo Niño to Juan Soldado and even more abruptly to San Simón, jumping countries and contexts without so much as a transitional sentence between topics. This rather incongruous chapter goes on to describe the religious icon, Don Pedrito Jaramillo in Texas, Mexican American Easter street processions in Chicago, and a Virgin of Guadalupe procession in Michigan, failing to draw adequate parallels between these practices and devotions to the Santo Niño. Readers nearly forget about the Niño, as the author focuses on public religious devotions of U.S. and Mexican communities, literally ending the final chapter of the book with them.

While the author's first hand recollections of his family's devotions to the Santo Niño offer useful insider perspective that enriches the text, there are times when his affection for the icon slides into eulogy. By describing his manuscript as "a thanksgiving testimony praising the prominent position the Santo Niño de Atocha has enjoyed in the *altarcitos* of my family" (p. xiv), he infuses his own emotions into what is otherwise a meticulously documented history. His personal enthusiasm for the icon and others like it is obvious when he refers to the "well deserved" (p. 169) reputations of Juan Soldado and San Simón, without illustrating why he believes these reputations are deserved. He contends that the religious traditions of U.S. Mexican communities "challenge ethnic stereotypes" that portray Mexican immigrants as people "with no spiritual dimension" (p. 193), yet offers no support for the claim that Mexicans are stereotyped as unspiritual. Given that Latinos have historically been stereotyped as being *more* spiritual than other populations (see Arlene Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.* [2001]), the traditions the author contends challenge stereotypes could as easily be said to reinforce them. In cases like this, alternative interpretations are not proffered—possibly the result of the author's emotional connection to his material. Nonetheless, the book provides a useful illustration of the ways that politics, media, and immigration can transform and reinvent religious icons—a worthwhile read for scholars of globalization and culture.

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