



Early History of the Southwest through the Eyes of German-Speaking Jesuit Missionaries: A Transcultural Experience in the Eighteenth Century

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The history of the United States has been deeply determined by Germans throughout time, but hardly anyone has noticed that this was the case in the Southwest as well, known as Arizona/Sonora today, in the eighteenth century as Pimería Alta. This was the area where the Jesuits operated all by themselves, and many of them, at least since the 1730s, originated from the Holy Roman Empire, hence were identified as Germans (including Swiss, Austrians, Bohemians, Croats, Alsatians, and Poles). Most of them were highly devout and dedicated, hard working and very intelligent people, achieving wonders in terms of settling the native population, teaching and converting them to Christianity. However, because of complex political processes and the effects of the 'black legend' all Jesuit missionaries were expelled from the Americas in 1767, and the order was banned globally in 1773. As this book illustrates, a surprisingly large number of these German Jesuits composed extensive reports and even encyclopedias, not to forget letters, about the Sonoran Desert and its people. Much of what we know about that world derives from their writing, which proves to be fascinating, lively, and highly informative reading material.

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