



## Transfer, Begegnung, Skandalon? Neue Perspektiven auf die Jesuitenmissionen in Spanisch-Amerika, *edited* by Esther Schmid Heer, Nikolaus Klein, and Paul Oberholzer

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**ABSTRACT** This contribution offers a review of Esther Schmid Heer, Nikolaus Klein, Paul Oberholzer (eds.). 2019. *Transfer, Begegnung, Skandalon? Neue Perspektiven auf die Jesuitenmissionen in Spanisch-Amerika*. Studien zur christlichen Religions- und Kulturgeschichte 26. Basel: Schwabe / Stuttgart: Kohlhammer. ISBN 978-3-7965-3818-6 / 978-3-17-035494-4

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Colonialism in the South and Middle Americas could partially also be described as a history of the missionary orders, mainly the Blackfriars, the Greyfriars, the Carmelites and the Jesuits. The volume under review focuses on one of these orders, the Societas Ihesu. It is the result of an international conference that took place in Fribourg (Switzerland) in May 2017 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the dissolution of the order in 1767/68. [1]

The volume is divided into four parts. The first part deals with introductory matters and a contextualisation of the occurrences in the aftermath of the end of the South American Jesuit missionaries. Johann Meier shows that one of the reasons for the prohibition of the Jesuit Order was that the Marquês de Pombal, who served as the prime minister of the Portuguese crown, feared the order's political power. The result was nonetheless that the educational system in Brazil had to face a fundamental step-back. Mariano Delgado demonstrates that the singularity of the Societas Ihesu in South America should not be seen in their missionary endeavours, but in their ability to create an economical-social organisation according to the order's modern rationality. Fabian Fechner shows that the anti-Jesuit pictorial satire was only one side of the medal: Although the Jesuits mainly wrote against their adversaries, they were also able to employ caricatures themselves. Michael Sievernich gives a survey of the translation of all forms of Christianity (texts, music, culture) into the context of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. [2]

The book's second part deals with knowledge and knowledge transfer. Javier Francisco [3]

shows that the Jesuits in Paraguay recruited a significant number of members from all over Europe promising mission work, but offering work in the educational sector. The impact was thereby rather one-sided—European knowledge was transferred to the Americas whereas American knowledge found only few ways back to Europe. Irina Pawlowsky analyses a map that originally was created by the former Jesuit Franz Xaver Veigl and printed by the Lutheran printer Christoph Gottlieb von Murr in Nuremberg in 1785. Although the map is introduced as a map of the Río Marañón area (the northern Amazonas region), she shows that its main interest is to show the mission works of the Jesuits and display ethnographic knowledge. Whereas the Christians had built settlements, the ‘barbarian pagans’ were indicated as nomads. Among these nomadic areas are those where Portuguese-Brazilian Carmelites or Spanish Franciscans in the Ucayali region were active. Renate Dürr turns to the English Protestant translator John Lockman, who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, translated a number of French Jesuit letters into English. The translations were supplemented with critical comments that the translator called “antidotes” against the Jesuits’ “dangerous knowledge.” A closer look at the printer Chr. J. von Murr is given by Christoph Nebgen. After the Order’s dissolution in 1773, Murr acted as publisher of a huge number of letters, reports, and memories of several former Jesuits.

The third part of the volume is dedicated to the reception and further developments in former missionary stations in Spanish America. Corinna Gramatke gives first results of new research on art history in the Jesuit colonies in Paraguay. Other than is usually held, it seems that there were only few German artists active in the colonies. Only P. Anton Sepp SJ from Kaltern, South Tirol, has left traces as sculpturist. Ten further brethren with a German background are still known today. Eckhart Kühne gives a number of examples (including many images) for Chiquitos and Mojos in Bolivia that show that after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the missionary work as well as the exploitation of the indigenous inhabitants continued and came to a new zenith in both the craftsmanship in building churches and in art production for export. Sieglinde Falkinger reports on a tradition of the Chiquitanos to commemorate the sermons and traditions of the Jesuits in their own native language that is preserved until today. Severin Parzinger also turns to traditions of the Chiquitanos, namely their musical traditions. These were transmitted orally and their practise follows strict rules. The performance of the music is seen as a “holy duty”.

The final, fourth part is dedicated to traditions and renewals in the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. Guillermo Wilde demonstrates how the Jesuits’ Guaraní traditions were transformed and kept in the regions. Ignacio Telesca gives evidence of the sociological changes in Paraguay and the reductions after the expulsion of the Jesuits, which lost more than half of their inhabitants within thirty years. In the Paraguayan historiography after the Triple-Alliance-War (1864–1870), any influence of the Jesuits on nation-building was denied. Maximiliano von Thüngen turns to the mission, San Cosme y San Damián, that today is one of the tourist centres of the state of Paraguay. Nikolas Klein, finally, demonstrates how the Jesuits of the twentieth century contributed to a peaceful society in the South American states.

The articles of the volume give good examples of how the Jesuits’ missionary work in South America, especially in Paraguay and in Bolivia, was on the one hand part of the project of a lasting Christianisation of the continent, and had on the other hand a lasting impact on the political, cultural, and religious transformation of their societies, despite their expulsion in 1767/68. Although the intended readership are historians, the volume nonetheless has

some importance for religious studies as it demonstrates transformations of Jesuit religiosity in South American cultures.