In conclusion, for scholars with an interest in the fate of the Armada, the book has much to offer; its usefulness for the broader questions of Spanish history is limited.

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The aftermath of the Jesuit expulsion in 1767 and its effect upon the socioeconomic structure of northern New Spain’s missions are only beginning to be examined. This study by Cynthia Radding, regional historian for INAH in Hermosillo, concentrates on one group of missions, those of the Pimería Alta, and constitutes a solid contribution based on archival research.

The author is primarily concerned with analyzing how, from 1768 to 1850, mission pueblos with a communal agricultural base were converted into mestizo towns integrated into the Mexican governmental structure and characterized by private ownership of property. Although administrative shifts (from the Jesuits, to royal commissaries, to the Franciscans, to the ayuntamiento) influenced the process of change, the most crucial factors were the steady influx of gente de razón into the area and the growth of a regional market. Both brought increasing pressure upon mission lands and labor, contributed to the Indian depopulation of mission towns, and finally resulted in eradicating the economic base of the missions.

Although the administrative milieu was different, the process of mission secularization described by Radding for the Pimería Alta in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may well be applicable to other areas in earlier periods of Spanish rule where similar factors combined to undermine the mission as an economic institution.

S.M.D.


Reprinted in English translation after a quarter century, Father Baegert’s observations on Lower California remain available to delight the curious and scholarly. The translation, while generally reliable, misses Baegert’s cynical humor, thus misleading many into thinking he was an embittered cleric. Baegert’s treatise divides into three parts: one on the land, one on the people, and one on the mission history; a lengthy appendix refutes false reports about California. Intended for a European reader, his commentaries should be read as a supplement (corrective?) to Miguel Venegas’ Noticias de la California and Miguel del Barco’s Historia natural y crónica de la Antigua California.

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The broad and varied history of California permits the ongoing production of both scholarly and popular works in the field. Well written, accurate popular history performs