

Albrecht Classen

German Jesuits in Sonora as Contributors to the History of German Literature

After the Reformation in 1517 the Catholic Church was in dire need of responding to the Lutheran challenge, and the Counter Reformation, largely carried by the Jesuit Order (founded in 1540 by Ignatius of Loyola), successfully met this challenge. The Jesuits, however, did not limit their activities to Europe, and quickly discovered the unique opportunity to establish global missionary activities in the Far East, Africa, and in the New World. On 16 March 1540, Franciscus Xavier embarked on his journey to India, and soon he was followed by many other members of the new order who went to Brazil (1549), Florida (1556), and Peru (1557). The Jesuits founded a missionary province in Paraguay in 1609 under the leadership of Diego de Torres Bollo (1551-1638), and expanded their territory throughout South and then Central America in the following decades.¹ Jesuits arrived in Mexico as early as in 1572, and in 1591 they extended their efforts to Sinaloa at the northern border. In order to conquer the region beyond that point, the so-called Sonoran Desert,² for Christianity they sent a group of missionaries who, primarily under the leadership of Padre Eusebio Kino (1645-1711), soon were able to establish a vast network of missions. Many of these missionaries came from German speaking countries, some also from Bohemia, Croatia, present-day Poland, and a few from Italy. Kino himself was a descendent of an Italian family, but he received his entire education in present-day Austria and Germany.³ Many of the missionaries left extensive accounts, either in the form of letters or as treatises. Some of them even composed entire encyclopedias and elaborate travelogues in Latin, Spanish, or German. Those texts which were directly addressed to the missionaries's superiors were exclusively written in Latin and Spanish, those which had a broader appeal and were supposed to serve as informative but also entertaining literature were written in German.

In 1767 all Jesuits were expelled from the New World, and their monastic organization was banned because the European powers and the church suspected them of wrongdoing and political maneuvers to gain political power, and illegitimate accumulation of wealth.⁴ Nevertheless, during these almost two

hundred years the Jesuit missionaries in Northern Mexico can be credited for their enormous accomplishments in spiritual, intellectual, and also economic terms. Here, however, I will only focus on their writing and hence on their contribution to the history of German literature, more specifically, to German-American literature.⁵

The term "literature" in its traditional definition might be inappropriate when we discuss the missionaries' accounts because they do not, at least not intentionally, project fictional characters, events, or sceneries. Their narratives are concrete and detailed, often comparable to scientific reports, down to earth, realistic, and highly informative. Nevertheless, as recent advances in the theoretical orientation of German literary studies have illustrated, it would be a profound misconception to identify "literature" exclusively with fiction, and every fictional text with "literature." We might perhaps be able to draw a clearer distinction between both areas if we focus on modern literature, but narratology, poststructuralist theories, and even discussions about the fundamental principles of philology have forced us to incorporate the vast array of non-fictional narrative texts as part of the larger corpus of "literature."⁶ In other words, the Jesuit reports belong to the history of German literature under the rubric of factual narrations.⁷ This position is particularly well supported by medieval studies because medieval writers hardly ever cared for or knew about the strict separation between fictionality and factuality. Many chronicles, for example, contain legendary tales, entertaining narratives, biblical accounts, etc. At the same time many clearly "fictional" texts such as Arthurian romances and courtly love poetry contain a wealth of important factual information.⁸ Perhaps the best examples for the complexity of the matter would be Marco Polo's *Il Milione* (1299) and John Mandeville's *Travels* (middle of the fourteenth century). Whereas the first text was often decried for its fictionality and "millions" of lies, although it is primarily based on personal observations and meticulous eyewitness accounts of the Eastern World which nevertheless seemed unbelievable to Polo's contemporary readers, the latter experienced a dramatic popularity throughout the Late Middle Ages far into the Early Modern World. When scrutinized closely, however, Mandeville's claim on truth does not find support, as most of the elements of his fanciful travelogue are purely fictional.⁹

Recent scholarship has therefore taken the bold step and decided to incorporate the vast array of non-fictional texts composed in the early-modern period in the domain of medieval and early-modern German literature.¹⁰ In recent years Germanists have also acknowledged the fact that science and literature, historical and philosophical writings, the novel and the essay, the letter and the poem all belong to the same body of cultural documents, perhaps best summarized as narrative texts. With respect to the essay as a literary genre, John McCarthy points out: "the essayist's mode of expression is a hybrid of the literary and the didactic, of lively poetry and sober scholarly science. From that hybrid character arises its hermeneutic perplexity as a boundary work between the two realms of specificity and non-specificity."¹¹ Similarly, the vast body of

Jesuit travel accounts and reports also transgresses the boundaries between science and literature, between theological reflection and poetic impression.

The methodological approaches to a Jesuit travel account applied by a Germanist, however, would be different from those used by historians and theologians. The literary scholar examines the language, structure, imagery, topoi, themes, motifs, and other textual aspects, and is less concerned with the actual facts such as dates, names, numbers, etc.¹² Even a very scholarly document, such as an encyclopedic treatise, a geographical report, or a critical discussion of anthropological and biological elements invites a critical examination as a literary document. In this sense, the Jesuit travel accounts represent important, though heretofore hardly examined contributions to German Renaissance, Reformation, and Baroque literature.

Many of the Jesuit reports which were sent from all over the world to the European headquarters met with great interest and were carefully collected and even translated into the vernacular.¹³ Joseph Stöcklein compiled one of the most important collections of travel accounts and missionary reports and also commented on the padres' observations, experiences, and accomplishments. His monumental anthology not only provides a wealth of information about the history of Jesuit missionary work, but also serves as a significant literary document representative of seventeenth and eighteenth-century German literature.¹⁴ In his prologue he raises his voice to praise the missionaries' selfless efforts for the spiritual rescue of millions of non-Christians. In particular, Stöcklein points out that the true reward for their enormous efforts would await them in the afterlife, whereas here on this earth they suffered from persecution, mockery, imprisonment, torture, death penalties, and other pains and misery. In his admiration for the Jesuits' astonishing feats in the name of God, the author resorts to poetic language and creates literary images of how God would eventually reward them for all their struggle: Their hunger from which they suffered here on earth would be compensated with heavenly fruit of the tree of life (1v); their thirst would be quenched with water from the river of eternal joy; their nakedness would be covered with the coat of divine glory; and the heat which torched their bodies would be cooled down with the heavenly dew, etc. (1v). The entire prologue is marked by a considerably poetic language which derives its source from religious inspiration and missionary ideals and zeal.

Stöcklein also explains the reasons for having translated the Jesuit letters from Latin, Spanish or French into German: "damit/gleichwie in andern Ländern/also auch in Teutschland euer Ruhm verkündet: euere Ehr wider gifttige Zungen und Federn hergestellt: anebst [*sic*] viel junge zu einer so wichtigen Sach taugliche Männer zur Bekehrung dern Heyden angefrischet" (2r of the "Vorrede. I. Absatz. Zuschrift des Verfassers"; so that, like in other countries, your glory will be proclaimed in Germany as well, that your honor be reestablished and defended against evil tongues and pens; and that many young men, capable to convert heathens, will be inspired for such an important cause). Obviously, Stöcklein argues against the so-called "Black Legend"

denigrating the entire Jesuit Order (and the Spanish Kingdom as well), and also attempts to appeal to young men to join the Jesuit Order and become missionaries as well. Moreover, Stöcklein demonstrates his clear understanding that a travel account promises to be highly popular because the readers would be able to traverse the entire world without ever leaving their homes. Consequently he relies on his audience's strong sense of curiosity: "weil nemlich fast allen Menschen fremdes Brod besser zu schmäcken pflaget" (2r; because almost all people enjoy more the bread from others). In addition, he directly appeals to theologians, lawyers, medical doctors, philosophers, mathematicians, geographers, ethical teachers, and the entire range of craftsmen to consult the Jesuit accounts because they all would find fascinating, curious, unusual, exciting, and informative material to read in his collection:

Die Ethici oder Sitten-Lehrer werden mehr als alle andere in Durchblätterung dieses Wercks die Sitten / Gebräuch / Tugenden und Laster: die Geschicht-Schreiber aber einen Hauffen merckwürdiger Geschichten: die Staats-Leute viel Zerrüttung gantzer Königreichen und Ländern: die Höflinge einen ewigen Glück-Wechsel: die Soldaten etliche sieghaffte Kriegs=List / Schlachten und Feld=Züg: Die Handwercks-Leut (als die Töpfer / Weber und andere mehr) etwelche Kunstgriffe ersehen / nach welcher Vorschrift / diese letztere einen feinen Porcellan, schönen Musseline, die zarteste Leinwand und andere schätzbare Arbeit in unsern Ländern verfertigen können. (3r)

(The teachers of ethics or morals will learn, more than all other [readers], while they flip through this volume, about customs, habits, virtues, and vices; the historians will find a pile of curious stories; the politicians will hear about the destruction of entire kingdoms and countries; the courtiers will be confronted with the eternal up and down swings of fortune; the soldiers will hear about many successful military strategies, battles, and warfare; craftsmen, such as potters, weavers, etc., will understand how to make fine porcelain, delicate cloth, the best canvas, and other valuable products in our own countries.)

Curiously, his German translations also served the purpose to convince the Christian theologians in Europe that the ancient teachings by the Indian "Brachmännern" (2v; Brahmins) not only offer delightful and entertaining reading material, but also provide insight in the significant interaction between theology and poetry: "folgends ihr Religion und Aberglauben in deroselben alten Liedern / Reimen und Gesängen haubtsächlich begriffen seye." Although Stöcklein clearly specifies that non-Christian religions are nothing but "Glaub / Wahn und Irrthum" (belief, phantom, and error), he nevertheless assumes that the study of their texts would be pleasurable and instructive. For the

geographer, on the other hand, the Jesuits' accounts provide the opportunity to learn more about the world, gain firsthand witness reports about previously unknown countries, correct the traditional maps, and gain reliable information: "unsere Priester hingegen die Sach/wie sie an sich selbst ist/uns aus eigener Erfahruß gleichsam mit dem Finger zuverlässig gezeigt haben" (3r; our priests, however, have reported about the situation as it is, based on their own experience).

Stöcklein's narrative strategy also concerns the public image of the Jesuit missionaries who have accepted extremely difficult and harsh living conditions abroad in order to serve God and to convert the heathens. The comparison with Indian "Brachmänner," however, causes problems because their asceticism might seem comparable if not superior to the Christian missionaries' efforts. Yet Stöcklein finds comfort in the ethnocentric and completely fictional claim that these non-Christian holy men "heimlich in der Schwelgerey/Unzucht /Knaben=Lieb und andern Lastern/wie die Säu in dem Sumpff sich herum weltzen. Ein Missionarius hingegen wandert in der Gegenwart GOTTes: er befließt sich auf alle Weise in der That und heimlich ohne Gleißnerey ein solcher zu seyn / für welchen er äusserlich angesehen wird" (3v; secretly wallow in debaucheries, adultery, pederasty, and other vices, like pigs in the mud. A missionary, on the other hand, lives in the presence of God, and he strives in every way to be honest both in his external behavior and in private, and to live up to the public values according to which he is judged).

Obviously, Stöcklein, explicitly struggled to create a public defense of the Jesuits and so he did not necessarily aim for an objective evaluation of the missionaries and their effectiveness. Instead he translated and collated many letters and reports to support the claim of the Jesuits' truly Christian mission and their outstanding success in converting heathens all over the world. However we have to qualify his account, and likewise the many reports of Jesuit missionaries in ideological, anthropological, and political terms, the few examples quoted above demonstrate that here we deal with an extraordinary author who successfully conveys his messages to his audience and thus builds strong arguments against the so-called "Black Legend" which targeted the Jesuits and in favor of the order at large. Stöcklein proves to be not only an outstanding writer in his own terms, he also reveals his extraordinary interest in geographical, anthropological, artistic, political, and theological matters. Moreover, he demonstrates a sharp mind as a linguist, being aware, for instance, that his South German readers might not be sufficiently familiar with the technical jargon for things pertaining to sailing ships and hence provides an extensive list of specific terms (6vf.).

According to Stöcklein's own statement he conceived of his task as that of a historian and collector who tries to preserve a large number of old documents relevant for the history of the Jesuit order: "So gern als ich übrigens bekenne / daß in diesem Werck etliche Brief zum Vorschein kommen / welche schon zimlich lang in dem Staub gelegen seynd / mithin den neu = gierigen Leser nicht

vergnügen wurden / wann nicht eben diese Schrifften bißher in keiner Sprach gedruckt / sondern von mir grösten Theils aus dernjenigen / so sie aus Indien nach Europam geschrieben haben / eigenhändigen Urkunden jetzt zum ersten mal wären an den Tag gebracht worden" ("Vorrede" or prologue of "Des Ersten Theils"; I also gladly admit that many letters included in this volume have finally surfaced which have been lost in dust and thus could not entertain the curious reader. These tracts have never before been printed anywhere. In large part I have brought them to light, using personal manuscripts which were sent from India to Europe).

The actual collection consists of an enormous treasure of original letters or letters translated into German by a large number of Jesuit authors. Undoubtedly, many of these letters transcend the limitations of their genre as the writers aspire to compose elaborate travel accounts with lively descriptions of their personal experiences and observations at their missionary sites. No. 48, for instance, is the report by Antonius Sepp from Japeyu in Paraguay (1692), and no. 52 consists of the report by Adam Kaller from Mexico (1688). No. 53 is the letter by Adam Gilg from Sonora (1692), whereas letter no. 54 was written in the French province in North America, composed by Gabriel Marest in 1700. In no. 56 Marcus Antonius Kappus provides another detailed description of Sonora (1699). With letter no. 58, written by Petrus Martin in 1699, the editor has moved to India. In the second volume, published in 1726, the global perspective gains even more weight, as Stöcklein includes letters from Ethiopia, the Tartar region, China, Mexico, then again India, and so on. Occasionally some maps are included, and at times also some illustrations of curious objects. The reader is invited to join the writer on a world-wide tour and to accompany Jesuit missionaries wherever they went and from wherever they reported back to Europe. Stöcklein is clearly interested in providing as much information as possible, and also in establishing a solid case for the Jesuits as praiseworthy, selfless, and inspiring missionaries.

From this particular perspective, the monumental collection of texts undoubtedly fulfilled its purpose as the translated letters prove to be vivid documents of the Jesuits' individual achievements at their missions all over the world. At the same time, however, both Stöcklein and the vast number of epistolary authors demonstrate their considerable skill as writers who succeed in outlining their experiences in a well-structured manner and in highly vivid terms. Obviously they were all well-educated in their Jesuit schools in Germany and elsewhere and had acquired a considerable degree of literary learnedness.

Adam Gilg, for instance, discusses in great detail, but without ever boring his readers, the geographical conditions of the Sonora province. Then, he drafts an overview of the life style and habits of the Seri Indians, subsequently examining the linguistic problems with which he is faced as a German speaker in the New World. He also incorporates historical and political aspects, and mentions, among many other things, that their visitor Johannes Salvatierra charged him and Padre Kino to build a ship and explore California Baja. Gilg

provides exact descriptions of the dresses worn by the Indians and their body decoration, their lack of shame, their craft and trade, and finally their responses to the Europeans in their behavior, attitudes, and actions.

Stöcklein's monumental collection incorporates the accounts from the missionaries in America, but his perspective is really global. For our purpose, however, the contributions of those Jesuits who worked in Sonora deserve particular attention. Although these missionaries primarily composed letters and treatises—traditionally not considered as literary material—among them we also encounter significant writers who published heavy tomes about their experiences and observations, modelled in the vein of a long tradition of apodemic or travel literature.¹⁵

Ignaz Pfefferkorn's *Beschreibung der Landschaft Sonora* printed in 1794 and 1795, translated into English in 1949 and into Spanish in 1984, finally reprinted as a facsimile in 1996, beautifully serves as a magnificent example. Although Pfefferkorn (1725-after 1795) intended, as both the title of his massive two volume "description" and the highly diverse content indicate, to provide his readers with an encyclopedic overview of Sonora, including its fauna and flora, its people and natural resources, the work includes many narrative sections which mark it also as a literary product. One example of many might be enough. Pfefferkorn refers to an experiment with butterflies and mentions how he succeeded to capture them alive. Their beauty dazzles him and makes him sing a poetic song of admiration:

Der kunstreichste Pensel [*sic*] kann die Pracht nicht erreichen, welche alsdann vor meinen Augen ausgebreitet lag. Ein Schmetterling zeigte an dem feinem und zarten Gewebe seiner Flügel die vortrefflichste Purpurfarbe; ein anderer das niedlichste Violet. Dieser stellte sich in hell=gelber, jener in himmelblauer Kleidung dar.¹⁶

(The most skilled artist's brush could not match the splendor which then lay spread before my eyes. The delicate texture of one butterfly's wings displayed the most exquisite purple color; another the most beautiful violet. This one appeared in light yellow; that one in sky-blue dress.¹⁷)

Pfefferkorn here reveals his strong religious inspiration and reflects his love for God in a poetic, hymn-like literary outburst:

Sie [the soul] fühlet alsdann gleichsam das unlaugbare Dasein des Schöpfers: sie erstaunet über seine unbegreiflichen Werke. Sie wird gedemüthigt vor seiner unermessenen Größe; und durch die süßesten Triebe ermuntert, dem Urheber der Natur das gebührende Opfer der Verehrung, des Lobes, und der Dankbarkeit darzubringen. (I, 383)

(The soul feels the undeniable existence of the Creator; one is astonished at His incomprehensible work. One is humbled by His unmeasured grandeur, and one is animated by the most tender desires to bring to nature's Creator the fitting sacrifice of veneration, praise, and thankfulness. [143])

Pfefferkorn writes very much as a missionary, and specifically emphasizes his personal experiences in this role as priest, healer, counselor, scientist, geographer, farmer, anthropologist, etc.: "Ich selbst hab oft das Glück gehabt, dergleichen freudenvollen Fang zu thun. Nie aber hat man die ganze Nation bereden können, ihr armseliges Land zu verlassen" (11f.; I myself often had the good fortune to make such a joyful catch [of a new Christian]. But never was it possible to persuade the whole nation to leave its poor country", 30).

Otherwise, Pfefferkorn heavily relies on the scientific-encyclopedic approach and mostly utilizes a matter of fact style. Nevertheless, even then his account proves to be well written, fascinating, and highly informative.

Joseph Och (1725-73) was much more concerned with his own personal experiences and provides a biographical framework for his report. Although his account also strives to be precise in his account and to proffer concrete information about the country, its people, and the environment, he always injects a personal observation and narrates in the first person. Many passages in his text prove to be, as far as we can tell on the basis of the English translation, of a high literary quality because of his witticism, his sharp mind, and the eloquent descriptions of events which had occurred on his journey and during his time as missionary in Sonora. The following example might illustrate this phenomenon particularly well:

One of the most pleasant days of my life was the ninth of May in the year 1754 when, after reiterated entreaties, I finally received permission from our General in Rome, Father Ignatius Visconti, to travel to the Indian mission. This joyous message was personally delivered to me in my chamber in Heidelberg by the Provincial . . .¹⁸

Och obviously had a very good eye for culturally interesting details, for entertaining events, and significant aspects of his surrounding. Most important, though, proves to be his considerable skill in writing about these observations. One of these deserve, above all, to be paraphrased and analyzed at greater length. The journey with a tall ship to the New World clearly excited the missionary and left a deep impression on him. He combines personal observations with hearsay reports, and mentions, for instance, that "most officials ship to the Indies with only a penny in their pockets, but after a period of five years return as wealthy people with forty to fifty thousand pesos" (21). Once the ship had taken off from the port of Santa María near Cadiz, a highly amusing spectacle occurred which Och discusses with humor and surprise, undoubtedly aware that

this anecdote would increase the narrative quality of his report. As soon as the ship had left the port, a large crowd of poor people came rushing up in little barks and stormed the ship in order to get a free transport across the Atlantic. Although the captain angrily tried to chase them away, using a cudgel, all his efforts were to no avail. A few of them he could throw overboard, but they quickly climbed back and the rest were hidden by the sailors. Och admits that this human comedy made him laugh more than ever before and finally comments: "Truly, what mice are in a house, these fellows are on a ship." Whereas the regular travelers often had to suffer because of low water rations and food supplies, these beggars secretly took as they wished. And surprisingly, a few days later, "gradually one after another appears to help with the work so as to earn leftovers from the crew" (22).

Wherever we turn in Och's account, he always demonstrates a considerable literary ability to enrich the sober and factual missionary report with personal perspectives and opinions, with short anecdotes, and with individual comments. In other words, here we encounter a true travel author who created a first-rate literary autobiography based on his experiences in Sonora. But he also dealt with the expulsion of the Jesuit missionaries from America at great length, and added an extensive encyclopedic description of "America in General" (119). Here, in the introduction to the first chapter on the characteristics of the Indians, Och makes a statement about their mistreatment by the Spaniards which deserves to be quoted in full because of its remarkable open-minded, to some extent even tolerant attitude which places him right next to the famous Bishop de las Casas:¹⁹

To the eternal shame of mankind, it was necessary to declare, and even through a peremptory papal decree to expound as an article of faith, that these people were our brethren and true human beings. The early Spaniards through their cruelty transgressed to such a degree that many thousands, yes, even millions of souls were inhumanly offered up to their avarice. (119)

This does not mean that Och would be free of the typical stereotypes which most of the white explorers and missionaries held regarding the Indian population. The Indians lack, as he believes, in upbringing and understanding, they are primitive and "incapable of having other, higher rational thoughts" (120). Nevertheless, Och greatly despises, like most of the German-speaking missionaries, primarily the Spaniards and harshly criticizes them for their cruel treatment of the native population. Whereas the latter are the objects of his missionary attempts, hence require from him to believe in their learning abilities, transforming them into good Christians and members of a Christian society, the Spaniards rank even lower for him and most other German-speaking missionaries because they came from Europe and were raised as Christians, yet display a morally worse and more sinful behavior than the Indians.

All these comments do not transform Och's account into a fictional travelogue, instead he constantly proves to be an alert observer, interested in many different aspects of daily life, theological issues, and scientific explorations. Nevertheless, the way how he reflects upon his experiences and how he summarizes his findings, unquestionably qualify him as a highly literate writer who attracts and maintains both his contemporary and twentieth-century readers' attention. Certainly, Och, like all the other Jesuit writers, intends to instruct and teach his audience, but the way in which he conveys his information demonstrates his outstanding mastery of the German language and assigns him the rank of a first-rate author of travel literature.

Johann Jakob Baegert (1717-72), who reached Mexico in 1750 and spent his seventeen years of missionary activity in California Baja, also left behind a fascinating report, both literary and factual at the same time, about the peninsula and the native population. More so than any of the other writers Baegert addresses specific literary issues relevant for the composition of his account, discarding older reports written by Spanish authors, ridiculing their clumsy and wordy style, and their "lengthy and dry narrations which do not interest anyone in England, France, or Germany . . . Instead of pleasure and interest, they give boredom and drowsiness to the reader."²⁰ At the same time he reveals, in comparison with all other Jesuit authors, the most negative attitude towards the natives and the lands they live in: "Everything concerning California is of such little importance that it is hardly worth the trouble to take a pen and write about it. Of poor shrubs, useless thorn bushes and bare rocks, of piles of stone and sand without water or wood, of a handful of people who, besides their physical shape and ability to think, have nothing to distinguish them from animals, what shall or what can I report?" (5).

Nevertheless, perhaps this negativity and overly critical approach, typically Eurocentric arrogance, and glaring loathing for foreign cultures provided Baegert with the decisive impetus and energy to compose a highly literary eye-witness documentary about the fauna and flora, and also about the native population: "It seems as if the curse of the Lord, laid upon the earth after the fall of Adam, fell especially hard on California and had its effect" (33). He also expressed his strong disapproval of the way how the Indians raise their children and, at the same time, sharply attacks liberal European writers who idealize the alleged utopian values practiced by indigenous people: "May God further enlighten the Indians and preserve Europe, and especially Germany, from rearing children in the Indian manner, which in part corresponds to the plan outlined by that base-minded zealot J. J. Rousseau in his *Emile*, and also to the moral teachings of some modern philosophers belonging to the same fraternity of dogs" (76).

The reader is left with a bitter aftertaste at the end, almost with a sense of dislike of this writer because of his racist and Eurocentric attitude. Nevertheless, two points clearly speak in his favor, first, his astonishing ability to provide a crystal-clear picture of the world of California Baja in geographical, biological, and anthropological terms, and secondly, his impressive literary skills in

formulating his observations and experiences in the New World. He refutes those writers who heavily rely on secondary sources, tend to digress in their account, and excessively pad their report with unnecessary references to historical events, previous explorers and travel writers such as Marco Polo, and heavily rely on irrelevant comparisons with the social, legal, and geographical conditions in other parts of America (7). Baegert includes everything he has to say about his life as a missionary and what he learned throughout the many years abroad, and he leaves out what does not really pertain to his treatise. Obviously he was effective as a Jesuit missionary, because the Indians lamented and cried when he had to leave the country together with all other padres in 1767 (170).

This account is consistent with those already delivered by Padre Kino (died 1711) and Ignaz Pfefferkorn (see above) who all observed that Jesuit missionaries were, as a rule, friendly welcomed and regarded as a great benefit to the Indians. Nevertheless, his report is that of a highly critical, almost contemptuous person who applies his outstanding literary abilities to describe in a very meticulous and sensitive manner small and large details, events and people.²¹ Baegert is rightfully praised for his accomplishments both as missionary and writer, but we might not like what he has to say because he simply does not sound, worse than all his fellow missionaries and writers, politically correct.

Some of the missionaries seem to have adapted entirely to the use of Spanish and composed their treatises in that language. A famous example would be Juan Nentvig, or Johann Nentuig (1713-68), who wrote his *Descripción geográfica, natural, y curiosa de la provincia de Sonora por un amigo del servicio de Dios y del rey nuestro señor* (Description of the geography, nature, and curiosity of the province of Sonora by a friend in the service of God and our lord the king), or *Rudo Ensayo* (Crude Essay), in 1764.²² Because of his choice of Spanish we cannot count Nentvig among those contributing to eighteenth-century German literature in the narrow sense of the word, but it is certain that he as well demonstrated outstanding skills as a writer, and this both with respect to the concrete information which he supplied, and with respect to the style and language which he employed to convey these information.

Many other authors could be mentioned here. Joseph Stöcklein's extensive collection of letters and reports, but also Bernd Hausberger's recently published bio-bibliography confirm that the missionaries were highly successful in translating their exceptional experiences in the New World into remarkable scientific and literary documents. Many text corpora are still waiting to be edited, such as the large correspondence by Johann Anton Balthasar and P. Philipp Segesser, both their works still preserved today in private family archives in Lucerne, Switzerland.²³ Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, following Stöcklein's footsteps, published many of the Jesuits' accounts, dictionaries, travelogues, and letters in 1804,²⁴ but recognized them only as "factual" documents of Jesuit missionary history. This claim cannot be disputed as all the Jesuit writings have critically contributed to the understanding of the history of Jesuit missionary activities in the Sonoran Desert. In this sense, to be sure, Och, Pfefferkorn,

Nentvig, Balthasar, and Segesser, and many others deserve our recognition as outstanding chroniclers and historians. Anthropologists and theologians have often profitably studied their statements and used their observations as witnesses of the early-modern history of Sonora.

The Jesuits' role as participants in the history of German literature has only recently been recognized, although only few of these texts have been subjected to a critical reading from a literary point of view.²⁵ The reasons are manifold, one being that Jesuit literature—whatever genre or from whatever time period—generally has never enjoyed the same level of recognition as other travelogues, religious texts, and secular literature. The other reason simply is that these texts have, by and large attracted only the interest of historians and anthropologists and have remained largely unknown to literary scholars. And finally, although some of the major texts by Kino, Pfefferkorn, Och, Nentvig, and others have been translated into English and/or Spanish, a vast portion of this literature still awaits its modern editors.

Certainly, not every scrap of manuscript or printed material from the Jesuit missionaries can be identified as literature, although all of these texts are of greatest historical interest to us. But a surprisingly large number of their extensive writings clearly demonstrate their literary skills in delivering attractive, fascinating, thought-provoking and highly readable accounts of the New World, Northern Mexico and Sonora. Their texts are lucidly written, well structured, at times very personal, at other times profoundly scientific and objective. A detailed stylistic analysis, for which there is no space in this article, would certainly confirm this preliminary observation. Of course, the ethnic stereotypes, individual prejudice, Eurocentric orientation, and other nowadays certainly reproachable aspects in the Jesuits' writing are undeniable, although they are quite typical for their time and should not influence our aesthetic evaluation. These documents need not be evaluated from a strictly anthropological point of view, although even in this respect they provide valuable information; instead they should be considered as texts in the first place, and as such require a literary-historical interpretation as well.

To conclude, many of the German-speaking missionaries prove to be excellent authors who bring to life the world of Sonora in a highly vivid manner and attractive literary style. Their letters, travel accounts, and lengthy treatises represent an important, though hitherto generally ignored contribution to the history of seventeenth and eighteenth-century German literature. As authors who spent many years in the Sonoran Desert, or, in a region which today is considered to be part of the U.S. state of Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora they are of considerable interest to German-American studies and deserve to be studied in greater detail. Historians and anthropologists of the Southwest have long recognized the relevance of the Jesuit literature for their work; it is now up to the literary historian to follow suit and recognize the valuable contributions of these Jesuit authors to the literature of their time. The comparison of Stöcklein's introductory comments with those texts composed by

Padre Kino, Ignaz Pfefferkorn and Joseph Och, among others, indicates that they all succeeded, though in fairly different styles, to couch their observations and comments in intriguing travel accounts of a high literary caliber.

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Notes

¹ Andrea Falkner, "Jesuiten," *Kulturgeschichte der christlichen Orden in Einzeldarstellungen*, ed., Peter Dinzelbacher and James Lester Hogg, Kröners Taschenausgabe, 450 (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997), 204-41, here 263f.

² The Sonoran Desert extends from the southern tip of California Baja to the northwest border of modern Arizona near Needles in the vicinity of the Colorado River. The northern border passes near Wickensburg (northwest of Phoenix) to Lake Roosevelt, and the eastern border runs east of the towns of Oracle and Tucson. Almost the entire Mexican province of Sonora, marking the southern and southeastern border, belongs to the Sonoran Desert. I have consulted a map located in the Library of the University of Arizona, Map Collection, G3302. S6 1980z, S6.

³ Thomas J. Campbell, S.J. *Pioneer Priests of North America*, 3 vols. (New York: Fordham UP, 1921); Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Rim of Christendom: A Biography of Eusebio Francisco Kino, Pacific Coast Pioneer*, Foreword by John L. Kessel (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1936; Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1984); Annamaria Kelly, *Kino alla conquista dell'America* (n.p.: Southwestern Mission Research Center, 1980).

⁴ Charles Gibson, *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New*, Borzoni Books on Latin America (New York: Knopf, 1971).

⁵ Bernd Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa im kolonialen Mexiko: Eine Bio-Bibliographie*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur der iberischen und iberamerikanischen Länder, 2 (Vienna; Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik-R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995). For a critical evaluation, see my review in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 104, 3-4 (1994): 412-14.

⁶ *The Future of the Middle Ages: Medieval Literature in the 1990s*, ed. William D. Paden (Gainesville; Tallahassee, et al.: UP of Florida, 1994); *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

⁷ Wendell V. Harris, *The Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory*, Reference Sources for the Social Sciences and Humanities, 12 (New York; Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 99-105 (fiction) and 258-66 (narratology).

⁸ Fritz Peter Knapp, *Historie und Fiktion in der mittelalterlichen Gattungspoetik: Sieben Studien und ein Nachwort*, Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1997).

⁹ Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca; London: Cornell UP, 1988).

¹⁰ Kurt Ruh, "Vorwort," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2d ed. K. Ruh, et al. (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1978), 1:vi.

¹¹ John A. McCarthy, *Crossing Boundaries: A Theory and History of Essay Writing in German, 1680-1815* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1989), 321. See also Steven D. Martinson, *Harmonious Tensions: The Writings of Friedrich Schiller* (Newark: U of Delaware P; London: Associated UPs, 1996).

¹² Wolfgang Neuber, *Fremde Welt im europäischen Horizont: Zur Topik der deutschen Amerika-Reiseberichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, Philologische Studien und Quellen, 121 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1991), 11-34.

¹³ Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Nachrichten von verschiedenen Ländern des Spanischen Amerika aus eigenhändigen Aufsätzen einiger Missionare der Gesellschaft Jesu herausgegeben* (Halle: Johann Christian Hendel, 1809).

¹⁴ For pragmatic purposes I will not copy the superscripts traditionally used in early-modern German prints to reflect the umlaut. Instead, I will resort to the modern umlaut. Joseph Stöcklein, *Allerhand So Lehr = als Geist = reiche Brief / Schriften und Reis = Beschreibungen / Welche von denen Missionariis der Gesellschaft Jesu Aus Beyden Indien / und andern Über Meer gelegenen Ländern / Seit An. 1642 biß auf das Jahr 1726 in Europa angelangt seynd*. Jetzt zum erstenmal Theils aus Handschriftlichen Urkunden / theils aus denen Französischen *Lettres Edifiantes* verteutscht und zusammen getragen (Augsburg; Graz: Philips / Martins / und Joh. Veith seel. Erben, 1726). I have used the copy in the Special Collection, University of Arizona, call number BV 2290 A 27. 1642. Oversize.

¹⁵ W. Neuber, *Fremde Welt*. See also Christinae Hippler, *Die Reise nach Jerusalem: Untersuchungen zu den Quellen, zum Inhalt und zur literarischen Struktur der Pilgerberichte des Spätmittelalters*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, series I: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 968 (Frankfurt a. M.; New York: Lang, 1987).

¹⁶ Ignaz Pfefferkorn, *Beschreibung der Landschaft Sonora samt andern merkwürdigen Nachrichten von den inneren Theilen Neu-Spaniens und Reise aus Amerika bis in Deutschland*, rpt. of the 1794 Cologne ed., ed. Ingo Schröder, Beiträge zur Forschungsgeschichte (Bonn: Holos, 1996), 1:382.

¹⁷ Ignaz Pfefferkorn, *Sonora: A Description of the Province*, trans. and annotated by Theodore E. Treutlein (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1989, rpt), 143.

¹⁸ *Missionary in Sonora: The Travel Reports of Joseph Och, S.J. 1755-1767*, trans. and annotated by Theodore E. Treutlein (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1965), 1. Unfortunately, the original German text was not available to me. It was printed by Murr in 1808 in his *Nachrichten von verschiedenen Ländern*, 1:1-292; see B. Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, 265.

¹⁹ José Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*, Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory (Norman; London: U of Oklahoma P, 1993), 164-79.

²⁰ Johann Jacob Baegert, *Observations in Lower California*, trans. from the original German with an introduction and notes, by M. M. Brandenburg and Carl L. Baumann (Berkeley; Los Angeles: U of California P, 1952; rpt. 1979); originally printed in Mannheim, Germany, under the title *Nachrichten von der Amerikanischen Halbinsel Californien: mit einem zweyfachen Anhang falscher Nachrichten. Geschrieben von einem Priester der Gesellschaft Jesu, welcher lang darinn diese letztere Jahr gelebt hat* (Mannheim: Churfürstl. Hof- und Academie-Buchdruckerei, 1771, 2d ed. 1771). Unfortunately, I had no access to the original.

²¹ Hausberger, 104: "Dieses Werk wie auch seine Briefe weisen ihn als einen sehr realistischen und kritischen, ja überkritischen Beobachter aus, der an allem etwas zu nörgeln hatte." (This work, and so his letters, characterize him as a very realistic and critical, even overcritical observer who grumbled over everything.)

²² Juan Nentvig, S.J., *Rudo Ensayo: A Description of Sonora and Arizona in 1764*, trans., clarified, and annotated by Alberto Francisco Pradeau and Robert R. Rasmussen (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1980).

²³ Hausberger, 16.

²⁴ Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Conspectus Bibliothecae glotticae universalis propediem edendae operis quinquaginta annorum* (Nürnberg: Monath und Kusseriano, 1804). A copy of this work is available on microfilm at the Library of the University of Cincinnati, Microfilm 167, frame no. 1079.

²⁵ See, for example, my study "Padre Eusebio Kino—ein österreichisch-italienischer Missionar aus Tirol in Sonora / Mexiko und Arizona," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 105, 3-4 (1997): 441-66; and "Baroque Jesuit Literature: The German-American Connection: With Special Emphasis on German Jesuits as Observers and Commentators of Southwest Indian Culture in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Attempts of Intercultural Communication," *Studien zur Literatur des 17. Jahrhunderts: Gedenkschrift für Gerhard Spellerberg* (1937-1996), ed. Hans Feger, Chloe, 27 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), 345-*Studies* 32 (1997): 21-45.