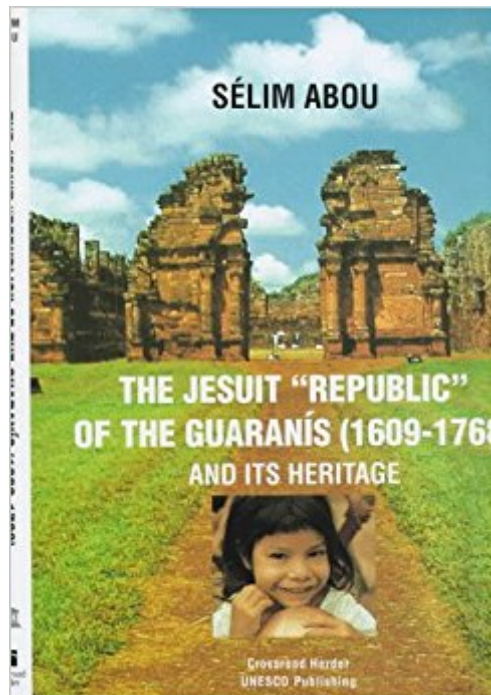




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The Jesuit Republic Of Guaranis (1609-1768) And Its Heritage



Synopsis

In America, between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the expansion of the Society of Jesus appeared as the spiritual and humanistic counterpart of the military conquest and political domination. From Canada to Rio de la Plata, including California, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, the method consisted in regrouping the natives in relatively autonomous villages that would be conducive to teaching and evangelization. Within this system, the thirty "Reductions" of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, built and inhabited by the Guaranis, stand out. Thanks to the innate dispositions of these Indians, their cultural and spiritual affinities with Jesuits, and to the actions on the part of the Jesuits that were both prudent and daring, what has been called the "Jesuit Republic of the Guaranis" came into being, which lasted one hundred and fifty years (1609-1768) as the scene of a religious and human experience without parallel, where Indians were allowed access to the status of free citizens, in all respects equal to the Spaniards and even culturally superior to them in many ways. Since the time of the Enlightenment, the experience of the Reductions of Paraguay has never ceased to intrigue scholarshistorians, anthropologists, political theorists - and artistsfilm directors (Roland Joffe, director of *The Mission*) and playwrights. It remains a unique event in the history of human society.

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Customer Reviews

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The history of the Guaranis is both fascinating and tragic. Anyone interested in these people should rent or purchase the movie, "The Mission," which is one of the most accurate depictions of the Jesuits, Rome and the Guaranis. Rome, ie the Roman Catholic Church, was very much in bed with both the Spanish and the Portugese in their conquering of the Guaranis. Although the Jesuits attempted to protect the Guaranis, they too eventually gave in to Rome and took the safe road, selling out the Guaranis. Thsi book is indeed a wonderful find for anyone interested in the culture of Argentina and the countries where the Guaranis are found.

I love this book. The photos are gorgeous, and it's the only really good book I have been able to find on this subject. The story of the Jesuits and the Guarani deserves a book that can do it justice, and this one does. It's on the short list of things I'd grab if my house was on fire.

Somebody said that wars are too important a thing to leave them to military men. I would say that the history of the jesuit missions is too important a thing to leave it to jesuits. The book is a collection of bromides and uncritical descriptions of the mission's history. Very light and uninformative, the UN funds that went into it should have been better spent. The pictures are very nice and well printed, and are worth the money.

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