Finding aid to the Father Sigismundo Taraval journal transcription by Charles F. Lummis, circa 1909 MS.854

Finding aid prepared by Maritxu De Alaiza
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**Title:** Transcription of Father Sigismundo Taraval Journal recounting Indian uprisings in Baja California of 1734-1737, prepared by Charles F. Lummis.

**Identifier/Call Number:** MS.854

**Contributing Institution:** Autry National Center, Braun Research Library

**Language of Material:** Spanish; Castilian

**Physical Description:** 1.0 folder(302 typed carbon copied pages)

**Date:** circa 1909

**Language:** The majority of this transcription is in Spanish with some Latin. Notes and corrections are in Spanish and English.

**Abstract:** A transcription of the journal of Father Sigismundo Taraval, a Milanese Jesuit of Spanish ancestry, who recounts his first hand experiences of clashes with the indigenous people of Baja California. Taraval’s account was written beginning in 1734 and continued through 1737. The transcription was created circa 1909 and included editorial notes from Charles Lummis.

**creator:** Lummis, Charles Fletcher, 1859-1928.

**creator:** Taraval, Sigismundo, Father, 1700-1763

**Access**
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application or contact library staff at rroom@theautry.org. An item-level inventory is available from library staff.

**Related archival material**

**Processing history**
Processing of collection and publication of finding aid made possible by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

**Publication note**
A translation of the Taraval Journal was written by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur and published by the Quivera Society in 1931. Braun Research Library call # 972.2 T72i, 1931.

Wilbur’s translation is complete and the volume also includes a timeline of events, an index, and footnotes thoroughly explaining Taraval’s account.

**Existence and location of orginals**
Taraval’s original handwritten manuscript is held at the Newberry Library in Chicago as part of the Ayer collection. Call # VAULT Ayer MS 1240.

**Biographical history**
The Jesuits were active in Baja, California from 1697 through 1768, a period of 71 years. Taraval’s account was written beginning in 1734 and continued through 1737. In this period Jesuit activity in Baja is described in three phases, the second, which ranged from 1730-1740, is referred to as “the age of storm and stress” (Wilbur, 1931, page 18), and was marked by Indian attacks, plundering, raids, and rebellions. This period is the one in which the Taraval journal was written and it records these events by Father Sigismundo Taraval as an eyewitness describing them first hand.

Taraval was a Milanese Jesuit of Spanish ancestry. His record describes many conflicts occurring with the native Baja population over attempts to convert them to Catholicism. In particular, there were clashes about the long-held practice of polygamy and the strong influence of the medicine man whom the Fathers believed was “the Devil in disguise” (Wilbur, 1931, p. 11).


**Acquisition**
Bequest from Charles Fletcher Lummis to the Southwest Museum, 1910 February 28.

**Custodial history**
This transcription was created by Lummis while he was City Librarian for the Los Angeles Public Library. It was most likely part of the Charles Fletcher Lummis Papers and Library he bequeathed to the Southwest Museum in 1910 February 28.

**Scope and contents**
This is the carbon of the copy Charles F. Lummis had made for the Los Angeles Public Library during his time as City Librarian. Lummis made the transcription from the original journal which he borrowed from Edward E. Ayer and is now housed in the Ayer Collection of Western Americana in the Newberry Library, Chicago. The original is missing the first four pages and several pages at the end of the document.

The journal begins in July of 1734 and describes how a San Joseph mission in Baja is reported to have been "sacked". A soldier stationed at that mission was murdered; Fathers Lorenzo and Nicolás Tamaral were also murdered. Father Taraval, along with three guards, and 50 of the loyal Callejues Indians, crossed through enemy territory to the port at La Paz where they traveled by boat to the Island of Espíritu Santo. A series of brutal attacks on the missions of Baja continued through 1737 when the rebel leaders were ultimately captured and sent to Loreto and then banished to Mexico.

Wilbur notes that the Taraval Journal was historically misattributed to Father William Gordon, a Scottish Jesuit who was stationed at La Paz in the same period as Taraval. The journal was therefore previously known as the Gordon Journal. However, Wilbur asserts that "internal evidence" and handwriting analysis prove Taraval's authorship indubitably.

The transcription's pages are numbered (1) 4 through (324, 325) 302. The number in parenthesis refers to the original manuscript's numbering. The second non-parenthetical number refers to the transcriber's numbering system. I.e.: (324, 325) indicates that two manuscript pages have been included on page 302 of the transcript.

Corrections in pencil and red ink appear throughout the manuscript in Charles F. Lummis' handwriting. It is assumed that the typing of the transcription was most likely done by Lummis' second wife, Eve Lummis.

Preferred citation


**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Baja California (Mexico : Peninsula)

Catholic Church -- Mexico -- Baja California (Peninsula)

Evangelistic work -- Mexico -- Baja California (Peninsula) -- History -- 18th century -- Sources

Indians of Mexico

Indians of Mexico -- History -- 18th century -- Sources

Indians of Mexico -- Religion

Jesuits -- Mexico -- Baja California (Peninsula)

Manuscripts, Spanish

Missionaries -- Mexico -- Baja California (Peninsula)

Missions -- Mexico -- Baja California (Peninsula)