Wandering Peoples
Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700–1850
Wandering Peoples is a chronicle of cultural resiliency, colonial relations, and trespassed frontiers in the borderlands of a changing Spanish empire. Focusing on the native subjects of Sonora in Northwestern Mexico, Cynthia Radding explores the social process of peasant class formation and the cultural persistence of Indian communities during the long transitional period between Spanish colonialism and Mexican national rule. Throughout this anthropological history, Radding presents multilayered meanings of culture, community, and ecology, and discusses both the colonial policies to which peasant communities were subjected and the responses they developed to adapt and resist them.

Radding describes this colonial mission not merely as an instance of Iberian expansion but as a site of cultural and political confrontation. This alternative vision of colonialism emphasizes the economic links between mission communities and Spanish mercantilist policies, the biological consequences of the Spanish policy of forced *congregación*, and the cultural and ecological displacements set in motion by the practices of discipline and surveillance established by the religious orders. Addressing wider issues pertaining to ethnic identities and to ecological and cultural borders, Radding's analysis also underscores the parallel production of colonial and subaltern texts during the course of a 150-year struggle for power and survival.

**Praise**


"In *Wandering Peoples*, Cynthia Radding makes in important contribution to our understanding of the history of the indigenous peoples of northwestern Mexico in a superb study that artfully integrates anthropological and historical approaches to ethnohistory. . . . Radding provides insightful analysis of the dynamics of culture change and culture conflict, particularly as these are related to ecological adaptations. The book has a great deal to offer Latin Americanists as well as anyone interested in these general issues. Finally, it is a beautifully written book that is a pleasure to read.” — Janine Gasco, *Journal of Anthropological Research*

"Radding’s multilayered analysis is grounded on the central themes of ethnicity, class, and community. . . . Largely free of loaded jargon, this book is a refreshing example of ‘new’ cultural geography. — Jeffrey S. Smith, *Geographical Review*
Cynthia Radding is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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