

THE JESUITS IN JIANGNAN (1842-1949): A NETWORKED ENDEAVOR

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Abstract: *Padre Robert Jacquinet de Besange (1878–1946), l'ideatore della Safe Zone che porta il suo nome, salvò decine di migliaia di civili durante l'occupazione giapponese di Shanghai, eppure è stato spesso descritto come un uomo solitario. Tuttavia, un più attento esame mostra che le sue iniziative furono possibili soltanto grazie a un'ampia rete di contatti, basata sulle connessioni stabilite dai gesuiti nella regione del Jiangnan. Jacquinet è perciò esemplificativo di come i successi della missione dei gesuiti a Shanghai si fondassero sulle loro reti di relazioni. L'articolo delinea gli intrecci tra istituzioni, clan e figure che hanno contribuito a inserire la Compagnia di Gesù nella fiorente società civile di Shanghai dagli anni Sessanta del XIX secolo al 1949.*

Opening: The Jacquinet Paradox

Among the Jesuits who worked in the greater Shanghai area between the mid-nineteenth century and the consolidation of the post-1949 regime, the figure of Robert Jacquinet de Besange (1878–1946) stands out. Father Jacquinet arrived in China in 1913, destined to teach English language and literature at the Jesuit-run Aurora University. He soon developed a range of extra-academic activities as vice-pastor in one of the churches of Hongkou district as well as chaplain for a number of associations, the development of which was testifying to the vitality of Shanghai's burgeoning civil society (Chevrier, Roux, Xiao-Planes 2010; Yu 2014). Jacquinet found his lasting call in the service of successive waves of refugees. During the Northern Expedition in 1927 he managed to secure a passage to the Holy Family Convent and School in Zhabei, evacuating in the midst of fighting around 600 nuns and children to safety. His role of coordination in the relief efforts that followed the 1931 Yangtze–Huai River floods further developed Jacquinet's social network and sense of action, which proved to be crucial during the Japanese attack of Shanghai in

1932: as president of the China International Famine Relief Commission, or yet as a member of the Board of Governors of the Shanghai General Hospital, and negotiating with all concerned parties, Jacquinet was able to evacuate war refugees caught in the fire of war. This first intervention led, during the Second Sino-Japanese War, to the setting-up of the "Shanghai Safety Zone" (or "Jacquinet Safe Zone"), a demilitarized zone for Chinese civilians located in a part of the Old City of Shanghai. The Jacquinet Zone hosted around three hundred thousand refugees from 1937 to 1940. This work directly led to the Protocol of the 1949 Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war (Ristaino 2008; Meehan 2009).¹

The Jacquinet paradox lies in the fact that the hierarchy of the Church in China and the superiors of the Jesuit order were seeing Robert Jacquinet as a 'loner',² while the latter had secured a central position within the network woven across the time by Jesuit institutions and individuals as well as into the local society at large.

The Jesuit-centered network was gathering, among others, alumni from Aurora University and St. Ignatius College, religious sisters working in schools and orphanages, Chinese and foreign parishioners, or yet Catholic lay leaders such as Joseph Lo Pahong (Lu Bohong 陸伯鴻, 1875–1937), a devout, enterprising, and very wealthy philanthropist.³ Other networks into which Jacquinet was able to enter or to mobilize included wealthy politicians, often belonging to the Protestant elite, the Shanghai Volunteer Corps,⁴ the Portuguese community (of which he is chaplain), Buddhist lay leaders,⁵ members of the Red Cross and other secular organizations. If Jacquinet was able to create coalitions around a number of causes, it was because, as a man located into a powerful and well-recognized network, he could engineer alliances among equally influential social, religious and political

operators.

Jesuit networking was based for good part on the influence of the wealthy Catholic families of Greater Shanghai with which the Society was connected in one way or another. For instance, the Zhu clan had converted to Catholicism in the 17th century and was active in a number of industries, including shipping, banking and real estate. After the foundation of Saint Ignatius High School, the heirs of the clan received their training there, cementing links with other Catholic families and developing their language skills and international acumen. One of the six first bishops ordained by Pius XI in 1926 was the Jesuit Simon Zhu Kaimin 朱开敏 (1868-1960), the brother of the wealthiest member of the Zhu clan, Zhu Zhiyao 朱志尧 (1863-1955), a dedicated industrialist closely associated to Lo Pahong. The uncles by marriage of the two Zhu brothers were Ma Xiangbo 馬相伯 (1840-1939) and Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 (1845-1900). One can feel how closely connected both within itself and with the Jesuit order was the Jiangnan Catholic elite (Mariani 2011: 18-19). Made bishop of Haimen (Jiangsu), Zhu Kaimin was substituted by a government-appointed bishop in 1959. Labeled a rightist, Zhu died of illness the following year.

Jacquinet might have appeared to his superiors as a marginal, notwithstanding the fact that Jesuit scholastics, religious sisters and Jesuit alumni worked heartfully with him. However, what strikes the observer today is rather the fact that the initiator of Shanghai's Safe Zone could not have operated independently from the web of connections that was resulting from the presence of his Order in the Jiangnan region for more than eight decades. The strange case of Robert Jacquinet changes our focus on the way the Jesuits were operating: much attention has been paid to the 'endogamy' of the Catholic communities that they were fostering or to the functioning of the Shanghai Church and the Orders that were its pillars as an "Im-

perium inter Imperia" (Mariani 2011; Pieragastini 2017). This contribution reexamines their presence and action in the light of their capacity to operate *within a given environment and in cooperation with a coalition of actors*.

A Return Marked by Ambiguities

Interrupted in the second third of the 18th century, the Jesuit missions in China were able to resume thanks to the framework progressively developed by the succession of Unequal Treaties (from the Nanjing Treaty of 1842 to the Sino-French Treaty of Huangpu of 1844 and those that followed, up to the Sino-Japanese agreements of 1914). In this context, France was to play the role of a 'protectorate', similar in some respects to the former Portuguese *Padroado*.⁶ On the basis of the Treaty of Tianjin signed in 1858, the French state issued missionaries of any nationality who requested it (almost all Catholic missionaries in practice) a passport that designated them as 'compatriots' and was supposed to provide them with protection, especially when purchasing property. The complexities of the system and the tensions that it caused fed a constantly evolving body of case laws, fueled also by sometimes dramatic conflicts, such as the one that occurred in Nanchang in 1906, or by the perplexities expressed by a French diplomacy that struggled to abandon the positions it had supposedly acquired (it formally renounced them in 1943-1946). Nevertheless, the number of conflicts linked to the exercise of these prerogatives (and the violence linked to protests against them) decreased significantly after 1908 (Young 2013).⁷

Led by Claude Gotteland (1803-1856), three French Jesuits arrived in Shanghai in 1842, after repeated requests for the return of the Society of Jesus from the Christian communities in the region to its apostolic administrator.⁸ They first settled in Heng-


tang 橫塘 (Qingpu 青浦 district, west of Shanghai), and then, five years later, established their headquarters in Zikawei (Xujiahui 徐家匯 in Mandarin).⁹ This place was the ancestral land of the family of the great Catholic scholar and minister Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562-1633),¹⁰ near the old city of Shanghai, located at the confluence of many canals and rivers (Broullion 1855). The Jesuits bought them from Xu Guangqi's descendants. They were joined by about forty of their confreres over the next ten years, a flow of arrivals that would continue throughout the history of the Mission. Their presence received its full ecclesiastical sanction in 1856-1859, when the Vatican divided the Chinese territory into apostolic vicariates, which were entrusted to different religious congregations. The Jesuit province of Champagne (covering northern and eastern France) inherited the rural territories of Hebei,¹¹ and the Province of France (Paris) was placed in charge of the Apostolic Vicariate of Kiangnan (*Vicariatus Apostolicus Nanchinensis*).

Jiangnan was a region that included both urbanized areas (Shanghai and Nanjing) and the poor countryside of parts of Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Anhui provinces – though not as poor as those of Hebei, which had been ravaged by civil wars, epidemics, droughts and successive floods. A real apostolic puzzle was gradually put in place: thus, the vicariate of Jiangnan bordered on that of Zhejiang, a province divided into two vicariates entrusted to the Lazarists; the three vicariates of Henan were in charge of the Italian Apostolic Missions of Parma and Milan, etc.

In general, the original Jesuit provinces were supported by other provinces until the latter were given an independent territory. After the Revolution of 1911, the reorganization of the Jesuit missions in China resulted in their division into nine mission territories – vicariates or apos-

tolic prefectures. The French province of Champagne kept mainly its mission in Xian County¹² (Hebei), and the French province (Paris) kept the mission in Shanghai. In Anhui, the province of Castile took over the area of Wuhu (1913), the province of Leon the area of Anjing (1929), and the province of Turin inherited Pengpu in 1929. In the southern part of Hebei, the Hungarians received Daming in 1935 and the Austrians received Qing County in 1939. In the western part of Jiangsu there were Californians in Yangzhou along the Grand Canal (1928) and French Canadians in Xuzhou (1931). The Portuguese Jesuits in Macau had opened a residence in Zhaoqing, Ricci's first place of residence, and the Irish, in charge of Hong Kong since 1926, inaugurated a residence in Canton two years later. Jesuits of other nationalities joined the territories entrusted to the Society, including the two French missions. In 1938, shortly after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, out of a total number of 600 Jesuits, there were 140 Chinese and 460 foreigners. In addition, two hundred Chinese secular priests trained in seminaries run by the Society were working in association with it. A count of the number of Jesuits who worked in China between 1842 and 1947 confirms the primary importance of this mission territory for the Society: one counts a total of 1,576 Jesuits of 26 different nationalities, including 307 Chinese, 561 French, 230 Spanish, 86 Italians, 79 French Canadians, 72 Irish, 54 Americans, 54 Portuguese and 36 Hungarians (Lardinois, Mateos, Ryden 2018).

Eight Chinese Jesuits appear in the Catalogue of the Jiangnan mission of 1862. Others continued to enter the Society. Some of the Chinese recruits left the Society in the course of their lives. The most famous case is that of Ma Xiangbo: trained at St. Ignatius College, which opened in 1850,¹³ ordained as a Je-



suit priest in 1870, this polyglot intellectual left the Society six years later. After having been involved in various diplomatic initiatives as well as in attempts to modernize the country, conducted in coordination with his older brother, and following his widowhood, he started in 1898 to collaborate anew with his former confreres, a collaboration that proved at times to be difficult (see below the section devoted to Aurora University). He played a leading role as a standard-bearer for the Chinese Catholic community, both nationally and internationally. Although Ma Xiangbo's career is inseparable from the trajectory of the Society in Jiangnan from its beginnings to its conclusion, his name remains officially dissociated from it (Hayhoe, Lu 1996).

The Development of the Jiangnan Mission

In the provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu, around Zikawei, southwest of Shanghai, the French Jesuits set about building a Christianity that remained relatively protected from external upheaval until the Japanese occupation of 1937. Even the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864) could not halt the growth of the mission: the flight of the faithful from the Jiangnan villages in the face of the rebels' advance caused the Catholic population of Shanghai, where they had taken refuge, to grow. This overall picture masks realities that were sometimes much more difficult: in the first period, epidemics and poor hygiene resulted in an excess of deaths among the missionaries, whose life expectancy hardly exceeded forty years. Between 1854 and 1863, thirty of them died of disease, mainly typhus or cholera. Insurrections and military expeditions punctuated the entire period. In the decades following the defeat of the Taiping, missionaries and Chinese Christians in Jiangnan were threatened by popular movements in 1869-70, 1875-76, 1886 and 1891, especially in Anhui.¹⁴ The

unrest of 1891 was the most serious, and the Jiangnan missionaries received 220,000 taels in compensation from the Chinese government for the damage they had suffered (Pieragastini 2017: 58). From 1842 to 1948, 612 Jesuits belonged to the Jiangnan Mission. Among them were 389 French, 147 Chinese, 24 Italians, 11 Germans, while Dutch, Swiss, Luxembourgers, Japanese, Spanish, British-Canadians, Portuguese and Polish provided some additional units.¹⁵

The early days of the Mission were not without friction with the very communities that had demanded the return of the Jesuits (Mungello 2005): operating in autarky since the imperial edicts of persecution until 1842, the Christians of the Shanghai region had governed themselves through local Catholic clans, in charge of the management of the churches and other property, with the help of groups of consecrated virgins who animated the liturgical assemblies. In 1842, the Vicar Apostolic, Mgr. Louis de Besi, was indignant: "They are not only cantors, but deaconesses, and deaconesses more powerful than those of Christian antiquity" (Servièrè 1914, vol. 1: 24). Upon their return, the foreign missionaries were careful to assert their control over both temporal goods and the women in charge of the communities, supervised from 1867 onwards by French sisters from the congregation of the Auxiliatrices du Purgatoire.¹⁶ The consecrated virgins were to be organized into a semi-religious order (*Xiantanghui* 獻堂會) which was to remain very active in the region. The first Jesuits to arrive also integrated the training of Chinese diocesan priests into the educational structures of their order. The situation calmed down as missionaries and local Christians went through common trials and as educational and charitable institutions, from which Shanghai Catholics benefited and took pride, inserted the local congregations into both the local society and the

universal Church.

The living conditions of the missionaries varied greatly from place to place, as father de la Servièrè, wrote in the *History of the Kiang-nan Mission* (Servièrè 1914, vol. 1: 7-9).

As can be seen, the local parishes, in rural or semi-rural territory, occupied a large part of the missionaries' efforts. These local units were not only centered on strictly pastoral activity but often assumed an educational and medical function. Near the churches built along the canals, the fishermen (an important part of their population has been Catholic since the 17th century) moor their boats in the evening. Towards the beginning of the 20th century, the priests in charge of the modest parishes of Pudong were helping Catholic workers to find jobs in the companies that were beginning to prosper all over the territory of Greater Shanghai, not hesitating to get along with Protestant businessmen for this purpose.¹⁷

The center of Xujiahui (Zikawei in Shanghainese dialect), where ecclesiastical, intellectual and charitable institutions coexisted, played the role of headquarters. Its grounds were divided by a canal. On the right bank were the institutions directly run by the Jesuits: the residence, the college, the faculty of theology, the library, the cathedral, the observatory, the museum of natural history, the minor and major seminaries, and the orphanage/art workshop of Tushanwan 土山灣. To the east, the women's congregations: in addition to the Carmelite convent, the Notre-Dame complex created and managed by the Auxiliary Sisters of Purgatory since their arrival in 1867: hospital buildings, the community's residence, a novitiate, a school for the deaf and dumb, a crèche, embroidery, sewing and laundry workshops, an orphanage, and the Morning Star school for the daughters of wealthy Shanghainese families (Mo 2018).¹⁸ (The

Ladies of the Sacred Heart, who were to run the women's section of Aurora University, would supposedly move to another location than Zikawei, the sign of a certain independence from the Jesuit patronage).

An Intellectual Apostolate in Search of Its Purpose

Xujiahui was also the place where a strategy of 'indirect evangelization' was set up, focusing on intellectual apostolate, through which the Jiangnan Jesuits aimed to imitate their great elders of the First Jesuit Mission. The goal of reviving the scientific activities that had contributed to the success of the latter was somewhat of a dream, as political conditions and intellectual and social needs had changed over time. Nevertheless, an important initiative was taken in August 1872, when a committee involving the Society and the Vicar Apostolic drew up the *Kiang-Nan [Jiangnan] Scientific Plan*, which aimed to make Zikawei a research center, in part to counteract the advances of the Protestants (Servièrè 1914, vol. 2: 192-198; Mo 2021). The construction of a meteorological observatory, directed by Auguste Colombel (1833-1905), was a centerpiece of this plan, the first one he mentions. Beginning in 1873, the *Observatoire Météorologique* published daily weather bulletins and forecasts whose usefulness and popularity instantly increased the visibility of the mission in the region and provided data for comparative studies in Europe. The Observatory's activities were soon expanded to include seismological and astronomical studies, and in the 1890s, the Observatory developed a maritime warning system that was adopted by the General Inspectorate of Customs along the Yangtze coast. This project, directly inspired by the First Jesuit Mission, was in germ from the very beginning of the Second Mission, since Claude Gotteland, before his departure, had been

trained for this purpose at the Paris Observatory. From 1900, a good part of the astronomical activities moved to the Marian hill of Sheshan 佘山: the telescope that was built there observed twice the return of Halley's comet. The observatory joined the international longitude determination activities in 1926 and 1933 as one of the three world reference points.

Under the same plan, a second unit was in charge of natural history research, Pierre Marie Heude (1836-1902), who arrived at the mission in 1868, supervised the museum attached to the project and published the results of his research.¹⁹ Six volumes of *The Natural History of the Chinese Empire* were published from 1880 to 1927 by the Tushanwan School Printing House (see below). They included over 200 lithographs of animal and plant specimens. After Father Heude's death, his successors (Fathers Courtois, Savio, Belval and Peil) systematically classified and expanded the collections already assembled (Borrell 1991). The move of the museum to the campus of the Aurora University, completed in 1931, gave it a foundation that it had lacked until then. By the time it reopened to the public, it had over 50,000 catalogued plant specimens. The synergy between the museum and the university was clearly defined: a natural history museum would allow medical and science students at the university to observe specimens up close; Aurora intended to welcome young scientists – both local and visiting – to use the museum's research facilities and, in so doing, help China modernize its agricultural and public health systems. The new museum building housed six large collection rooms, three laboratories, three libraries, and a botanical garden. The Heude Museum, as it was renamed at the time, also served as a university institute of natural sciences, making it not only an exhibition building, but also a research facility. Its collections were integrated into the

Shanghai Natural History Museum, which was formed in 1956.

A third group, initially headed by Aloysius Pfister (1833-1891), who was also in charge of the *Bibliotheca Zikawei*,²⁰ concentrated on publishing monographs in European languages (mainly French and Latin) on the history and geography of ancient and modern China and related subjects. The series entitled *Variétés sinologiques* began in 1892 and continued until 1938. Its 70 volumes included the contribution of Henri Havret (1848-1901) on *La siècle chrétienne de Si-ngan-fou*²¹ or the works of Henri Doré (1859-1931), a missionary for forty years in Jiangsu and Anhui, who gave to the *Variétés* the eighteen volumes of his *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine* (*Research on Superstitions in China*), a composite but precious monument on popular cults. Volumes 6 to 12 of these *Recherches* are for the most part translated and adapted from a work of 1878 written by a Chinese Jesuit, Pierre Hoang (Huang Feimo), a polemical sum on the 'pantheon' of Chinese deities. Several Chinese Jesuits collaborated with the *Variétés*. Pierre Hoang published *Le mariage chinois du point de vue légal* (1890), *Mélanges sur l'administration* (1902), *Catalogue des tremblements de terre signalés en Chine d'après les sources chinoises* (1969-1913). Mathias Zhang (Zhang Huang, 1872-1929) gave in 1905 a manual synchronizing the Western and Far Eastern chronological systems.²²

Finally, a fourth group was in charge of the translation into Chinese of documents needed for both preaching and scientific projects. It was initially headed by the Ma brothers (Joseph Ma Xiangbo and Matthias Ma Jianzhong). After their departure, the work was divided among those who, in the eyes of the Committee, were the most brilliant among the young Chinese Jesuits, among whom we may mention the name of Li Wenyu 李問漁 (1840-1911). Xu Zongze 徐宗澤 (1886-1947), attached to the Zikawei library, continued


this work, becoming one of the most brilliant Catholic intellectuals and Christian theologians of his generation as well as the influential director of the *Catholic Review* (*Shengjiao zazhi* 聖教雜誌) (Starr 2016: 100-127).

The Aurora University

The creation of the Aurora University had a direct influence on Robert Jacquinet's destiny, since he seems to have been sent to China to teach there. First, in 1903, an Aurora Institute (*Zhendān xuéyuàn* 震旦學院) was created, divided into two sections, literary (especially languages, to train translators) and scientific, whose studies were to last two years. The program had been drafted the previous year by Ma Xiangbo, who, after his retirement, was determined to devote himself both to the development of the Church and to educational reform in China. The project was therefore initially a collaborative one, between Ma Xiangbo, financially well-endowed and socially well-connected, and the Jesuits of Jiangnan. Ma's project was ambitious and idiosyncratic: inspired by Confucian humanism, it was more about a dialogue of the Classics than about the acquisition of specific skills. It was clearly part of a national renewal perspective through the training of an intellectual elite dedicated to such a cause. The Jesuits, on the other hand, wanted to emphasize the acquisition of scientific knowledge, the use of the French language, and the 'political neutrality' of the institution. The conflict was inevitable. Ma Xiangbo therefore went to found the Institute and then Fudan University (*Fudan gongxue* 復旦公學, literally 'New Dawn') in 1905 (Ren 2015).

The institution could have foundered in its early days, especially since Ma's departure was followed by a six-month student strike. But the Jesuits were able to invest considerable resources in the young

university – and to mobilize others. Beginning in 1913, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated an annual grant of 1,000 francs to Aurore. This support was extended in 1916. In return, the Jesuits agreed that the direction and administration of Aurore would retain a French character, that the teaching would continue to be conducted in French, and that the director and the majority of the teachers would be French. As a result, the government subsidy was increased to 15,000 francs, then to 25,000 francs per year. This figure continued to be adjusted, reaching 1,600,000 francs in 1945 (Wiest 1997). Similarly, the municipal council of the French concession paid 300,000 francs in 1915 for the new construction and relocation of the Jesuit observatory and natural history museum, despite the mutual distrust that marked relations between the concession council and the Jesuits (Major 2016). Moreover, in 1912, the university obtained official recognition from the newly formed Chinese Republic for the degrees it awarded. In 1918, the French Ministry of Public Instruction granted the Aurore preparatory course the equivalence of the French *baccalauréat*. This preparatory course lasted three years with French as the language of instruction during the last two years, and included courses in French, English, European literature, Chinese and Western history and geography, philosophy, mathematics, physics and natural sciences. The upper course was also a three-year preparation for the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree with various specializations within each program (Hayhoe 1983). Medical students followed a six-year course of study leading to certificates in anatomy, embryology, physiology and histology. Certificates in external pathology, obstetrics, surgery and internal pathology could be obtained during an additional eighteen months of dedicated study (Servièrè 1925). These degrees were recognized in both



France and China. With a campus of 103 acres, L'Aurore had the means for its development.

This pursuit of academic excellence went hand in hand with a great deal of political conservatism, especially in the early days: during the May 1919 movement, L'Aurore students were told to return to their classes or leave the school if they intended to continue to participate in the movement (although they could return and take their exams in September). Sixty-nine of the 200 students chose to stay at L'Aurore. The rest left... under the watchful eye of the French concession police, called by the Jesuit leadership of L'Aurore to ensure that their departure was orderly (Hayhoe 1983). In contrast, the Fudan students were in the vanguard of the movement, with the approval of their leadership.

The following years saw a broadening of the missions and spirit of the Aurora. Moreover, the Jesuits actively prepared the best of the young Chinese Jesuits to take a leadership role in the Aurora, sending them to Europe for their doctoral studies, often in innovative areas (anthropology, geography).

An Economic and Financial Enterprise


It remains extremely difficult to quantify the total economic efforts related to the Jiangnan Mission (and to the Catholic missions of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century in general), since the sources are incomplete. But it is clear that the sums involved in the enterprise were considerable. The following considerations are only preliminary.

The Catholic missions in China worked to purchase land in the concessionary ports designated by the Treaties, and then elsewhere, which could be used for mission buildings or rented out in order to generate a fixed income. By 1860, the Jiangnan Mission had acquired about

13,000 hectares in the area. The Missions received funding from *Propaganda Fide*, their central houses, annual or extraordinary donations, especially from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Work of St. Peter the Apostle, and the Work of the Holy Childhood; they received tuition and medical fees and the fruit of collections from local congregations. As mentioned above, the missions received compensation from the Chinese government when Chinese missionaries or Christians were victims of harassment or violence. In addition, Catholic religious and philanthropic institutions in Shanghai received tax exemptions and subsidies from the French Concession authorities (on a much smaller scale, from the International Concession as well), especially after 1920. In the middle of the 19th century, donations from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Work of the Holy Childhood played an essential role. The end of the century and the beginning of the following one saw the share of the allowances increase. After the First World War, the share of local income increased significantly.²³ In Shanghai, the city's real estate growth played a major role in this development. C.F. Remer estimated the total value of land in Shanghai in the early 1930s at 8 billion francs, of which the French Catholic missions owned about 580 million francs. However, the successive crises of the 1930s-1940s greatly affected the real estate values of the Catholic missions, reducing the Jesuits' income by 70% and forcing them to sell many properties (Pieragastini 2017: 66-72; Renner 1933; Levy 1941).

A Jesuit Mission in Turmoil

The Taiping and Boxer rebellions, and then the rise of the Chinese national movement, led the Church to rethink its way of being. It was not the religious con-




gregations, organized on a national basis, that were pioneers in the *aggiornamento* that gradually took place, but rather the Roman authorities, beginning with the Pope's first apostolic delegate to China, mgr. Celso Costantini (1876-1958), who strongly promoted the movement of intellectual and artistic inculturation, and who oversaw the ordination of the first Chinese bishops in 1926. In 1939, the Vatican lifted the ban on the practice of Chinese rites that had been in place since the middle of the eighteenth century, introducing into the Catholic liturgy the homage to the ancestral tablets.²⁴

In contrast, for a long time the mistrust of some of the missionaries towards the nation in which they were living was expressed crudely. In 1863, one of them declared in an article published in the Jesuit journal *Études*: "No, if the Europeans do not become the guardians of the Chinese government, it will never be able to stand on its own feet". More entertainingly, in 1888 another missionary wrote: "Strangely enough, I sometimes use the telegraph in Nanking. If I happen to use the Chinese language, the employees, all Chinese, get confused and produce unintelligible dispatches, while my dispatches in French and English arrive perfectly correct. It is so true that all these modern inventions are to the measure of the European mind and not to the size of the Chinese" (Vermander 2008). Still in *Études*, the tone changes noticeably from the 1920s: the Chinese national assertion is seen with sympathy, local traditions evoked with a new respect. Later, the authors describe with accuracy the sufferings brought by the warlords and then those, redoubled, caused by the Japanese occupation, which they abhor. The turning point of 1949 is foreseen and envisaged with apprehension, notably by Father Alfred Bonningue (1908-1997) who made the trip to Yan'an (Mao Zedong's base) and spoke of his desire to see China become "a nation happy to enjoy its vigor and uni-

ty" (Bonningue 1947). Even in a man as aware of the prejudices of many of his colleagues as Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), occasional remarks sometimes surprise the contemporary reader: "The point that worries me most in this great affair is to know if the Chinese have in them a human fabric comparable to ours (as I hope by looking at some of my Yellow friends) – or if they would not rather represent a stopped and infantile layer of the human layer (as many people say equivalently). If, on the other hand, China has its share of life-force thought and mysticism (?) to bring to us, we can only rejoice in its individualization and that of Asia" (Teilhard de Chardin 2008: 83).²⁵

Chinese Jesuits who join a mission territory necessarily learn the language of the Jesuit province of origin – French most often, Spanish in Anhui, more rarely Portuguese, Italian, English or German – in addition to acquiring Latin. The identity consciousness of this Chinese group affirmed itself with time. In Shanghai, Chinese Jesuits often came from Catholic families, who could trace their origins to a convert from the first Jesuit mission. These Catholic clans had been strengthened during the period of persecution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and had ensured the survival of religious communities. After the establishment of the concessions, some of these families had built up vast fortunes, and were part of a thriving commercial world. Studies at St. Ignatius College cemented an early solidarity among members of these clans (Mariani 2011: 17-20). In Anhui or Hebei, the origins of the entrants were usually more modest.

The multiplication of nationalities working in Jiangnan could also be a source of difficulties. Seventy Americans from California and Oregon provinces served in China between 1928 and 1957. It was Lu Bohong, already mentioned, who went



to Chicago and then to Rome to request the opening of an American school in Shanghai. An audience with Pius XI won the case. This meeting, and the publication of the missionary encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* that preceded it, led Father General Ledochowski (1866-1942) to open a new scholasticate in Shanghai in 1930,²⁶ where all the young Chinese Jesuits or those destined for China could study together. The young Americans had the painful experience of having to learn Chinese and French at the same time; they also suffered from the austerity and lack of hygiene of their French confreres... (Butterworth 2003: 25-26). And an international community sometimes obeys strange patterns of communication: in March 1930, the American scholastic Francis Rouleau wrote to his family: "It is a curious thing that we young Jesuits living in Shanghai do not learn the Shanghai dialect but Mandarin, the official language. All the scholastics around us in Shanghai are natives of the province and, therefore, speak in that dialect. So, we cannot have any communication in Chinese with our Chinese scholastic brothers. Of course, they all speak French, and there is no difficulty of communication at that level" (Martinson 1998: 49). The American Jesuits were soon put in charge of a future research and education institute in Nanjing and a high school in Shanghai, a school where instruction was given in English in preparation for entrance to Aurora University. Gonzaga High School opened in 1931 with an enrollment of 36 students. A mission was later assigned to them in Yangzhou. Another American Jesuit, Carlos Simons, was assigned to the rural area of Haizhou, Jiangsu Province. The Sino-Japanese war disrupted the district to such an extent that it was cut off by armed bands. The Jesuit Louis Hermand was killed there in April 1939. Carlos Simons obtained the release of his companion, Father Louis Le Bayon, and then, in December 1940, of a

group of Christians who had been held for ransom - before being killed himself on December 31, 1940. Some of the American Jesuits present in China were repatri-

ated during the Japanese occupation, while others remained interned in Shanghai.

Conclusion

Marked by the contradictions of the times, the Jesuit Mission of Jiangnan nonetheless impresses by the constancy, the scope and the inventiveness of the means mobilized. If the inscription of many of the missionaries in a certain French colonial ethos constituted a major limitation, the institutions set up largely met the local realities, and often responded to the needs of the time in a way that contributed positively to the overall development of Shanghai. The Jiangnan Mission was definitely 'a networked endeavor'. Moreover, the mission was not confined to the Zikawei area: most of the missionaries worked among the poor people of Jiangnan - fishermen and river transporters, peasants, orphans... The Chinese Jesuits nevertheless often bitterly resented the superiority, conscious or unconscious, displayed by their European confreres. This feeling of superiority was all the more unfounded because the linguistic skills of the Chinese Jesuits were usually superior to their own. But these asperities were partly erased in the course of time, as the Roman orientations brought into China by the Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini were accepted by the Jiangnan Jesuits, despite some murmurs, and the evolutions recorded during the Twenties and Thirties prepared the transition to a local leadership, a transition that would have been fully completed (as effectively happened in India, for example) if the historical circumstances had been different. Marked as it was by interactions both rich and difficult, this institutional

context allowed for individual adventures and initiatives – like the ones carried on by Robert Jacquinet – to take place and bear fruit.

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Notes

¹ The figure of Robert Jacquinet requires further research. Jean-Luc Pinol is conducting a long-term project that has been gathering significant novel results. I thank him for having generously shared with me insights and material in the process of preparing this article.

² A letter dated 16 September 1939, addressed by the Superior of the Jiangnan Mission, Yves Henry, to the Superior General of the Jesuits (ARSI, Missio Sinn. 1011 1, 22) relays the strong discontent felt by Chinese political and ecclesiastical authorities as to the 'uncontrollable' initiatives of Jacquinet and asks permission to bring about his prompt and discreet departure from China.

³ Sometimes called the 'Chinese Rockefeller', Lu Bohong came from a family whose ancestor had been baptized in 1620 by Xu Guangqi himself. Founder of the Catholic Action in Shanghai, he was assassinated in December 1937, probably because he was suspected of economic collusion with the Japanese. On a personal level, Lu and Jacquinet do not seem to have been close, but their networks often intertwine.

⁴ He was the Catholic chaplain of this important organization, which contributed to build-up his status among the Anglo-Saxon community. Jacquinet's personal network is grounded into Shanghai International Settlement rather than into the French concession.

⁵ For their role in the rescue efforts during the great flood of 1931, see Brooks Jessup (2010: 41).

⁶ *Padroado*: a set of rights and obligations contracted between the Kingdom of Portugal and Spain and the Holy See for the

promotion of the faith in the Portuguese colonies and throughout the East from the Indies. From the creation of the *Propaganda Fide* in 1622, the Holy See worked to limit Portuguese prerogatives.

⁷ Marianne Bastid-Bruguière's (2014) account of Young (2013) provides the reader with a few useful rectifications.

⁸ In truth, this return was not a direct consequence of the Treaty of Tianjin. It was prepared well before, and the correspondence seems to indicate that the conflict that occurred at the time of their departure was first considered a potential obstacle (Truchet 2007). The fact remains that the Unequal Treaties would ensure the continuity of the missionary presence.

⁹ The construction of a church began in 1847, not without some local unrest, and the building was inaugurated in 1851. The cathedral (St. Francis Xavier) was located in Dongjiadu 董家渡, at the edge of the old city. Even though the vicar apostolic was a Jesuit, a territorial separation thus acted between Jesuit (Xujiahui) and diocesan (Dongjiadu) authority. Moreover, although it eventually bordered the territory of the French Concession (which was gradually expanding throughout this period), the Xujiahui domain was never incorporated into the concession. The Jesuits nevertheless sought French protection when they had complaints about the decisions or attitudes of local authorities, such as police chiefs.

¹⁰ In particular, he assumed the position of Grand Secretary (*Wenyuange daxueshi* 文淵閣大學士).

¹¹ At that time, Zhili, renamed Hebei in 1928.

¹² The small county of Xian 獻 in Hebei should not be confused with the large city of Xi'an 西安, capital of Shanxi province. The diocese of Xian is usually referred to as *Xianxian* or *Sienhsien*, the second *xian* (*hsien*) 縣 meaning 'county' in Chinese.

¹³ In 1936, the school had 14 Jesuit teachers, 39 other teachers and 400 students.

¹⁴ The unrest was often sparked by rumors

of the murder of children in the orphanages run by the Missions. These rumors were sometimes stirred up by local officials, who probably wanted to stir up anti-Qing resentment and a broad national movement.

¹⁵ These statistics do not include Jesuits who left the Order before the end of their lives. However, they do include foreign Jesuits who did not die in their mission territories.

¹⁶ The Shanghai region is far from being the only one where the institution of consecrated virgins became embedded in local customs and produced an original type of Catholicism. For an example concerning a diocese in Fujian province see Menegon (2009).

¹⁷ This last point is mentioned to me by Liang Zhang, and is based on the documents she is collating for her ongoing Ph.D. thesis on the Catholic communities of Pudong.

¹⁸ The Auxiliary Sisters also ran other schools. Besides St. Ignatius, the Jesuits also started other colleges, one of which was given to the Marists.

¹⁹ P.M. Heude's opposition to Darwinian theories partially, but not totally, undermined his credibility among his scientific colleagues.

²⁰ The origins of the library date back to 1843. At its peak, the library had 200,000 volumes – 80,000 in European languages, and 120,000 in Chinese (King 1997). Still located in Xujiahui, the library has once again become an important place for research and consultation.

²¹ A seminal document on the presence of the Syriac Church in Xi'an in the seventh and eighth centuries.

²² On the Jiangnan Jesuit policy as to publications in foreign language, see Mo (2022).

²³ Towards the end of World War I, the Jiangnan Mission's investments would have amounted to about 70 million francs, the income from which covered about 80 percent of its annual costs (Young 2013: 87; Pieragastini 2017: 71-72).

²⁴ On the generally trusting and direct relations maintained between Chinese Catholic intellectuals and the Roman hierarchy, overcoming the barriers erected by the missionary congregations, one may consult with profit the work of Sibire (2012). There is, notes Olivier Sibire, “a Confucian perception of Rome”, which makes it “a world spiritual government” and sees in the Pope the father of the great human family. The modernization of both the nation and the local Church (two tasks that the small literate Catholic elite conceived in parallel) was thus carried out within the framework of a reinterpreted Confucianism (Sibire 2012: 172-176). Rome responded to these expectations and played a decisive role in the establishment of a local hierarchy, of a Catholic education freed

from a single foreign model, and even – to a certain extent – in the possibility given to Catholic youth to express their national aspirations more fully. The relationship with the center of the Church, conceived as an ultimate recourse, is thus perceived in a different way than is usually the case in Western Christianity, and it is easily attuned to ecclesiological representations informed by a specific cultural tradition.

²⁵ Letter of April 15, 1927. The question mark after “mysticism” is in Teilhard’s original.

²⁶ A first Jesuit theological faculty had operated in Zikawei between 1880 and 1913. The new foundation expanded and regularized its mission.



A newsstand on the side of a Shanghai street, 1st June 1947, History in Photos