

Article

Jesuit Rhetoric and Language Studies in Modern Shanghai

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Abstract: From the sixteenth century onwards, the Jesuit educational model, as well as the method of evangelization propounded by the same religious Order, have been relying on the mastery of certain rhetorical techniques and, notably, in strong linguistic competency. This contribution examines how the Jesuits in modern Shanghai understood and put into application their traditional focus on rhetoric in the semi-colonial context of the time. After having recalled how Jesuits engaged with Chinese language and discourse in the Ming and early Qing dynasties, we take the 1923 *Catalogue* of the Jesuit publications in the missionary enclave of Zi-ka-wei as a reference point so as to describe and assess a number of trends that we summarize as follows. A privileged relationship was maintained between Latin and ancient Chinese and a growing interest in the “margins” and the way to address them efficiently triggered a renewal of ethnographic and linguistic studies; specifically, the expertise developed in dialectology testifies to the change that was occurring in the way to rhetorically address hearts and minds.

Keywords: dialectology; Jesuit education; Latin; rhetoric; Shanghai; sinology; Society of Jesus; Jesuits



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1. Introduction

As they launched into the building of a network of educational institutions in Europe and beyond, the nascent Jesuits decisively contributed to the shaping of a model of humanistic education grounded on Classical Rhetoric (Gannett and Brereton 2016). “The Renaissance and the humanism at its core did not die with the outbreak of the Reformation, as textbooks generally imply, but was just getting launched on a triumphant conquest of minds and hearts, which was accomplished primarily by school systems based on the humanistic program.” (O’Malley 2016, p. ix). As stressed by Marc Fumaroli (1990), for the Jesuits, Rhetoric was the force enabling those who mastered its techniques to understand and formulate ethical, spiritual, exegetical, anthropological, and theological principles. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the consolidation and expansion of this institutional and pedagogical network, mainly in Europe. At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic conquests, and the development of state-sponsored education somehow weakened the influence of Jesuit education in the territories where it was at its strongest. However, from 1830–1840 onwards, the development of Catholic missions throughout the world gave the Jesuit model of education new impetus. The focus on the skills and outlook that Rhetoric provides the student with was maintained in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Jesuits were developing their educational network in their new mission territories. While being reshaped, this educational network continues to expand today, notably in Africa (Vermander 2019), reviving and reinterpreting its rhetorical tradition (Gannett and Brereton 2016).

This contribution analyzes how the Jesuits continued to focus on the way to acquire and make use of classical rhetorical techniques within the context of their mission in Shanghai. How were the insights gathered from Cicero and Quintilian harnessed for shaping the mind of young Chinese students and, more largely, for acculturating Christianity and

promoting evangelization in the Jiangnan region? Although our study intends to cover the whole of the Jesuit presence in modern Shanghai (1843–1955), its main point of reference is a document kept in the Zi-ka-wei [Xujiahui] Library, the *Catalogue des Ouvrages Européens (Imprimerie de l'Orphelinat de T'ou-sè-wè, Zi-ka-wei, près Chang-hai)* of 1923. In other words, we take as our main lead the multi-lingual and multi-purpose publications that the Jesuits of Zi-ka-wei were choosing to print. Through this study, we hope to illustrate how a well-established model of education, largely based on the mastery of languages and rhetorical techniques, was both maintained and thoroughly adopted in a non-Western, semi-colonial context.

2. Jesuit Rhetoric and the Chinese Presence in China

2.1. Rhetoric and Humanistic Education

The colleges that Jesuits started to create from the time of Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) onwards offered the institutional context where the study of Rhetoric was to take place. The first of these schools was created in Messina in 1548 (Casalini 2019, p. 155). The consistency of the pedagogical method implemented throughout this network of institutions was ensured by the adoption of the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, finalized in 1599. Grammar, Humanities, and Christian doctrine were advertised as the main disciplines being taught. The declared aim was for the student to attain *eloquentia perfecta*, through which erudition, wisdom, virtue, and eloquence were integrated. Latin was the sole medium of instruction, and education “was predicated on mastery and active reproduction of the ancient tongues.” (Haskell 2019, p. 553).

This focus on ancient languages actually helped and guided Jesuits in their acquisition of new tongues. Being trained in multi-linguistic competency was part of a requirement that was both spiritual and practical: “The Jesuits were constantly advised to adapt what they said and did to times, circumstances, and persons. The rhetorical dimension of Jesuit ministry in this sense transcended the preaching and lecturing in which they were engaged and even the rhetorical foundation of the casuistry they practiced—it was a basic principle in all their ministries, even if they did not explicitly identify it as rhetorical.” (O'Malley 1993, p. 255). Gannett and Brereton have aptly described the style of teaching that such inspiration developed, as well as the human type it fostered:

The students were also asked to participate actively in the classes. Importantly, Jesuits taught students to achieve speaking competence in Latin, not just reading skill, using an early version of whole-language immersion, and since they had their students for seven years, they could move slowly, step by step, with plenty of active learning techniques: drills, carefully graded exercises, writing assignments of many kinds, and constant oral work (double translation, competitions, debates, declamations, and other verbal performances). [. . .] Jesuit rhetorical education placed a great deal of emphasis on style, using Cicero as a touchstone (along with many other models in different settings) [. . .] The many years of extremely close attention to analysis and production of language gave Jesuit education a distinct flavor. (Gannett and Brereton 2016, p. 9)

2.2. Jesuit Rhetoric in the Chinese Context

The Jesuit model was destined to meet with another humanistic tradition, the one started by Confucius and his disciples. While Jesuit missions spread worldwide, missionaries trained in philology and liberal arts naturally started to map the syntax, lexicon, and oratory of non-European languages. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) associated humanist scholarship with a flexible “policy of adaptation”: “[The] humanist culture so carefully cultivated by Ricci was a set of scholarly practices centered on the rhetorical-philological skills of attentive reading, interpretation, composition, and translation that were applied to texts in both European and non-European languages on a wide range of topics, although always with an eye *ad maiorem dei gloriam*.” (McManus 2019, p. 738). The skillful tapestry of quotations, arguments, and references engineered by Ricci in his main apologetic work, *The True*

Meaning of the Lord of Heaven [Tianzhu shiyi 天主實義], certainly represents a major cross-cultural rhetorical achievement. Later on, in 1687, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, a translation of the foundational Chinese classics published by Philippe Couplet (1623–1693), Christian Wolfgang Herdrich (1625–1684), Prospero Intorcetta (1626–1696), and François de Rougemont (1624–1676), testified to the attentive study made by Jesuits of Chinese literary sources and rhetorical resources (Meynard 2011).

2.3. Modern Zi-Ka-Wei and Rhetorical Accommodation: An Editorial Endeavor

After 1843, the Jesuit missionary endeavor in China developed in a complicated and ever-evolving context:

Catholic missions resumed in China in a context profoundly different from the one that had marked the arrival of Matteo Ricci. Missionary congregations were allowed to enter or re-enter by the grace of the “Unequal Treaties” (from the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 to the Sino-Japanese agreements of 1914), which, by the force of guns, opened the country to opium trade and religious proselytism. [. . .] In 1856–1859, the Vatican divided the Chinese territory into Apostolic Vicariates, which were assigned to different religious congregations. The Jesuit province of Champagne (covering the north and east of France) inherited rural areas of Hebei, while the Province of France (i.e., Paris) was placed in charge of the Jiangnan region (mainly Jiangsu and Anhui), a region that included both urban areas (Nanjing and Shanghai) and poor countryside. [. . .] Jesuit provinces in charge of a missionary territory received support from other provinces until the latter were given an independent territory once the Mission had grown sufficiently for justifying a new territorial division. (Vermander 2014, pp. 10–11)

The headquarters of the Jesuit Jiangnan Mission was established in Zi-ka-wei, a land located in what is now the Xuhui district of Shanghai in the southwest part of the city. Modern Zi-ka-wei provides us with an important example of the way Ricci’s model of acculturation was reframed in a semi-colonial context. From the middle of the 1860s onwards, the Jesuit Zi-ka-wei compound gradually transformed from a religious and charitable community to a center of scientific, educational, and cultural institutions that were spanning fields of humanities and natural sciences, interweaving the global scholarly network by connecting international associations, and publishing reports, journals, and book series (Mo 2018, 2021). So far, research has been mainly concentrated on the framework of the “*Plan Scientifique du Kiang-nan*” that Jesuit’s endeavored (see Standaert 1996; Shanghai Library 2020; Tao 2017; Wang 2004, 2017; Ren 2018; Wang 2015). Looking to enlarge the scope of the research, this article selects as its point of reference the *Catalogue des Ouvrages Européens* (1923), which advertises the works printed by the Tou-sè-wè Press, a Jesuit institution located within the Xujiahui missionary enclave. As these were commercial pamphlets, similar catalogs were not systematically preserved. The one in our possession constitutes an excellent sample of the way works published by the Jesuit-led Press were advertised to the public, at a time where Catholic and especially Jesuit activities in Shanghai were still experiencing strong growth.

The *Catalogue* comprises 20 pages and divides the works it advertises into the following sections: a sinological series (*Variétés Sinologiques*) totaling 55 titles; a section dedicated to ethnographic studies on ethnic minorities (which includes only one book, see Section 4.1); and another section focused on the study of the Mandarin language that offers ten dictionaries and textbooks, while a complementary one advertises 14 works on the study of the Shanghai dialects and practical/devotional leaflets romanticized in the same dialects. The *Catalogue* offers also ten textbooks for helping Chinese students to study French, two for the study of English, and seven for helping Chinese students to learn Latin. Linguistic, geographical, and historical Atlases account for 17 publications, and 15 books cover a variety of topics, such as medicine, apostolic practices, the Chinese calendar, and popular religion. Finally, there is a list of the devotional, pedagogical, meteorological, and scientific periodicals published by the same Press. Most of the publications listed are au-

thored by Jesuits pertaining to the Jiangnan mission. The publications were to be ordered directly from the Press, with some outlets in Beijing, Tianjin, Paris, and London.

3. The Latin Language Inheritance

3.1. Learning Latin in China

Young European Jesuits arriving in China had been trained in Latin, and were starting their studies of literary Chinese and local dialect when arriving at their destination. As if reciprocally, young Chinese Jesuits had to learn Latin in order to fulfill priestly duties. Many of them had been educated at the Jesuit St. Ignatius College of Zi-ka-wei, and thus received early exposure to this language. Additionally, learning Latin was an efficient and resourceful channel for young Chinese scholars to enter the new intellectual “upper class” of modern China. Though there were inevitable tensions and cultural misunderstandings arising from a semi-colonial context, the publications in the Latin language, namely the “Zi-ka-wei textbooks” 匯學課本, were a flagship of Catholic publishing institutions in China, with a few competitors, such as the publications of the Yanzhou Cathedral of the German Divine Word Missionaries 德國聖言會兗州天主堂印書館¹ and the Peking French Lazarist Mission Press (or Pei T'ang Press) 法國遣使會北平北堂印書館².

Since the Latin-language publications of T'ou-sè-wè Press were first meant to be teaching materials for the Jesuit-led Zi-ka-wei St. Ignatius College and Aurora University, they were designed according to specific educational purposes. For example, the core disciplines taught at Aurora University included law, astronomy, medicine, flora, and fauna, all of which were built on Latin vocabulary. Other Jesuit scientific institutions, such as the Zi-ka-wei Observatory and the Heude Museum of Natural History, relied on the college system for intellect resources. Therefore, Jesuits consciously affirmed the special importance of Latin and prepared Latin textbooks adapted to the curriculum of St. Ignatius College.

At the same time, the Zi-ka-wei educational undertakings integrated a classical ideal of the *Academie*, according to which scholars held different viewpoints, should enter into discussion, a model revived during the Renaissance (Li 2021). So as to nurture such an ideal, a textbook of classical Latin (*Ciceroniana syntaxis et exempla*) was written for the needs of the students of St Ignatius College (its study was preceded by one of two textbooks of rudiments). The mention of Cicero was pointing at more than at a model of eloquence. After Augustine, Cicero was the first source for the little treatise on friendship by which Ricci opened his literary career in China. The author of the *Laelius, De Amicitia Dialogus* provided his readers with a model of scholarship based on the cultivation of the soul and of human relationships (Ricci 2005; Zou 2001). Therefore, Cicero was a perfect medium for evoking the historical depth of Jesuit cultural interactions in China.

We have already mentioned that learning Latin was a necessary requisite for accessing the priesthood. More broadly, for Chinese graduates who had completed their courses and language training at St Ignatius College, it also facilitated their integration into the French higher education system, as well as their access to French and Italian languages spoken by foreign Jesuit missionaries.

3.2. Angelo Zottoli, Ma Xiangbo and the Interaction between Latin and Classical Chinese

Angelo Zottoli 晁德蒞 (1826–1902) represents a major figure when it comes to the perpetuation of Latin literacy in the context of Zi-ka-wei. Zottoli was an influential teacher of both foreign and Chinese young Jesuits, initiating the first ones to Chinese Letters, and the second to the Latin language. His *Cursus litteraturae sinicae: neo-missionariis accommodatus* (“Course of Chinese Literature: Accommodated for New Missionaries” 中國文化教程), published in five bilingual volumes between 1879 and 1882, was also widely consulted by Chinese Jesuits, and adapted under various formats.

The first volume is designed to address basic notions of Chinese grammar and to provide more elementary texts for the students. The second volume mainly addresses the study of the Four Books (Sishu 四書). The third volume focuses on the study of selected passages from the Five Classics (Wujing 五經). The fourth is

mostly an analysis of more complex texts such as historical accounts and epistles. Finally, the fifth one contains examination essays and poems involving a higher level of difficulty. (De Caro 2022, p. 58)

In the section “Langue Mandarine”, the *Catalogue* of 1923 lists first this bilingual Latin/Chinese course, stressing its special status within the Shanghai Jesuits’ educational endeavor. Zottoli’s monumental course is not only a textbook but also a collection of Chinese texts translated into Latin. These texts deal with a variety of topics, ranging from linguistic issues to philosophy, historical essays, or poetry (William 2015). The gradual acquisition of Chinese culture by the young Jesuits arriving from Europe was the main concern to be dealt with during their training in Zi-ka-wei. The work involved in the acquisition of the *Cursus* was intense. The first volume, *Lingua familiaris*, consisted of four parts: *Primæ lectiones* 蒙學, *Dialogi comici* 雜劇, *Parvæ narrationes* 小說, and *Descriptiones romanenses* 才子. These four parts were followed by a grammatical table and various lexicons. The second volume, *Studium classicorum*, included a brief introduction to the Chinese calendar and chronology, from the Yellow Emperor to the Guangxu Emperor, as well as the names of historical places, elements on heavenly stems and earthly branches, seasonal festivals, folk gods and goddesses, metrology, oracle bones and divination, bells and chimes, drums and ceremonies, sacrificial vessels, rituals and dances, and it was completed by illustrations. Then followed the study of some of the Confucian classics. The third volume, *Studium canonicorum*, focused on the study of selected passages from the Five Classics, with a stress on the *Classic of Odes* 詩經, *Classic of Documents* 書經, and *Classic of Changes* 易經. The volume, entitled *Stylus rhetoricus*, was mostly an analysis of more complex texts. The first part was centered on “ancient prose”, and the second on a number of specialized literary styles (epistolary documents, historical relations). Finally, the *Pars Oratoria et Poetica* was containing examination essays and poems, all of them involving a higher level of difficulty, with preliminary explanations about the Chinese imperial examination system. The selection was balancing classics and more popular writings, many of which were introduced for the very first time to a foreign audience. Somehow, the *Cursus* was introducing Chinese language and literature to its readers the way Latin language and rhetoric used to be throughout the European educational courses.

The *Cursus* was an essential element of the life of the Jesuits in Zi-ka-wei, who often consulted this text in order to improve their knowledge of Chinese culture, language, and philosophy. Its use was multi-purposed; although the Jesuits had traditionally sought to evangelize Chinese officials, the French Jesuits in Zi-ka-wei had adapted their strategy to the political and cultural environment of the place and period in which they were located. Missionaries preparing to minister to the common people of Jiangnan were focusing on basic learning and then on local dialects, while others, still focused on the elites or perpetuating the sinological tradition of their Order, would pay more attention to the *Cursus*’ advanced sections. Considering the fact that they were starting the study of the Chinese classics much later than Literati was doing, they certainly would never achieve eloquentia perfecta in Chinese, but the Latin model was still indicating to them towards which ideal they should strive.

Ma Xiangbo 馬相伯 (1840–1939) provides us with a most impressive example of the personal integration of Latin and ancient Chinese rhetoric. A member of the Society of Jesus from 1862 to 1876, and a student of Fr. Zottoli, he always remained in close communication with the Order, even when disagreeing with the course of action chosen by the French Jesuits. He left the nascent Aurora University of which he was the Rector and funded Fudan University (1903–1905). His linguistic abilities were impressive, and his knowledge of Latin (a language he taught to Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), among other luminaries) was celebrated throughout China (Zou 2005). At the same time, Ma Xiangbo was well-versed in the knowledge of Chinese classics, which Fr. Zottoli had encouraged him to study so as to complement his Western-style education. His rhetorical training led him to reach a compromise between literary elegance and the necessity to touch hearts and minds. This is reflected in the linguistic choice he made in his translations of the Four Gospel based

on the (Latin) Vulgate (1919–1937). Ma elected the so-called “easy wenli 文理” style, i.e., a simplified version of classical Chinese, for bridging the gap between Catholicism and China. This choice locates him halfway between the Protestant translations that, exactly in the same period, were privileging modern Chinese and most Catholic translations, still faithful to high-level classical Chinese (Hong 2022). Ma Xiangbo’s literary preferences reflect the rhetorical style developed during the first decades of Zi-ka-wei’s existence. The title of one of his articles, (*Shengjing yu renqun zhi guanxi* 聖經與人群之關係, “The Relation between the Bible and the Crowd”, see Hong 2022, p. 7), speaks well of the fact that, for Ma, “translating the Bible” is an act that, from the start, needs to take into consideration the translator’s readership. At the same time, as stressed by Vermander (2021) at that particular time in China’s history, most Chinese intellectuals were considering the Bible as a “Classic” (jing 經), and the language that was proper for the classics was, by definition, classical prose. Later on, some Chinese Jesuits, Xu Zongze 徐宗澤 (1886–1947) notably, would use with more audacity the possibilities offered by different traditions of Chinese writing (see Starr 2016, pp. 100–27).

4. The French Language and the Sinological Endeavor

During the first decades of their presence in the Jiangnan region, most Jesuits were of French origin, supplemented by Jesuits coming from the Milan Province. The proportion of Chinese Jesuits gradually grew. In addition, new mission territories were carved in the Jiangnan apostolic region (Vicariat apostolique de Kiangnan or *Vicariatus Apostolicus Nanchinensis*), entrusted to Spanish, Canadian, American, and Hungarian Jesuits, among other nationalities represented (Rule 2014; Lardinois et al. 2018). Still, French remained prevalent both as a language of communication and as the one in which Chinese studies were undertaken and published.

4.1. Sinology at the Frontiers

This focus on the French tradition may explain sinological trends that gave particular importance to geographical knowledge based on a semi-colonial model of exploration and ethnographic research. The *Catalogue* puts in a good place a ground-breaking study by the MEP missionary Paul Vial 鄧明德 (1855–1917): *Les Lolos: Histoire, religion, mœurs, langue, écriture*, though this work is the only in the section focusing on minority studies (“Études sino-orientales”)³. This book is based on a decade of in-depth fieldwork in what is now called the Yi 彝 ethnic area of Yunnan Province. *Les Lolos* systematically collected Yi’s folklore and related it to various cultural theories, linking ethnographic fieldwork, linguistics, and geography. It also made use of figurism, (the search for biblical tropes in traditional myths and cultural heroes), when giving an account of the language, identity, and cosmogonies of the group under study. Whatever its limitations, Vial’s research was developing a method anchored in comparative linguistics. The book was both “traditional” in its ethnographic and folklorist focus and “modern” in its quest for new methods and explanatory patterns. It triggered a strong interest in studies around the Chinese ethnographic frontiers.

The fact that the Jesuit Press of Shanghai elected to publish this book authored by an MEP missionary from Yunnan was indicative of a trend that the Sinology of this time and, notably, the one promoted by the Shanghai Jesuits underwent a process of “decentralization” that led it away from a focus on classical and Confucian texts and directed it towards the study of minority people and/or popular customs and ways of life. The *Variétés Sinologiques* monograph series comprised a good number of volumes about the popular customs and ethos of the island of Chongming, on Chinese “superstitions” (gathered in a famous series of volumes on popular religion authored by Fr. Henri Doré 祿是邁 (1859–1931)), or on the Chinese proverbs collected in Inner Mongolia. This ethnography-driven sinology could not but go along a shift in rhetorical patterns; collecting information about the people located “at the margins” and understanding what could move their minds and

hearts were endeavors taking precedence over the mastery of “official” rhetorical patterns and techniques.

4.2. Sinology and Localization in Zi-Ka-Wei

We have just mentioned that the monograph series *Variétés Sinologiques* was grouping together studies undertaken by Jesuits based in Jiangnan. As such, this series occupies a place of choice in the *Catalogue*. Some volumes deal with the very distinctive characteristics of the Jiangnan Delta region. Some also echo the rise of modern China. The frequent interplay between images and text is also an interesting feature of the series. The scholarly quality of the *Variétés* helped to upgrade Zi-ka-wei from a mere geographical setting to a distinctive “intellectual field” of sinology. The fact that eight volumes of the series (there were sixty-six in all and fifty-five of them were published at the time the *Catalogue* appeared) were awarded the “Prix Julien” by the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* illustrated the fact that “diaspora sinology” as practiced in Zi-ka-wei could be equated with mainstream academic sinology.

Among the volumes listed in the *Catalogue* that bear more directly on the mastery of languages and Rhetoric, let us note Augustus Debesse 華克誠’s (1851–1928) *Petit dictionnaire française-chinois* 法漢字典簡編 and Joseph de Lapparent 孔明道’s (1862–1953) *Petit dictionnaire chinois-français* 上海方言法華字彙. This last volume also deals with the Shanghai dialect, a subject to which we will come in the next section. Let us note that Fr. Joseph de Lapparent contributed much to the compilation of dialect dictionaries, gathering nearly 30,000 daily Shanghainese dialectal expressions.

Said otherwise, and for developing a point we already hinted towards, Zi-ka-wei, sinology went with a recognition of local knowledge, where linguistics and anthropology met each other. Included in the *Catalogue*, Henri Dugout 屠恩烈’s (1875–1927) *Atlas philologique élémentaire, Essai de classification géographique des langues* 基礎語史學地圖集—語言地理分類 was published in 1910, pioneering a cartographic approach of linguistics. Dugout’s second and third volumes, *Classement général des langues par genres et par familles, Les langues maternelles, and les plus répandues*, furthered his endeavor in linguistic geography and contributed to the recognition of the richness of regional cultures.

The *Catalogue*, with the material on languages and linguistics it lists, shows that the Shanghai Jesuits were pragmatically undertaking a localization of rhetorical resources operated through the study of languages, as well as of ordinary ways of communicating and interacting, anchored into ethnographic research.

4.3. Teaching French in Shanghai

The use of the French language was in no way restricted to scientific publications. Taught and used at St. Ignatius College, its study was also compulsory at Aurora University. In 1912, the University obtained from the French Republic the official recognition of the diplomas it awarded. In 1918, the French Ministry of Public Instruction granted the Aurora preparatory course the equivalence of the French baccalaureate. 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 the natural sciences. The senior 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). French language textbooks were thus in high demand. Early on, the T’ou-sè-wè Press published for the Chinese students at St. Ignatius College, *Introduction à l’étude de la langue française* 法語進階 by Henri Boucher 董師中 and *Grammaire française* 法文初範 by Laurent Tchang 張省機. Later on, the needs specific to the students of Aurora University resulted in the publication of new textbooks, some of them focusing on syntax, and others on literary compositions (Ren 2019). The array of textbooks had to be extremely wide, since they had to respond to the needs of beginners, as well as to the ones of extremely advanced students,

i.e., former students of St Ignatius already well-trained in the language and studying at Aurora University in order to prepare for advanced university studies in France.

5. Dialectology and Rhetoric

One of the distinguishing marks of the localization of classical rhetoric was the art of persuasion by means of dialects. Though the Jesuits were educated in classical eloquence and letters, they needed to engage with dialects in order to instruct, persuade, and inspire.

5.1. Dialects and Accommodation

Missionary orders had to preach for very diverse congregations, many of them hardly literate, and conversant mainly or uniquely in the local dialect. Therefore, they had to apply language science to the spoken Chinese dialects, breaking away from the Chinese literati's concentration on classical literature (You 2002). In modern China, Protestant missionaries worked in translating the Bible into dialects, including Shanghainese, which was the first of the Wu dialects to be used for Bible translation (Choi 2018, pp. 432–44)⁴.

The *Catalogue* contains several examples of biblical readings for the ordinary people, such as the *General Catalogue of Sacred Scriptures* 經書總目, reproducing early devotional literature, and the *Catalogueus Librorum Lingua Sinica Scriptorum* 中文語言寫作圖書出品目錄, a Latin compilation of sacred books in the Chinese language. Stanislas Chevalier 蔡尚質's (1852–1930) *Histoire de la Passion de N-S. Jesus Christ* 耶穌受難記略方言, a collection of stories about the crucifixion of Jesus compiled from the four Gospels of the New Testament, constituted a most creative attempt at Chinese-language biblical commentary (You 2002). Chevalier was known as one of the founders of Zi-ka-wei's scientific apostolate, chairing the daily operation of the Zi-ka-wei Observatory. He was also concerned with daily missionary work, translating the *Passion* into the Songjiang dialect with romanticized spelling (Qian 2014).

In the *Catalogue*, the section “Dialecte de Chang-hai” includes nine pieces. More than half of them were translated from Mandarin publications. For instance, *La Boussole du langage mandarin, traduit en dialecte de Changhai* 土話指南 was a translation of Henri Boucher 董師中's (1857–1939) *La Boussole du langage mandarin* into the Songjiang dialect. The French version originated from the textbook bearing the same title published for Japanese diplomats in China during the early Meiji era (Xu 2013, pp. 24–74), which was regarded as a founding work in the history of Chinese language education in Japan, breaking away from the model based on Thomas F. Wade's (1818–1895) *Yü-yen Tzŭ-erh Chi* 語言自邇集 (Zhang 2016). Boucher offered a detailed depiction of folk customs, economic life, and diplomacy in the late Qing Dynasty. The eighty chapters of *La Boussole du langage mandarin* were divided into four parts: “Formules de conversation qu'il faut savoir” 應對須知, “Mandarins et marchands parlent de leurs affaires” 官商吐屬, “Style ordinaire des commandements” 使令通話, and “Dialogues entre mandarins” 官話問答. The first three parts were retained and reorganized into two volumes when they were translated into dialect. The fourth part, “Dialogues entre Mandarins”, was omitted, as it was mainly used by the interpreters of the Chinese embassies and consulates for diplomatic receptions in the Qing period, and had little to do with the use of dialect as well as with changing political circumstances. The rearrangements undergone by the dialect version showed that missionaries working in the Jiangnan context were mainly posted in areas where the population was more and more engaged in trade and commerce.

5.2. Sacred Rhetoric in Shanghai

Many works in Shanghai dialects can be included in the category of “sacred rhetoric”. They notably include collections of sermons and prayers. Their study helps one to record the gradual changes that occurred in the Shanghai dialect during the modernization process (Chen 1992). It also helps the analyst to map the diversity of the dialectical variants spoken in the region. In addition to the Songjiang dialect mentioned above, the Italian Jesuit Christophorus Bortolazzi 苗景筠 (1856–1934) worked on Chongming Island where

he familiarized himself with the local language and culture. The *Catalogue* includes his dialectal translations of pious leaflets such as *Préparation à la mort* 方言備終錄 and *Petit recueil de vies de Saints* 方言聖人行實摘錄. The original Mandarin versions of these leaflets were compiled in Xu Zongze's *Synopsis of Jesuit Translations in the Ming and Qing Dynasties* 明清間耶穌會士譯著提要. The original manuscript of *Préparation à la mort* was written by St. Alphonsus Ligoretti (1696–1787). It was first translated into dialect by the philosopher Li Wenyu 李問漁 (1840–1911). The *Petit recueil de vies de Saints* was originally composed on the basis of the *Legenda Aurea*, with several revisions introduced (Li 2011). Both dialectal adaptations included additional considerations, for instance, for evil methods, for confessing one's sins, and the afterlife.

The *Catalogue* sub-section “Série d’opuscules en dialecte de Chang-hai” includes five volumes. There were booklets such as *Conversations usuelles* 日常交談 and *Dialogues à l’hôpital* 就醫對話, and only one classic in its entirety, namely, the *Three Character Classic* 三字經, a Confucian work meant for the education of children, which the Zi-ka-wei Jesuits also published in Mandarin. This illustrates the interest consistently shown by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries towards this specific work, which combines language teaching with moral education. The English Congregationalist missionary W. H. Medhurst once argued that the *Three Character Classic* was an ideal sermon manual (Guo 2009). The publication in the dialect of this classic work was meant both to provide for the moral education of local people and to help newly arrived missionaries to immerse themselves in the local language and society. Both the illiterate and the missionaries were required to memorize the text, much as Catholic Catechisms might be, even before they could read and write correctly.

It was noteworthy that the works covered in the *Catalogue* section “Série d’opuscules en dialecte de Chang-hai” are the only ones that use lithography among all language books. Usually, lithography was used for non-sale printed materials, such as flyers, as it came cheaper. The T’ou-sè-wè Press long practiced the art of lithographic printing (Xu 2014, pp. 32–33). Photo-lithography allowed for the inserting of images within devotional literature. The Shanghaiese dialect booklets were usually small in size, they were distributed with other language books rather than separately sold, and dialect pronunciation was supplemented by simple drawings. All these factors pleaded for the preferential use of lithography.

5.3. Jesuit Lexicography in Local Context

The Jesuit attempts to theorize the Shanghai dialect was based on the French linguistic tradition and proceeded mainly through the compilation of textbooks and lexicons. Albert Bourgeois 浦君南 (1893–1948), who taught at Aurora University, compiled the *Leçons sur le dialecte de Chang-hai* 上海話練習課本. It consisted of thirty-one lessons, presented in a matchable French–Shanghaiese pattern, with a “Shanghai–French Glossary” at the end of the book. The *Catalogue* recorded its first edition in 1922. Although dictionaries for everyday use were compiled during the Ming and Qing dynasties, dictionaries dedicated to dialects were then a very recent development. The Jesuits, who came to China in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, used Latin as the main tool for studying Chinese phonology, such as the *Dictionarium Sinico-Latinum* 漢拉詞典 compiled by Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault 金尼閣 (1577–1628), and Lazzaro Cattaneo 郭居靜 (1560–1640) with the assistance of Sebastião Fernandez 鐘鳴仁 (1562–1621), as well as another dictionary of the same title compiled by the French Jesuit Alexandre Delacharme 孫璋 (1695–1765). From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, advances in printing techniques triggered a large number of bilingual dictionaries. Dictionaries produced in Zi-ka-wei were following the French model of the “définition de mot”. The lexical works of Corentin Pétillon 貝迪榮 (1858–1939) and Joseph de Lapparent were progressively supplemented by the ones of Auguste Debesse, notably his *Petit dictionnaire chinois-français* (1901). Paul Rabouin 應儒望’s (1828–1896) *Petite grammaire* 松江方言語法詞典, a grammatical dictionary of the Songjiang dialect, was also anchored into the French lexicographic tradition. Entries were completed

by synonyms and antonyms, and closely related to their French equivalents. The index was sorted alphabetically according to the pronunciation in the Shanghainese dialect; the use of four tones discriminating among homophones. The lexical works of the French Jesuits of the Champagne Province, based in Hebei, were inclined to privilege the “*définition de chose*” over the “*définition de mot*”. Séraphin Couvreur 顧賽芬’s (1835–1919) *Dictionnaire français-chinois, contenant les expressions les plus usitées de la langue mandarine* 法漢常談 and *Dictionnaire français-chinois* 法華字典 were of an encyclopedic nature.

The publications on dialects coming from the T’ou-sè-wè Press were much more systematic than the various Chinese Pidgin English 洋涇浜英語 textbooks and dictionaries that were popular in Shanghai at the same time. A comparative study between publications on Shanghai dialects at the T’ou-sè-wè Press and the ones on Cantonese, Hakka, and other dialects at the Nazareth Press in Hong Kong would help to characterize further the way linguistic and cultural studies were understood and undertaken in different contexts.

6. Concluding Remarks

The studies of the publications coming from the T’ou-sè-wè Press as listed by the *Catalogue* of 1923 provide us with precious insights as to the way the Jesuit’s approached rhetoric and language studies that unfolded in modern Shanghai. First, there was a strong commitment to follow the traditional model of humanist education, able to touch both heart and mind through the use of the “right word” in the right context (O’Malley 2016). Second, as shown by Zolotti’s *Cursus*, Latin was still seen as the nearest equivalent to classical Chinese. These two written languages were considered to constitute the embodiment of the style and values proper of each of the civilizations they represent. Classical Chinese and Latin rhetorical patterns were mutually translatable. They were conveying a common humanist outlook. At the same time, and this is the third characteristic we noted, Jiangnan-based Jesuits were conscious that these two rhetorical models were located “at the center”. Growing attention was being given to “the margins”, the margins of the Chinese Empire (the publication of Vial’s ethnographic work), the margins of Shanghai city (Jesuits were very much present in the island of Chongming, as well as in the marginalized community of fishermen), and the margins constituted by Catholic villages that were suddenly displaced into an urban milieu by modernization. These considerations triggered a style of research relying on the French language and an ethnographic tradition that is reflected in a good number of the volumes gathered in the *Variétés Sinologiques* monograph series. The art of touching hearts and minds in the context in which the Shanghai Jesuits operated meant to focus on local dialects (and the territory of today Shanghai was home to several variants) and to develop proper instruments and methods towards their learning and their use for evangelization. Additionally, Jesuit publications reflect the rapid evolution of these dialects under a process of accelerated modernization.

This attention to “margins” and, especially, to dialects may reflect what Professor Tao Feiya has called the phenomenon of “fragmentation” in modern Chinese Christianity (Tao 2014) and, confronted with a changing situation in modern Shanghai and China, Jesuits had to challenge a rhetorical model that was too much anchored into past references, and ways of proceeding for remaining influential. At the same time, they relied on resources proper to their tradition and training for acclimating their way of touching hearts and minds through the mobilization of linguistic competency. The *Catalogue* of 1923 points towards a work in process, in which its very nature, as well as its historical circumstances, would compel it to stay unfinished.

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Notes

- ¹ Giorgio Weig 維昌祿 (1883–1941) and Theodor Mittler 苗德秀 (1887–1956) of the Yanzhou Catholic Church Printing House prepared three series of German Latin textbooks: *Rudimenta linguæ latinæ* 拉丁文初學, *Elementa* 拉丁文詞學, *Syntaxis* 拉丁文句學, accompanied by *Grammatica* 話規 and *Exercitia* 課文. This was supplemented by the *Pars Magistri* and several large-scale dictionaries such as the *Latin Lexicon* and the *Chinese-Latin Dictionary*. See [Lei \(2012\)](#).
- ² The two sets of Latin textbooks published by the Beitang Press in 1931 and 1951, the three-volume *Elementa Grammaticæ latinæ* 辣丁文規, the four-volume *Exempla Latina* 辣丁習課, and a series of reference books, have been published many times in the past half century and have become classic textbooks. See [Lei \(2012\)](#).
- ³ On the life and work of Paul Vial, see notably [Moussay \(2004\)](#).
- ⁴ The Shanghai Dialect Bible was first translated into Chinese characters by Walter H. Medhurst (1796–1857) in 1847 with the Gospel of John. See [Choi \(2018\)](#).

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