Converting Zi-ka-wei: Angelo A. Zottoli, S.J. (Chao Deli 晁德蒞, 1826–1902) and His Mission in Shanghai

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Abstract

When the Jesuits returned to China in the nineteenth century, the mission and surrounding community at Xujiahui (Zikawei), near Shanghai, was an important intellectual and administrative center. Among the foreign Jesuits present at Xujiahui, a fixture for many years, was the Italian Angelo Zottoli, an educator, administrator, and translator for the mission. From his arrival in Shanghai in 1848 until he died in 1902, Zottoli was an essential figure in the cross-cultural dialogue between Chinese Catholics and foreign missionaries. Though far from a firebrand, Zottoli greatly admired Chinese culture and generally took an “accommodationist” approach, which clashed with the attitudes of other Jesuits in Shanghai. At the same time, he supported papal pronouncements on Chinese Rites, which provided strict limits to accommodation. Overall, then, he represents the difficulties Jesuits faced in reconciling the history of the church in China and their own attitudes (such as Eurocentricity) with Chinese culture. This article is part of the special issue of the Journal of Jesuit Studies, “Jesuits in Modern Far East,” guest edited by Steven Pieragastini.

Keywords

Introduction

Starting in the late sixteenth century, the Society of Jesus members came to China from Europe. These early Catholic missionaries established cross-cultural relationships with Chinese individuals from different social strata, from the highest members of the Ming dynasty mandarinate to people with much more humble origins. Because of this, Jesuit missionaries had a stable presence in China and established numerous Sino-Christian communities, fostering dialogue with local literati and commoners alike.

However, this flourishing exchange between Jesuit missionaries and Chinese culture was undermined by difficulties within Europe—and then more globally—following the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. After restoring the order in 1814, the Jesuits cautiously resumed their missions across the Qing empire. In different ways, these new missions were pervaded by, on the one hand, a sense of profound continuity with earlier Jesuit missions and, on the other, an awareness of the political changes happening in the nineteenth century in China and around the world. The renewed missions sometimes also encompassed a less “accommodating” approach towards local cultures than the previous ones. One of these missions was based in Xujiahui 徐家匯, known in the local dialect as Zi-ka-wei. This small village, now a district of the city of Shanghai, had a glorious Catholic past that was deliberately used by the Jesuit missionaries: it was the birthplace of Paul Xu Guangqi 徐光啓 (1562–1633), a Chinese Catholic literatus who facilitated the conversion of his family and various members of his community.

Angelo A. Zottoli, S.J. (Chao Deli 晁德蒞, 1826–1902) was part of this nineteenth-century Sino-European Catholic community and played an essential role in the restoration of the Catholic presence in Zi-ka-wei, supporting...

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1 Given the limited scope of my recently published monograph, Angelo Zottoli, a Jesuit Missionary in China (1848 to 1902) (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), which largely focused on a limited selection of Zottoli’s cosmogonic and cosmological writings, historical and historiographical materials were mentioned only in a very limited manner. As a result, I have decided to provide further biographical information and more bibliographical references in this article, hoping that this might facilitate the study of Zottoli’s missionary activities by other scholars.

other European Jesuit missionaries mainly from France and Italy. Although recent studies have highlighted the relevance—and even the limits—of the Jesuit missions in Shanghai and, more generally, in the Jiangnan area, Angelo Zottoli and his works have received relatively limited attention in recent scholarship.4

Zottoli’s significance lies in two main aspects of his scholarship. On the one hand, he was a pioneering scholar who sought to provide a new accommodating

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cross-cultural environment for his Chinese students and European Jesuit missionaries in Zi-ka-wei. On the other, he deeply respected—with some exceptions—the efforts of the previous Jesuit missionaries who had reached China during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a result, Zottoli established a continuous cross-cultural dialogue with some of his Chinese students, especially Ma Xiangbo 馬相伯 (1840–1939), Ma Xiangbo’s brother Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 (1844–1900), and the Jesuit artist Liu Dezhai 劉德齋 (1843–1912). Moreover, Zottoli’s works, mainly written in Latin and Chinese, were constantly interested in establishing a dialogue between Chinese culture, philosophy, literature, and Roman Catholicism. Minimally, this article aims to show how Zottoli contributed to the nineteenth-century French-led Jesuit missions in Zi-ka-wei. In addition, it will provide previously unpublished sources related to his last missionary activities in the Jiangnan area.

Angelo Andrea Zottoli and His Journey

Zottoli was born in Acerno (province of Salerno, region of Campania) on June 21, 1826, and died in Zi-ka-wei on November 9, 1902. Zottoli first joined the


Jesuit college in Salerno and then, against the will of his parents and some of his family members, went to Naples in May 1843 to pursue a clerical career, then decided to leave for Malta due to political turbulence in Naples in 1848. In the same year, he was chosen as one of several Italian novices to join the Jesuit mission in Zi-ka-wei, led at that time by French Jesuit missionaries, and he arrived in China in September of 1848. After his death, Zottoli was buried in a graveyard outside the area of Nanmen 南門 (Southern Gate), in Shanghai, by Fr. Joannes-Maria Louail, S.J. (Ding Shaoming 丁紹明, 1855–1907).8

Italian Jesuit missionaries were actively part of this French-led mission, including a group of Italian Jesuits who arrived in Shanghai with Zottoli in September 1848. According to Michele Volpe, the very first Jesuits from Naples in Shanghai started their mission in 1845.9 Other Italian Jesuit missionaries, including Agostino Massa (1813–56), joined the Zi-ka-wei mission in 1846.10 Subsequently, as mentioned, other Jesuits from Naples arrived in 1848. Zottoli played an active role in the Catholic community of Zi-ka-wei as part of several institutions there.

Starting in 1850, the same year he was ordained as a priest on the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola (July 31), Zottoli was appointed head of the religious residence and a professor of theology (ministri domus ac theologiae professoris)

Fang Hao: see Fang Hao, Zhongguo Tianshujiao shiren wuchuan, 260–62. Furthermore, a biography on Zottoli was written in Italian right after his death in Memorie della vita del Padre Angelo Andrea Zottoli, S.I., missionario in Cina (Memories of the life of Father Angelo Andrea Zottoli S.J., a [Jesuit] missionary in China) (Naples: Ricciardi, 1933).

The earliest documents available on Zottoli are preserved at the Archivio Storico della Provincia Euro-Mediterranea della Compagnia di Gesù (Historical Archive of Euro-Mediterranean of the Society of Jesus), Rome, Italy. I sincerely thank Dr. Maria Macchi for her support during my research in Rome at the archive. Of these, I was able to retrieve two notable works, which were probably written in the mid-/late 1840s. They are two poems, one in Latin and one in Greek, written by the young Zottoli on the occasion of the renewal of his religious vows as a young Jesuit novice. Later on, in 1879, he would publish a longer Latin poem, dedicating his famous Cursus litteraturae Sinicae to the “God-bearing Virgin” (Virgini Deiparae totius operis dedicatio). Cursus litteraturae Sinicae: Neo-missionarioris accommodatus (Course of Chinese literature. accommodated for new missionaries) (Shanghai: Ex Typographia Missionis Catholice in orphanotrophio Tou-sè-wè, 1879–82), i: dedicatio. For the English translation of this poem, see De Caro, Angelo Zottoli: A Jesuit Missionary in China, 58–59.

The text on the tombstone provides some interesting biographical information about Zottoli. It can be found in 葉農, 邵建, 人過留痕: 法國耶穌會檔案館藏上海耶穌會修士墓墓碑拓片 (Leaving their mark: Rubbings of tombstones of the Shanghai Jesuits in the French Jesuit Archives), ed. Ye Nong and Shao Jian (Macau-Shanghai: Jidan daxue Aomen yanjiuyuan, 2020), 88.


See Annals of the Propagation of the Faith 7 (1846): 226.
in Zi-ka-wei. He then became the Bibliotheca Zi-ka-wei’s director and was appointed headmaster of St. Ignatius College. In Zi-ka-wei, Zottoli became a widely appreciated Sinologist and received various awards for his studies, especially his *Cursus litteraturae Sinicae: Neo-missionariis accommodatus* (Course of Chinese literature: accommodated for new missionaries), published between 1879 and 1882. In Italy, in 1881, a pamphlet stated that the minister of Italy in Shanghai had announced the publication of Zottoli’s *Cursus*, and Zottoli was presented there as a missionary who gave honor and prestige to Italy in China. In 1884, Zottoli received the prestigious *Prix Stanislas Julien*. In September of the same year, an Italian literary journal celebrated this award and mentioned the words of Hervey de Saint Denys (De Liwen 德理文, 1822–92)—the head of the academic commission awarding the price. The *Cursus* was considered one of the most complete and refined works for the study of the Chinese language and literature. Later on, in 1886, Zottoli was also awarded honorary membership to the Royal Asiatic Society. Even in 1926, twenty-four years after Zottoli passed away, Germano Oldani referred to him as an eagle flying above all his contemporaries.

11 See Sica, *Annales Domus Zi-ka-wei SJ*, 28. According to Sica, this was also the time in which Zottoli was officially ordained as a Catholic priest by Francisco Xaverio Maresca, OFM (Zhao Fangjing 趙方濟, 1805–55) in 1850 at the Zi-ka-wei chapel on the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola. This is also confirmed in la Serviere, *Histoire de la mission du Kiang-nan*, 1:219. For a more detailed account of Maresca’s episcopal years, see David Strong, *A Call to Mission*, 1:35–45.

12 See *La settimana religiosa di Milano*, no. 36 (1882): 287.

13 See *Il Barretti*, no. 31 (1884): 280. The same brief comment by Hervey de Saint Denys is mentioned in *Revue archéologique* 3 (1884): 364.


15 Germano Oldoni, “La lingua italiana nell’estremo oriente e la grafia europea nella traduzione dei nomi cinesi,” *L’universo: Rivista mensile pubblicazione dell’Istituto geografico militare* 7 (1926): 657–58. Later on, in 1940, Hugh J. Bihler, presented the *Cursus* as a book that “contains in Chinese and Latin version all that an educated Chinese must know about the literature of his country.” See Hugh J. Bihler, “The Society and Anthropology,” *Woodstock Letters* 69, no. 3 (1940): 321. The legacy of the Zottoli family continued with the son of Angelo Zottoli’s brother Carmine, Angelandrea Zottoli (1879–1956), who became a well-respected scholar of Italian literature and was named after his illustrious missionary ancestor. At the end of his life in 1956, Angelandrea Zottoli wrote in his will that his entire family library constituting the ‘Fondo Zottoli’ would be donated to the city of Salerno and the Salerno Provincial Library in the Campania region. According to Antonio Colombis, at the time of the donation, the library fund included, among other sections, “some of Angelandrea Zottoli’s books on literature and history in modern editions, with the addition of a few [other editions published] prior to 1700 dating back to the Zottoli family library, including among its ancestors a bishop of Acerino and a missionary, a learned
Zottoli was trained following a prevalent educational path for seminarians, including the study of theology, philosophy, Latin, and Greek. However, there is no evidence that Zottoli was able to study Chinese before he arrived in Shanghai in September 1848, in contrast with other Neapolitan Jesuit missionaries. Moreover, Zottoli did not adopt an entirely accommodating approach toward Catholic theology at the beginning of his mission in Zi-ka-wei, especially from 1849 to 1856. In fact, during that time, he wrote a two-volume manuscript, preserved at the Biblioteca Zi-ka-wei, titled *Dissertationes theologicae ad recentiorum praesertim haereticorum conditionem* (Theological dissertations on the situation of especially modern heretics, 1849–56). This work is divided into two volumes, each divided into four treatises (*tractati*). In drafting this theological work, Zottoli was inspired by a theological course produced by Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876) in the mid-19th century. Zottoli probably used this

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work as a textbook or a handy reference during his theological courses in Zi-ka-wei focused mainly on providing a theoretical framework against non-Catholic Christian beliefs. They were meant to challenge the theological views of “modern heretics” and prepare Catholic students in Zi-ka-wei for their theological studies.

In his preface to this manuscript, Zottoli stressed the importance of adopting Catholic theology:

From these (i.e., the argumentations of Catholic theology), then, that heretics turned themselves to reading the Sacred Scriptures, the Catholic theologian ought to strive by all means to inquire with at least the same diligence and to explain by accurate exegesis why the Church’s perception is visible in full light.19

During the same years, Zottoli started to study Chinese language and culture. As a result, he produced several works in Chinese and Latin, becoming a well-established scholar and educator in Shanghai.

Zottoli also had a continuous epistolary exchange with his confrères in Italy. On a few occasions, he provided valuable information on the political situation in China and important news from the mission in Zi-ka-wei. The members of the Neapolitan province of the Society of Jesus published some of his letters. These edifying letters (lettere edificanti)20 give useful information from Neapolitan priests abroad—some of them in Zi-ka-wei and some elsewhere in China—as well as local letters from other members of the Jesuit community. Sometimes, these letters were published only later due to political disorders or wars. For instance, a declaration was written by the publisher of these lettere stating that initially, Fr. Zottoli and Fr. Aloysius (Luigi) Sica (1814–95) decided not to publish their letters, given the political tensions caused by the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). Subsequently, once the hostilities were ended, the

19 “Ex eo enim quo haeretici ad sacras litteras sese magno visu converterunt, catholicum theologum summopere decet eas pari saltem diligentia inquirere, et accurata exegesi enucleare quo ecclesiae sensus toto lumine pateat.” Zottoli, Dissertationes theologicae, 1: proemium. I thank Dr. Vedran Sulvosky for his suggestions.
20 These letters are retrieved from Lettere edificanti della Provincia Napoletana della Compagnia di Gesù, 9 vols. (Edifying letters for the Neapolitan province of the Society of Jesus) (Naples: Marchese, 1874–1914).
The Catholic history of Zi-ka-wei is intertwined with the conversion of Paul Xu Guangqi and the burial of his father with Catholic rituals in 1607. It then continued in the 1840s with the arrival of Claude Gotteland, S.J. (Nan Gelu 南格祿, 1803–56), who purchased property near Xu Guangqi’s tomb. There, Gotteland, together with other French Jesuit missionaries, helped establish various institutions, including the Bibliotheca Zi-ka-wei (1851), the St. Ignatius College (later named Xuhui College, Xuhui zhongxue 徐匯中學, 1850), an astronomical observatory, known as the Observatory of Zikawei (1871), and the Tou-se-we/Tou-se-wei or Tou-sai-wai (Tushanwan 土山灣) Orphanage. The presence of the French Jesuits was pivotal for the realization of the Roman Catholic community in Zi-ka-wei, and the location of so many Catholic institutions in one place, close to but beyond the borders of the foreign concessions, led to the area eventually coming under French de facto “jurisdiction.”

The Role of the Jesuit Missionaries in Zi-ka-wei (Xujiahui 徐家匯) and Angelo Zottoli in Politics and Education

21 Lettore edificanti, 7:56.
At the same time, Zi-ka-wei was an educational hub for cross-cultural studies and a place for devotional rituals and prayers. An interesting example is a letter dated June 23, 1855, from Joseph Gonnet, S.J. (E Erbi 鄂爾璧, 1815–95), who was one of the first members of the Society of Jesus to join the mission in Zi-ka-wei, on October 15, 1844. In this letter, Gonnet reported on how all of society in Shanghai was engaging in religious practices and ceremonies, including Protestant missionaries and the local mandarinate.\textsuperscript{26} In addition, the Jesuits lived a very active spiritual and social life. The missionaries' daily activities included learning Chinese and giving pious and profound comfort to the whole Christian community in the area. Zottoli’s \textit{Cursus} played an important role in the daily life of Jesuit missionaries in Zi-ka-wei, providing them with the tools to study Chinese.\textsuperscript{27}

Moreover, Zottoli was widely recognized as extremely interested in Chinese culture and gained the respect of his community. This was true even in an environment that displayed elements of “Sinophobia”\textsuperscript{28} by the Europeans.\textsuperscript{29} As a result, Zottoli attempted to pave the way for a more accommodating approach to the local Roman Catholic community. According to David Mungello, a less accommodating attitude was widespread in the community of the Society of Jesus in Zi-ka-wei, with Italian Jesuits tending to the Chinese side, in contrast to their French brethren. In 1875, this contrast led to an official request by the French Jesuit Auguste Foucault (1826–89) “not to send any more Italian priests because they were stoking anti-French sentiment among Chinese.”\textsuperscript{30} Even though Mungello’s analysis could be criticized as being excessively severe in its criticism of Catholic missions—especially in relation to their Eurocentric agenda—this is still an argument that is worth considering. Since the Italian missionaries found more favorable conditions without political and economic restrictions, it would have been possible for them to establish a

\textsuperscript{26} For the original text of the letter see \textit{Annali della propagazione della fede} (1855): 482–83.
\textsuperscript{27} See \textit{Annales de la propagation de la foi} 63 (1891): 252.
\textsuperscript{29} For an account of modern Shanghai and the effects of European colonialism on the city, see Isabella Jackson, \textit{Shaping Modern Shanghai: Colonialism in China’s Global City} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 113–62. For an analysis of the complex discriminatory environment in Shanghai even beyond the given period, see Yuezhi Xiong, \textit{Shanghai Urban Life and Its Heterogeneous Cultural Entanglements}, trans. Lane J. Harris and Chun Mei (Leiden: Brill, 2022), esp. 103–41.
\textsuperscript{30} Mungello, \textit{The Catholic invasion of China}, 47. This assertion has also been supported by Li Tiangang. See 李天纲, 信仰與傳統—馬相伯的宗教生涯 (Li Tiangang, \textit{Faith and tradition: Ma Xiangbo’s religious career}) (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1996), 1242.
more “accommodating” policy in contrast with the one adopted by the French missionaries. Nicholas Williams, in a similar way, suggests that “Zottoli stood out as a foreign missionary with a singular respect for Chinese culture” despite being in a context that featured distinctive European—or even Eurocentric—characteristics.

Zottoli was a quiet scholar who focused on his educational activities in Zi-ka-wei. At the same time, he sometimes engaged in political discussions with various members of the Society of Jesus and was not afraid to voice his concerns. In this regard, an interesting exception to his generally discreet attitude is a letter to the superior general of the Society of Jesus, dated May 1879, concerning the disputes over Chinese rites. Therein, Zottoli argued that the papal bull issued by Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758) on the Chinese rites controversy—that is, the bull *Ex quo singulari* (1742)—was still relevant and dogmatically correct:

Zi-ka-wei, May 13, 1879

To the Most Reverend Father General,

[...] Looking at the content of the canonical Chinese books, and at the ideas conveyed by modern and ancient Chinese [scholars], it is clear that the Papal bull issued by Benedict XIV concerning Chinese rites entails not just a pontifical and religious authority but [it also possesses] historical value and is a sincere critique [of the rituals].

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31 There were also instances in which Jesuit missionaries like Agostino Massa sought directly the help of Chinese warlords or mandarins in order to resolve their issues. On one particular occasion, in 1851, Agostino was supported by a local Mandarin with weapons and even a cannon in order to face rebels in the Pudong area. See La Serviere, *Histoire de la mission du Kiang-Nan*, 1:231.

32 Williams, “Angelo Zottoli’s *Cursus litteraturæ sinicae* as propedeutic to Chinese classical tradition,” 331–32.

Truly, from these books, so ancient and so sacred for the whole nation, [it appears that] the Chinese are practicing the art of fortunes; they are fond of the cult of the ancestors and hope [they will provide them with] happiness and protection. As a result, they are extremely careful in obtaining their blessings through sacrifices [to the ancestors], through libations [to them] by means of offerings. They also have very bizarre ideas on spirits and other similar things.

Our earlier [Jesuit religious] fathers were inflamed with the utmost ardent zeal and were driven by a great love for this poor nation, hoping to convert [the Chinese nation] to the truth of the Gospel. As a result, they sought in these books what could have been more in favor of [Christianity] and, therefore, closed a bit their eyes to what might have given a less accommodating idea of it [i.e., of Christianity]. As a result, if anyone in Europe, supporting what they have written [previously], wished to revisit these most painful and difficult questions, he would, in my opinion, run the great risk of defending certain theses that clash with all that we read and see here with our own eyes. The Reverend Father Superior, therefore, having learned that there are those in France who wish to stir up the ancient questions, has shown me the desire that by making use of the profound study performed by duty on the classical and canonical books of China, to have You, oh Reverend Father, warned of the grave difficulties of such an undertaking. In order, therefore, to satisfy the desire of the Reverend Father Superior, I venture to write these few lines to You, oh Reverend Father, and I am glad to take this opportunity to ask His holy blessing upon me and the work imposed upon me by [my] Holy Obedience.

To You, oh Father, Servant,
The least worthy of the servants and son in Christ,
Fr. Angelo Zottoli SJ

Interestingly, despite this much more critical letter, Zottoli established an accommodating method that included the teaching of both Chinese traditional literature and Catholic theology.

In addition to Zottoli, other Italian missionaries in Zi-ka-wei were involved in the mission to varying degrees. Agostino Massa was teaching both Chinese and theology to his confrère Renato Massa (1817–53) in 1849, as shown in a letter

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34 See ARSI, Sin-1205, 0698 (Sin. 5-vi, 5).
35 As discussed in De Caro, Angelo Zottoli, 139–56.
written by Renato to a friend in Naples.\textsuperscript{36} However, Massa could already write and read Chinese during his time in Italy. This is testified by his \textit{littera indipeta}, dated June 5, 1845. Therein, Massa wrote that he had diligently studied the Chinese language and felt, therefore, ready to join the Jesuit missions in China.\textsuperscript{37} After having read this letter, the superior general decided to grant Massa the possibility of joining the Jesuit mission in China.\textsuperscript{38} Naturally, then, Chinese language and culture played a crucial role in the education of some Italian missionaries in Shanghai, and their interest in Chinese literature, epitomized by Zottoli’s famous \textit{Cursus}, played an essential role in the education of both newly arrived European missionaries and Chinese orphans and novices alike. This attitude was intertwined with a constant concern for the frequently changing political situation in the Jiangnan area, as expressed by Sica. In fact, in a letter written to Fr. Gallucci in October 1894, a few months before his death, Sica said his sincere concern for the destiny of Christians during the first Sino-Japanese War and was mainly concerned about “our churches, our [religious] residences, and our lives, as well as the lives of our Christians […]”.\textsuperscript{39} This concern was shared by Zottoli, who wrote a letter to Bonaventura Pinto, S.J. (1838–1900) expressing his fear for the safety of Christian communities in China during that time.\textsuperscript{40} Zottoli was also deeply supportive of his community in various ways; for example, between June and July 1853, after an incident in Nanjing caused by the Taiping rebels, Zottoli and his Chinese catechists rendered an official document issued by the French consulate in Chinese that “appealed to the sentiments of justice and humanity” dated July 22, 1853.\textsuperscript{41}

\section*{Conclusion}

The complex political and religious vicissitudes related to the Jesuit missions in Shanghai in the nineteenth century made it more difficult to restore a Sino-Christian community in the village of Zi-ka-wei, and in Shanghai more generally.

\textsuperscript{36} See \textit{arsi}, \textit{Neap.} 2002.
\textsuperscript{37} See \textit{arsi}, \textit{Sin.} 1992-VIII.
\textsuperscript{38} See \textit{arsi}, \textit{Sin.} 1992-VIII.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Lettere edificanti della Provincia Napoletana della Compagnia di Gesù}, 7:57, translation by the author.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Lettere edificanti della Provincia Napoletana della Compagnia di Gesù}, 7:56–57. See also De Caro, “Angelo Zottoli (1826–1902),” 806.
\textsuperscript{41} This document was then brought there by Fr. Nicola Massa and Fr. Benjamin Brueyre 李秀芳 (or Bruyère, 1810–80) who returned to Zi-ka-wei on August 28 of the same year. See Serviere, \textit{Histoire de la mission du Kiang-nan}, 264–65.
Catholic missionaries dealt with intricate relationships with European colonial powers, local mandarins, and Chinese Christian converts, among many other individuals, including orphans, artists, and craftsmen. A sense of instability and insecurity pervaded all these relationships—also fostered by Eurocentric sentiments and the presence of Taiping rebels in the Jiangnan area.42

Nevertheless, a few European missionaries re-established a vibrant religious community with the support of local clergy and Chinese Catholics. Zottoli, among the many European Jesuit missionaries in Zi-ka-wei, represented an important missionary and scholar who combined sincere pastoral care for the Christian communities there with a profound erudition in Chinese language and culture.43

Even though he was generally a quiet scholar, Zottoli sometimes expressed his views on specific political or religious situations. For a good reason, he has generally been viewed as taking an accommodationist approach toward Chinese culture. However, as I have shown, he had a more strict viewpoint about certain theological questions, especially regarding Chinese rites. These attitudes reflect his multifaceted and complex personality and the bicultural intellectual context of his life and education.


43 For a comprehensive account of Zottoli’s Cursus and his erudition in Sinology and Chinese literature, see Williams, “Angelo Zottoli’s Cursus Litteraturæ Sinicæ,” 327–59.