

**FRANCISCANS, BAPTISMS AND RESCUES OF ABANDONED
CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHINA:
A POINT OF CHARITY? ***

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RESUMEN

El objetivo principal de este estudio es examinar el trabajo de los misioneros en la Edad Moderna en el rescate y bautismo de niños chinos. Para ello Manila se convirtió en un puente clave no sólo para los misioneros a seguir su camino a China sino por ser un punto crucial ya que los fondos para sostener esta causa vinieron de la piadosa obra de La Misericordia y muchos de esos niños fueron enviados a las instituciones cristianas filipinas para ser criados y educados. A la luz de esta tendencia podemos observar historias conectadas que reflejan realidades pluralistas y complejas en las que la piedad filial descrita y admirada por los misioneros fue cuestionada a la vez por una realidad apremiante en el Imperio Dragón. Por otro lado, el trabajo piadoso religioso también estaba marcado por intereses más profundos. Este trabajo intenta explorar la información proporcionada por el estudio de fuentes inéditas del *Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental* para analizar la naturaleza de estos fenómenos, su costo, el número de hijos, la edad, el género y el destino de quienes terminaron viviendo no sólo entre océanos sino entre culturas.

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Palabras clave: Caridad, bautismos, niños abandonados, evangelización, franciscanos, China.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to examine missionaries' labor during the Early Modern Period on rescuing and baptizing Chinese children in which Manila became a key bridge not only for the missionaries to follow their way to China but for being a crucial point since funds to sustain this cause came from the pious work of La Misericordia in Manila. Many of those children were sent to Philippine Christian institutions to be raised and educated. In the light of this trend we can observe connected histories that reflect pluralistic and complex realities in which that Chinese filial piety described and admired by the missioners was at the same time called into question because of a pressing reality in the Dragon Empire. On the other hand religious pious work was also marked by deeper interests. This paper tries to explore the information provided by the study of unpublished sources of the *Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental* in order to analyze the nature of these phenomena, its cost, the number of children, age, gender and destiny of those who ended up living not only between oceans but among cultures.

Keywords: Charity, baptisms, abandoned children, evangelization, Franciscans, China.

In modern European history, one of the most important duties that missionaries had in mind when spreading the word of God around the world was the development of works of mercy. In this historical period, Christian charity was still partially based on traditional medieval theology that understood it as a result of both God's and neighbor's love.¹ Originally, charity was understood as the only way to redeem humanity's sins, participate in God's mission of salvation and reach eternal life. However, Christian *caritas* was more complex than mere reciprocity. As Guerreau-Jalabert has pointed out, Christian charity marked a social behavior in which the lack of it showed disrespect for God and a threat to social order.² This research examines the charity in Spanish Franciscan missions in China in the middle years of the Eighteenth Century by analyzing the information that the missionaries included in the account books of the Order, nowadays kept at the at the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental in Madrid. According to this source, the charitable work of Franciscan missio-

¹ Nicolas Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume One: 635-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 592-595.

² Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, "Caritas y don en la sociedad medieval occidental," *Hispania* 50 (2000): 37.

naries had two main expressions: on one hand, baptism of children about to die and, on the other hand, rescuing abandoned children.

The preaching of the Gospel along with charity were fundamental elements in the Old Regime society, and especially for the missionaries. However, recent research has focused primarily on relations between Europeans and native populations and its implementation and difficulties. The aspects studied in this paper are especially relevant for understanding the instruments, agents and effects of the cultural encounter that the Catholic mission assumed in the settings of the Eighteenth-Century China.³

1. BAPTISMS AND MISSIONS

Baptism was one basic Catholic sacrament and it has been historically closely associated with the main religious missions aims. It was a sign of the search of universal sovereignty included in the act of going on mission.⁴ Baptism allowed individual salvation, the infusion of grace and the incorporation into the Christian community apart from the participation in filiation.⁵ Christian orders were obliged to baptize abandoned children in the streets in a time when there was great concern with being “baptized properly”.⁶ The Catholic Reformation of the Sixteenth Century involved a review of the baptismal theology of the Middle Ages and thus in the Council of Trent, the Catholic Counter-Reformation insisted on the medieval ideas on baptism, fundamentally based on St. Augustine. According to this precept, baptized dead children could

3 Some of the most relevant publications with this focus are: David Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins and Friars. Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2009), Erik Zürcher, *Bouddhisme: Chistianisme et société chinoise* (Paris: Julliard, 1990), Jacques Gernet, *Chine et chistianisme. Action et réaction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), Leonard Blussé and Harried T. Zurndorfer, *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia. Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), Nicolas Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume One: 635-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) and Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

4 Horst Rzepkowski, *Diccionario de misionología: historia, teología, etnología* (Estella: Verbo Divino, 1997), 50. See also Paul Brunner, “The Liturgie of Baptism in the Missions,” *China Missionary Bulletin* 11 (1959), 237-298.

5 Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 152.

6 John Bowell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), 398.

go to the Kingdom of Heaven and receive God's favour.⁷ Of course, the religious argument was important in order to justify the baptism of those children as soon as possible. However, it is also a need to take into account the missionary colonial context. Friars looked for legitimation of the evangelizing-colonial action: sending the numbers of baptized children to the Spanish donors was an obvious sign of the progress of the mission. In a way, they saw children about to die as an opportunity because they offered the justification for their labour.

In the Franciscan registers we can find out a very precise figure for the number of baptized children from 1729 to 1774. They were baptized in *articulo mortis*,⁸ moribund and usually abandoned. In the manuscripts kept, the number written for each year refers the total figure that includes all baptisms made in all the Franciscan missions in China. Except for the years 1768 and 1773, we do not know the number of baptized children in each province. The exception of these years gives us information of the Chinese provinces where the children came from: Shandong, Jiangxi, Guangzhou and Fujian. It is possible to assume that the rest of the figures of the period correspond to those four missions.⁹ Furthermore, it must be highlighted that these sources indicate the number of children whose baptisms were funded for three specific Pious Works managed from Manila,¹⁰ as I will explain on the following pages.

In Table 1, I have summarized the information consulted on the account books of the above-mentioned period. Data collected in this Table is written in the way in which was written in the primary sources. Due to this fact the categories may reflect possible contradictions. The asterisk marks the different numbers found for the same year in different documents probably due to an error produced by the friars themselves in transcribing data.

7 Those who died unbaptized would not go to hell but could save if *put no obstacle* to the grace conferred and contained in baptism. Ibid. See also Bryan Sprinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent* (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 134-156 and Jeese Couenhoven, *Stricken by Sin, Cured by Christ. Agency, Necessity, and Culpability in Augustinian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48-52.

8 *In articulo mortis* was a Latin fable that means "about to die". It was widely used in Theology and Law during modern times referring to actions and decisions taken in the final moments before death.

9 Also confirmed by bibliography. Arnulf Camps and Pat McCloskey, *The Friars Minor in China (1294-1955), especially the years 1925-55* (Virginia: St. Bonaventure University and General Secretariate for Missionary Evangelization, 1995), 6.

10 A Pious Work was a foundation for charity purposes. Beforehand it was established the beneficiaries, conditions and functioning.

Table 1. Children baptized *in articulo mortis* from 1720 to 1778

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of children baptized in articulo mortis</i>
1729	396
1730	665
1731	636
1732	549
1733	573
1734	751
1735	693
1736	596
1737	806
1738	758
1739	1,149
1740	1107
1741	1069
1742	1453
May 1742-May 1743	1,383/1,389*
1743-1744	1,629/1,641*
1745	1,467
1746	752
1747	533
January 1747-April 1748	2,108 (746 by a Christian chinese)
April 1748-April 1750	2,685
April 1750-April 1751	1,665
April 1751-April 1753	1,030
April 1753-April 1755	3,023 (2,042 by "Christians with no interest")
April 1755-January 1758	841
1758-1759	147
1759-1760	1,100
March 1760-March 1761	588
March 1761-March 1762	555
March 1762-March 1763	234
March 1763- March 1764	409
March 1764- March 1765	393/353*
March 1765- March 1766	126
March 1766- March 1767	297
March 1767- March 1768	135
1768-1769	641
Sunte y Canton	965
Kangtung	72 Fray Joseph de Madrid; 62 Fray Mathias de Santa Theresa

Fokien	24
March 1770- March 1771	728
March 1771- March 1772	450
March 1772- March 1773	285
March 1773-March 1774	170
Xantung	10 Fray Mathias de Santa Theresa and 62 fray Joseph de Madrid (including adults)
Kiansy	63 (infants and adults)
Canton	93 by father Tyrso and 93 by Father Ly
Fokien	11
1775-1776	174
1777-1778	400-500*

Source: AFIO [Franciscan Iberian Oriental Archive] 29/25 and 29/27.

Considering these statistics, it is possible to distinguish three different periods. The first one covers the years 1729 to 1745 and it is characterized by a continuous growth up to 1745. In fact, there is a significant increase from 396 baptized children in 1729 to 1,467 in 1745. The number nearly quadruples. In 1734, 1737, 1739, 1742 and in 1744 the increase is particularly remarkable compared with the previous year and the peak occurs in 1743-1744 with a total of 1,629/1,641 children baptized *in articulo mortis*.

The second period would be between the years 1746 and 1760 reflecting an evident volatility probably partly due to the greater confusion of data since there are periods when they send a single figure that includes up to three years. In any case, the numbers in this range remain at high values adding over eleven years a total of 13,132 infants baptized. However, there are important contrasts between 1750 and 1751, 1754-1755 and 1758-1759 if the figures are analyzed annually.

The third moment would range from 1760 to 1778 with numbers going down reaching similar values to those of the first period but again with significant contrasts from one year to another: the number of baptisms during 1760 was 1,100 while the previous year, by contrast, they managed to baptize 147 dying children. In 1762 and 1765 baptisms decreased by more than half compared to the previous years while in 1763, 1766 and 1768 there was a significant rise in the numbers. As a whole, there were approximately 36,550 infants baptized during forty-seven years with an average of 778 children baptized per year. It is also possible to state that there was an important inter-annual variation in the period under review.

It is especially difficult to provide an interpretation of the information obtained by the available sources because of the many factors involved. As we will see, we should consider at least four different aspects: the number of missionaries, the surrounding conditions, the Chinese economic and demographic context and the funding of these charitable works.

The number of children who could be baptized depended primarily on the amount of people dedicated to that labour. In fact, there were always a small number of Franciscans working in China during these centuries. At the end of Seventeenth Century, there were twelve: three in Central and Southwest Shandong, six in Guangdong, two in Jiangxi and one in Fujian.¹¹ In the middle of the next century, according to Standaert “there were continuously at least one Spanish Franciscan active in Guangdong, one in Fujian and one in Shandong or Jiangxi”.¹² In the second part of the Eighteenth Century, between 1760 and 1770 there would be in China eight Franciscans missionaries. It is known that the last one to leave the mission of Shandong was Buenaventura del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús in 1801.¹³

It is a low number of missionaries but Catholic missionaries were helped in their tasks by Catholic natives. The scarce number of missionaries made the Europeans realize the need for extra help, especially in such a vast territory as the Chinese empire. Besides, in January 1665 in the time of the regency period during the early reign of the Kangxi Emperor, it was promulgated a decree proscribing foreign priests. As a result, most of them were arrested in Guangzhou until 1671.¹⁴ Rome ordered the new vicars apostolic “to create a native clergy” which represented an important element to define the new objectives for conducting the missions. Considering the information consulted, it was certainly a relevant help. Although they acted only three years, the number of baptized infants during the period was significantly higher compared to other years. Probably they had the advantage of enjoying relative freedom in times of persecution to take forward the work. According to the records we have, from January 1747 to April 1748 a Christian Chinese could baptize 746 children

11 Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 329; Manuel Castro, “Memoriales de franciscanos, misioneros en China, en el siglo XVIII,” *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 242 (2002), 345.

12 Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 329-330.

13 Ibid.

14 Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, *Christians in China: AD. 600 to 2000* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 232.

and from April 1753 to April 1755 2,042 dying children were baptized by Chinese Christians too.¹⁵

A second element that undoubtedly determined the labour of the Spanish Franciscans in China was the surrounding conditions of the reception societies. Travelling long distances in poor conditions entailed fatigue and illnesses but it was even harder if we consider the situation of Christianity in China during those centuries. Since the beginning of the Eighteenth Century there had been a strong pressure for Christianity. Kangxi Emperor (1654-1722) issued the Chinese Edict of Toleration on 22 March 1692 legalizing the practise of Christianity by Chinese people.¹⁶ He himself recognized the services provided by Christians, Jesuits in particular, in areas such as astronomy, artillery and diplomacy so he guaranteed during his reign a period of tolerance towards Christians. However, the success of the missions did not only depend on the Chinese imperial power.

The actions of their European counterparts, and especially the papacy and the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith definitely conditioned the situation of Christianity. The Chinese Rites controversy was still the focus of discussion during the first decades of the Eighteenth Century. In 1704 Pope Clement XI forbade the practise of Chinese rites and Confucian rituals with the decree *Cum Deus Optimus*. At the same time, he sent a Papal Legate to the Kangxi Emperor to communicate his decision. This visit ended up with an imperial decree on December 1706 “requiring all missionaries to obtain a certificate (*piao*) to be granted only to those who agreed with the method of Matteo Ricci and who declared their readiness to stay forever in China”.¹⁷ All the Spanish Franciscans asked for the *piao* in 1708 so they were not expelled.

The Yongzheng Emperor came to power in 1722 and Franciscans finally obeyed the condemnation of rites made by Rome rejecting the conditions of the *piao*.¹⁸ In 1724 the emperor issued a decree proscribing Catholicism so persecution began. As a result, Spanish Franciscans were driven from their

15 Apart from this Christians, the attempt to create a native clergy was driven from specific seminars in Beijing and Macau. The *Missions Étrangères de Paris* started in Siam expanding later to China and the Chinese College at Naples also contributed in this sense. Lars Peter Laamann, *Christian Heretics in Late Imperial China. Christian inculturation and state control, 1720-1850* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 67.

16 See Nicolas Standaert (ed), “The Edict of Toleration: A Textual History and Reading”, in Arthur Wardega and Antonio Vasconcelos (eds), *In the Light and Shadow of an Emperor. Tomás Pereira, S.J (1645-1708), the Kangxi Emperor and the Jesuit Mission in China* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 308-358.

17 Charbonnier, *Christians in China*, 262.

18 Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 329.

missions in the provinces to Guangzhou. Judging by the numbers contained in the account registers of the religious order it seems they did not stop baptizing and the numbers between 1729 and 1730 remain at the same levels but it would be necessary to revise the datum from the previous years to assess the trend and the impact of such measures. In 1732 they were eventually expelled to Macao although some remained hidden. The number of baptized children in that year fell by 13.68 percent compared to the previous year so it does not appear to be a significant decline. The ban on entering China to mission remained but the missionaries opted to return secretly so that their aim to baptize dying children not only did not stop but increased. Nevertheless, the need to go unnoticed forced them to move constantly from one place to another and move away from the coast and urban areas which meant they spread the Gospel among the poor and the possibilities for further baptisms would rise since mortality was greater than in the higher classes.¹⁹ The steady growth in the number of children baptized could also be explained because the persecution did not affect the different provinces in the same way. Furthermore, it cannot fail to mention the great persistence and religious zeal that guided missionaries. Juan de Villena, who worked in China for twenty-three years from 1721 to 1744 mainly in Shangdong province, said in a letter to the commissary of the congregation in 1731:

“Having finished administering [...] I wanted to go there to preach the faith more and more. I had a lot of work to go there because of great cold, and all the time be filled with ice since water surrounded the village. Here it was where I got the joy of a Kidney pain [...] caused by the coldness of the ice. Having just arrived [...] God gave me eyes to see a small church that these new Christians had built to worship and praise God. I dwelt many days in this village to let them know well all their obligations because if these Christians are well rooted in faith, I hope to catch for God the entire village. I have baptized in this place fifty which is half of the village [...]”²⁰

It was in 1735 when the new emperor, Qianlong, succeed his father. During his reign, he continued with his predecessor anti-missionary policy which was increasingly harsh despite the Jesuits maintained the influence in the

19 Charbonnier, *Christians in China*, 268. See also James Lee, Wang Feng and Cameron Campbell, “Infant and Child Mortality among the Qing Nobility: Implications for Two Types of Positive Check,” *Population Studies* 48 (1994), 395-411.

20 Antolín Abad, *Sinica franciscana. Misioneros Franciscanos españoles en China. Siglos XVIII-XIX (1722-1813)* Vol. XI (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 2006), 174 [document originally in Spanish. Translation made by the author].

imperial court.²¹ In 1737, a Christian was arrested in Beijing while baptizing a dying infant which gave officials the opportunity to protest against Christianity so there were periodical anti-Christian campaigns during the entire second half of the Eighteenth Century. From 1746 to 1748 persecution focused on Fujian, in central China between 1747 and 1749, in Guangdong in 1767 and in Jiangxi in 1774.²² Judging from the data compiled in Table 1 it appears that these events could have had a contrasting effect in the number of baptisms made by the missionaries. Until 1745 the numbers remained growing but in 1746 there was 752 dying children baptized in contrast to 1745 when there were 1,467 infant baptisms so persecutions could have influenced. In 1747 the number increased markedly but it was due to the help of Christian Chinese who would not be conditioned by the fact of being a foreign priest. In addition, he was a doctor. The chances of baptisms multiplied due to this last fact.

An element that we have not mentioned yet but also conditioned the number of baptisms is the way the Chinese people accepted this sacrament and the manners used by the Christians to accomplish their conversion. Each case was different and it depended largely on an individual action guided by very different factors: it could be because of an individual desire, born from knowing Catholic doctrine or the good work of missionaries promoting the Gospel, the desire to imitate what acquaintances, family or neighbours did, or, simply it could be the fruit of the search for new solutions for those sick and dying children.²³ It is possible to find in the sources, especially in correspondence within the religious order, the different ways to make easy new baptisms. It is, therefore, not unusual to read how they used pills, herbs or coffee to help those children and then baptize them.

If in 1746 the drop might be caused by anti-Christian measures it seems those persecutions mentioned did not directly affect the number of baptisms during 1748-1749 since are years with the highest numbers of children baptized in the studied period. It seems oppression in Guangdong in 1767 had either no clear specific impact on the number of baptized infants. In Jiangxi in 1774 there

21 Several authors agree on the fact that is necessary to understand this anti-Christian campaign in a broader context of campaigns against “heretical sects” including Muslims, millenarian Buddhism and Luo devotees. Besides, there were another important factors such as imperial absolutism, Confucian conservatism and repression of anti-Manchu uprisings. Charbonnier, *Christians in China*, 273-274; Laamann, *Christian Heretics in Late Imperial China*, 67.

22 Ibid., 63.

23 Henrietta Harrison has studied The French Holy Childhood Association in China during the Nineteenth Century. The authoress highlights that baptism was understood either as a remedy or as a special death ritual for children that fitted well into the popular beliefs. Henrietta Harrison, “A Penny for the Little Chinese”: The French Holy Childhood Association in China, 1843-1951,” *American Historical Review* 113:1 (2008), 82.

were a total of sixty-three infants and adults baptized in a time of repression which gives an idea of the missionaries' persistence despite the hostile environment in which they were. As Charbonnier has observed, local authorities varied in their repressive actions towards Christians who were even victimized.²⁴

We have seen that the numbers of baptized children depended at first on the quantity of missionaries and native Christians dedicated to that labour, the difficulties of their conditions and the situation of Christianity towards political powers. However, changes in the number of baptized infants depended on a third essential aspect: the economic and demographic context. The Chinese Eighteenth Century's middle years have been recognized as one of the most peaceful and prosperous periods in its history. The Qing population growth from 143 million people in 1741 to 200 million in 1762 finally reaching 360 million people in 1812.²⁵ This was accompanied by the intensification of agriculture, the multiplication of markets and regional and national trade and political centralization reforms. However, this general situation did not affect everyone equally. Most of the population lived in poverty continuously facing famines, epidemics and natural disasters.

Commoners also suffered high land taxes, loan interests and bureaucratic corruption. An example of this is given by the historical documents that explain that the high number of baptisms in 1753 in Shandong was due to an epidemic that struck the province. In fact, Shandong province during the mid-Qing suffered numerous natural catastrophes and crops were devastated causing losses and difficulties in tax collection.²⁶ Data should be also read considering China's territorial complexity. Missions in Shandong, located in the North and to a lesser extent Jiangxi, were part of The Grand Canal Region which brought great wealth. The region was orientated to Beijing which was the political centre of the empire. Population growth rapidly but it was also highly mobile.²⁷ On the contrary, Fujian and Guangdong were part of the southeast coast characterized by high population densities and an intensive system of production. The region

24 Charbonnier, *Christians in China*, 297.

25 Jacques Gernet, *El mundo chino* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005), 434. Qing population growth is still open to debate since recent works indicate there was a much smaller increase than it was generally thought. See Kent Deng, "China's Population Expansion and Its Causes during the Qing Period, 1644-1911," *London School of Economics and Political Science Department of Economic History Working Papers* 219 (2015), 1-55.

26 Hsieh Bao, *Concubinage and Servitude in Late Imperial China* (London: Lexington Books, 2014), 10.

27 Susan Naquin and Evelyn Rawski, *Chinese Society in Eighteenth Century* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1987), 140-147.

as a whole gravitated to Guangdong and maritime trade with the Philippines, Japan and Southeast Asia.²⁸ Despite having common futures, territories had particular characteristics. As we do not have statistic information for every province, it is impossible to analyze the data taking into account all these referred complexities.

Finally, another necessary component to understand the number of children baptized was its funding. Both missionaries and native Christians who were dedicated to baptize dying infants depended on a minimum stipend to carry out their mission. The economic conditions of the Franciscan order were always very precarious.²⁹ However, important sources of income were the alms. Their mission enterprises gravitated decisively on them. Remittances are continuous throughout every year except for shipwrecks or exceptional events such as the English attack to Manila in 1762. It seems the lack of that money did not affect substantially, perhaps because it was common advancing the money for the expenses which would be returned later.

II. RESCUING ABANDONED CHINESE CHILDREN

The concerns of missionaries focused at first on the spirituals needs of children and then started worrying also about their physical well-being. From Sixteenth Century onwards, Franciscans in the Philippines had been erected as pioneers of social services.³⁰ During the Eighteenth Century, practising charity would involve both rescuing abandoned children and raising them in the Christian faith.³¹ There were different ways of carrying out that labour. Occasionally, Chinese families brought their unwanted children to missionaries' churches. Sometimes the priests themselves found the poor creatures on their way when evangelizing and rescued them. Spanish Franciscans had a third procedure: buying children. It is possible to know more about some aspects of

28 An imperial edict in 1759 specified that Guangdong was the only port in which Europeans could trade through the Co-hong. *Ibid.*, 102.

29 Legislation of the Order prohibited possessing any type of property, usufruct or receive inheritances. Over the years, the directive was loosened. From 1620 they received from the Crown 100 pesos per year and thirty bushels of rice. Later on, stipend increased slightly. Cayetano Sánchez, "Pocos medios para grandes empresas. Los franciscanos y sus recursos económicos para la evangelización de Filipinas", in Marta Machado and Miguel Luque (coords), *Un mar de islas, un mar de gentes. Población y diversidad en las islas Filipinas* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 2014), 179-193.

30 Lucio Gutiérrez, *Historia de la Iglesia en Filipinas (1565-1900)* (Bilbao: Editorial Mapfre, 1992), 153.

31 David Mungello, *Drawing girls in China. Female Infanticide since 1650* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 35.

this phenomenon through the account books on which they wrote the costs of raising these children. Franciscans paid in form of a purchase price to the natal family. Children could be adopted or raised together in informal foundling homes.

There were children of all ages. The youngest were rescued hours after birth and the oldest registered child was a thirteenth-years-old girl. We do not know whether they had a specific criterion for choosing children. It seems they used to buy or receive mostly children younger than six years. However, within this group, the most often was buying or receiving children younger than one year (see Table 2 and 3).

Table 2. Age frequency of the girls bought

Age	<1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10	13
Frequency	mode=15	5	3	5	7	3	4	1	1	1

Source: AFIO 29/25, AFIO 29/27.

Note: This table represents the registered girls bought or received from 1743 to 1776 whose age was written. Two girls bought between 1775 and 1776 that are listed as “de leche” are not included.

Table 3. Age frequency of the boys bought

Age	<1	6	12
Frequency	mode=5	1	1

Source: AFIO 29/25, AFIO 29/27.

Note: This table represents the registered boys bought or received from 1743 to 1776 whose age was written. One weaned boy received in February 1750 is not included.

The choice may have depended on the supply but it could also be influenced by economic factors. As missionaries point on the sources, supporting them was more expensive with age. Regarding the cost of acquisition, the younger the child the cheaper he or she was. Table 4 illustrates the relationship between age and cost of the child.

Table 4. Age, gender and cost of registered children bought from 1743 to 1775

<i>Date</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Purchase cost</i>
Apr 25 th 1743	9 months	M	2 reales
Apr 26 th 1743	4 years	F	4 pesos
Mar 15 th 1745	“fewdays”	F	“nothing”
Apr 9 th 1745	7-8 months	F	1 tael
Apr 14 th 1746	4 days	F	½ peso
Apr 8 th 1750	9 days	M	2 reales
1752	4 years	F	4 pesos
Nov 3 rd 1757	4 years	F	4 pesos
Jan 20 th 1758	1 year 6 months	F	1 peso
Mar 21 th 1758	2 years	F	1 peso 6 reales
Mar 24 th 1758	6 years	F	6 pesos
Mar 6 th 1758	6 years	F	6 pesos
March 9 th 1758	3 years	F	2 pesos 4 reales
Apr 1 st 1758	5 years	F	4 pesos
Apr 3 rd 1758	3 years	F	3 pesos 4 reales
Apr 13 th 1758	4 years	F	6 pesos 4 reales
Apr 27 th 1758	Month and a half	F	4 reales
Apr 18 th 1758	3 years	F	3 pesos 2 reales
Apr 29 th 1758	4 years	F	5 pesos
May 10 th 1758	5 years	F	3 pesos 6 reales
May 11 th 1758	6 years	F	5 pesos
Mar 2 nd 1759	4 years	F	3 pesos
Mar 20 th 1759	6 years	F	2 pesos 2 m
Mar 1765-Mar 1766	“de leche”	F	2 pesos
Sep 21 th 1768	2 months	F	1 peso
Sep 27 th 1768	2 years	F	5 pesos
May 1 st 1769	2 years	F	3 pesos/3.5*
Jun 27 th 1769	3 years	F	3 pesos/3.5*
May 17 th 1771	4 months	F	1 peso 4 reales
Jul 2 nd 1771	6 months	F	1 peso 5 reales
Aug 4 th 1771	8 months	F	2 pesos 5
Oct 8 th 1771	1 year 4 months	F	2 pesos 3 reales
Jan 9 th 1772	3 years	F	5 pesos 2
Dec 22 th 1772	6 months	F	2 pesos 4 reales
May 16 th 1773	9 months	M	6 reales
Aug 10 th 1773	10 months	F	1 peso 6
Mar 17 th 1774	5 months	F	6 reales
Jan 9 th 1774	3 months	F	6 reales
Jun 28 th 1774	11 months	F	4.4 pesos

Source: AFIO 29/25, AFIO 29/27.

Note: This table represents the registered children bought or received from 1743 to 1776 whose age and cost were written.

Different factors influenced the price of the children but, as can be appreciated, prices of children increase as they get older.³² Nevertheless, this is not the case, for instance, in 1775. Four *pesos* and four *reales* was paid for an eleven-month-old baby. This price is much higher than average prices in the previous years. On the contrary, in 1759, two *pesos* and two *reales* was paid for a six years-old girl. The lowest price is two *reales* for a nine month-old little boy, while the highest price was six *pesos* and four *reales* paid for a four years-old girl in 1758. It is interesting to note there is no difference in the price because of sex. It is difficult to draw general conclusions with a small sample. However, it appears that prices depended more on the children ages than on their gender. This is not surprising taking into account one of the main characteristics of Confucianism was that it honoured age over youth.³³

Most rescued children by the Spanish Franciscans were females. Of the total of children bought or received (sum of the children listed in Table 4 and 5), nearly eighty-five percent were females.³⁴ This result is logical because in Chinese late imperial society women received unequal treatment. The women's place in the family was important and it was recognised their biological equality. However, they were subordinated to men. Women were not as productive as men and they were not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. Furthermore, providing a dowry could be very expensive for families of most modest means.³⁵ As a result, girls were more likely to be abandoned.

32 Expenses are recorded in the account books in "pesos". In Chinese economy copper cash was used for daily transactions and silver for more important economic activities. However, from the Sixteenth Century Mexican and Spanish silver dollars had been circulating in China. In the Eighteenth Century it was usual to find the prices expressed in silver dollars instead of in *taels* (ounces) of silver. Franciscans paid all purchases with silver dollars. Only once, in 1745, they paid in *taels* for a little girl. Naquin and Rawsky, *Chinese Society in Eighteenth Century*, 104.

33 See Ping-Cheng Hsiung, *A tender voyage. Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (California: Stanford University Press, 2005).

34 The percentage is calculated based on the registered children with an associated cost.

35 There could be a connection between dowry and infanticide. But, as Ann Walter has pointed out, it depended on the law of supply and demand and sex ratios. See Ann Waltner, "Infanticide and dowry in Ming and early Qing China", in Anne Behnke (ed), *Chinese views of childhood* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 193-218. See also Susann Mann, "Grooming a daughter for Marriage. Brides and wives in the Mid-Ch'ing Period", in Rubie Watson and Patricia Buckley (eds), *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society* (California: University of California Press, 1991), 204-230.

Table 5. Children whose sex is registered

<i>Date</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Purchase cost</i>
1749	F	1 peso and a half
1752	5 F	15 pesos
Mar 1760-Mar 1761	3 M	11 pesos 4 reales
Mar 1761-Mar 1762	3 F 3 M	15 pesos
Mar 1763-Mar 1764	13 F	98 pesos
Mar 1766-Mar 1767	1 M 3 F	9 pesos 4 reales
1767-1768	3 F	20 pesos 4 reales
Jun 29 th 1769	F	1 peso
Jul 2 nd 1769	F	2 pesos
May 1 st 1775-77	F	3 pesos
Feb 1 st 1775-77	F	3 pesos
Dec 3 rd 1775	F	1 peso 2 reales
1777-1778	M	6 pesos
Feb 1 st 1777	F	3 pesos
Apr 12 st 1778	M	7 pesos
Apr 16 st 1778	M	2 reales and a half
Apr 18 st 1778	F	3 pesos
Apr 15 st 1778	F	1 peso
May 1 st 1778	M	3 pesos 1 real
Nov 1 st 1778	F	1 peso
1779-1780	F	3 pesos 3 reales
1780-1781	F	3 pesos and a half

Source: AFIO 29/25, AFIO 29/27.

Note: This table represents those children bought or received who are not included in Table 4. It is written their gender but not their age. In the manuscript data from April 1778 is shown as strikethrough.

Number of children rescued by Spanish Franciscans depended on their financial possibilities. As in the case of baptisms *in articulo mortis*, there were three funding sources to rescue abandoned children. The main source of income came from The Misericordia of Manila,³⁶ the most important charitable institution at that time in the Philippines.³⁷ From 1741 to 1781 missionaries were able

36 It was a lay brotherhood dedicated to charitable activities including burying its members and those who died on the streets, bring sick people to hospitals, provide dowries and alms or rescuing needy children. They were also in charge of the execution of last wills. María Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo, "Religiosidad popular en Filipinas: Hermandades y Cofradías (siglos XVI-XVIII)," *Hispania Sacra* 53 (2001), 345-354.

37 Members of the brotherhood who were members of the neighbourhood of Manila managed the donations and funds received. From the second half of the Seventeenth Century the Misericordia

to keep a continuous minimum amount of money in their coffer. They spent an average of around two hundred and fifty *pesos* per year in charity works.³⁸ Nevertheless, amounts spent from 1741 to approximately 1762 remained at higher values than those from 1762 to 1781. On documentation two other sources of income are mentioned: Pious Work of St Juan Nepomuceno from Dilao and Joaquim Memixe from Mexico. The amount of money dedicated to charity activities from these two Pious Works was similar to that of the Misericordia in the last period. Missionaries had foresight to save money and were moderate when buying new children.

They were also conditioned by the supply. Missionaries explain that in years 1760-1761 and 1763-1764 Chinese did not bring women to sell. On the contrary, in 1757 and 1758 Chinese brought many children to sell because of famine. Scarcity spread from Canton to Macao and, as provincial commissioner Fray Joseph Sensio explains: “many people bought little girls and mandarins acquiesced although is prohibited”.³⁹ In that year, Franciscans bought fifteen children. Besides, getting new children was not as easy as it could be imagined. In China there were also institutions to place abandoned children including Buddhist nunneries, orphanages and protective societies.⁴⁰ Fray Miguel Roca, provincial commissioner at that time, describe how parents received several offers for their children. For instance, in 1742-1743, governor offered seven *pesos* for a four-years-old boy. His father refused and finally received four *pesos* by Spanish Franciscans. The same happened with a nine-months-old girl whose parents wanted their daughter to be with Franciscans instead of sending her to other family who had also made an offer.

The procedure for rescuing children used to follow certain guidelines. Father Baltasar de Santa Cruz in 1693 already wrote in this regard.⁴¹ Once the child was in the hands of Christians, they investigated who the parents were and the cause of abandonment. Sometimes parents could not afford to retain a child and abandoned them as a temporary solution and it was a way to prevent parents from reclaiming those children. Furthermore, baptizing and healing those children could be problematic without the consent of a parent or relative. Of the sources

started to be part of the Acapulco galleon trade. It became a trade financial institution. It enjoyed real patronage from 1733. *Ibid.*, 361.

38 Including costs of baptizing children about to die.

39 Cuaderno de cuentas de la misión de China y Cochinchina. Obra Pia de la Casa de Misericordia. 1741-1788. -ms.firmas. AFIO 29/27.

40 See Joanna Handlin, *The Art of Doing Good. Charity in Late Ming China* (California: California University Press, 2009); Angela Kiche, “L'accueil des enfants abandonnés dans la Chine du Bas-Yangzi aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles,” *Etudes chinoises* 4:1 (1985), 15-54.

41 Baltasar De la Cruz, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario*, 283-284.

consulted, there are few cases in which they registered the cause of abandonment. In 1747 Spanish Franciscans received two little girls whose mothers died in childbirth. In 1749 and 1750 two boys were sent to missionaries because they were ill. Eventually, both of them died within a few days. Lastly, in 1750, a Chinese brought his son to mission because they could no longer support him. The fact that most causes of abandonment were not registered could be probably because most children were directly purchased in the market. Additionally, Spanish Franciscans' records had a clear aim. They did not pretend to describe in detail their labour but to account for the use of resources.

Children were baptized as soon as possible. It was at that moment when the priest named the child. The most common female name was Maria, followed by Ana or Josepha. They also used Francisca and Francisco in clear reference to the founding member of the Order. Food and clothing were the most important part of the total cost of maintenance. An estimated average of 15-30 *pesos* was spent per child and year but it depended on the resources available. Franciscans emphasize that the money should be invested primarily in baptizing dying children and only after fulfilling that responsibility could money be used to buy and raise children. From a psychological and theological point of view, implications of the lack of sacraments were very serious: eternal salvation was at stake.⁴² Paying the caregivers was another relevant spending. They were highly valued by the missionaries for their hard work but they recognize women did not receive a fair remuneration "because rice and other things are very expensive".⁴³ Their stipend was based on the number of children in their care. Taking care of twelve children could cost two *pesos* per month. If children were not adopted by a Christian family, they moved to live together with caregivers. Younger kids required a wet nurse and each child was assigned to one. In 1750 a wet nurse was paid five *reales* per month.

Curing their diseases was an additional cost. Missionaries write about ringworm, mange, and mostly, smallpox. Indeed, smallpox had a major impact on child population although tuberculosis was also common in those decades.⁴⁴ Other additional costs were dedicated to baptisms, the sacrament of Confirmation and funerals.

The main objective was to educate those children on Christian values. Children could be bought in Macao, Canton or in other missions. However, the preferred final destination for them was Manila where they were hosted by

42 Gutiérrez, *Historia de la Iglesia*, 134.

43 Cuaderno de cuentas de la misión de China y Cochinchina, AFIO 29/27.

44 Naquin and Rawsky, *Chinese Society in Eighteenth Century*, 108.

people from the elites. The consulted sources only mentioned the Marchioness of Salinas, who received in 1753 three girls and a young boy named Francisco. Two years later she once again welcomed six children who were accompanied by their caregiver from China.

Children were transported to Manila “with every secret”.⁴⁵ A total of 32 children were finally sent to the Philippines from 1742 to 1780. It seems that sometimes this was a difficult task since they wrote down the various attempts to give assistance to the same child up to the occasion in which the aid was effectively implemented. Many times they did not succeed. As a result, children were sent to different destinations. In 1758 two little girls stayed with their respective godmothers. The same happened in 1763 with another two girls and in 1772 with Pasquala. In 1759 and 1762 two children were sent to Goa. In March 1775 and 1778 three girls were given to residents of Macao. Children from the missions could remain there or be sent to Macao in order to travel to Manila. In years 1774 and 1775 a boy and a girl rescued in Canton by a Chinese cleric were sent to Macao. Carriers received one and two *pesos* respectively for their work. A one-year-old girl named Ines faced the same fate months after. It seems none reached finally Manila. Many others also did so because they died first.

Infant mortality was high. Mortality rate is difficult to calculate with available data. Nevertheless, we can have an idea observing shorter times frames. From March 1741 to January 1758, fifteen of the twenty-seven rescued children in that period finally died. Of a total of sixteenth little girls bought and received between April 1755 and April 1758, at least six of them died.

The way missionaries understood this labour is also relevant. This charitable action was an opportunity to win souls for their cause; but, rescuing children had also a moral connotation for Spanish Franciscans.⁴⁶ It meant “liberate them from the cruelty of the Chinese”. On the sources when they refer to it they use terms such as “rescuing”, “liberate” or “release” apart from “receive” and “buy” children. It is not clear to what extent their condemnation refers to parental neglect or the possible subsequent commercialisation. It seems they morally

45 Cuaderno de cuentas de la misión de China y Cochinchina. AFIO 29/27.

46 This charitable work not only had to do with missionaries' morality but also with the ethics of those who financed it (“the charitable imperative”). Occasionally, could be the result of the intensifying struggle for political and social power. Monica Bolufer, “Entre historia social e historia cultural: la historiografía sobre pobreza y caridad en la época moderna,” *Historia social II* 43 (2002), 118-119. Manchado López includes a third beneficiary: the crown. In her study about the Pious Work funded by the Italian Abbot Sidoti for rescuing Chinese children it is said those rescued children became Spanish crown subjects. Maria Marta Manchado, “Desamparo en que con la vida, se pierde el alma’. Las controversias en torno a la obra pia del Abad Sidoti para la recogida de niños chinos abandonados (Filipinas, 1705-1740),” *Revista de Indias* 71:252 (2011), 427.

reproved both.⁴⁷ The Roman Catholic Church has always positioned against infanticide. Although it is necessary to differentiate infanticide to exposure, both ways of abandoning children were understood as a sin for Christians.⁴⁸ As David Mungello has pointed out, Catholics revered Christ child: “The spiritual aura of the Christ child was transferred to all new-born infants in such a way that the sanctity of life was though filial piety, but in birth and infancy”.⁴⁹ Furthermore, missionaries came from a society where the notion of childhood was being reformulated. In the Eighteenth century Europe they were witnessing an expansion of various philanthropic initiatives and a state-run system for dealing with abandoned children.

Human trafficking was also repulsive for them. It may be ironic that the way in which they rescued children was being part of the market for children as buyers.⁵⁰ Missionaries were aware that little children were at risk of being used as a means to obtain cheap labour. Children could even be enslaved again. For example, in 1763, after an English attack on Manila, three little girls had no chance to travel to the capital of the Philippines. When two women offered themselves to adopt them, they first promised “taking care of them without ever having them as captives”.⁵¹ It was difficult to ensure the honesty of the foster

47 Rachana Sachdev has studied European traveller’s ideas on infanticide during Ming China. She concludes they commented on infanticide “without any moral revulsion, and continued to project an image of China as a virtual utopia for its residents”. Dominican Friar Domingo Fernández de Navarrete introduced a different approach in the Seventeenth Century and the vision offered by the Spanish Franciscans we are analyzing could probably represent a change on the European responses to infanticide during Qing dynasty. Rachana Sachdev, “Contextualizing Female Infanticide: Ming China in Early Modern European Travelogues,” *ASLANetwork Exchange* 18, 1 (2010), 24. See also Rachana Sachdev, “European Responses to Child Abandonment, Sale of Children, and Social Welfare Policies in Ming China”, in Rachana Sachdev and Qingjun Li(eds), *Encountering China: Early Modern European Responses* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), 19-48.

48 In China a father had the right to sell his wife of children: “Commercial transactions in people were illegal under Qing laws except in justifiable circumstances, such as for family survival during difficult times [...] illegal sells by relatives were, however, rarely punished”. Hsieh Bao introduction to *Concubinage and Servitude*, XXI.

49 Conception of life was different in China. From Daoist point of view, a child’s existence was not recognized until the third day after birth. Buddhist believed in transmigration so they condemned abandonment and infanticide. Confucianism was concerned for human welfare and *literati* opposed infanticide. They appeared as god or bad examples as part of popular moral literature against abandonment and infanticide. Nevertheless, age was revered in Confucianism. Mungello, *Drawing girls in China*, 7.

50 Pope Benedict XIV issued the bull *Inmensa Pastorum* in 1741 condemning slavery. In the Philippines it was also prohibited from the Sixteenth Century. Antonio García-Abásolo, *Murallas de piedra y cañones de seda. Chinos en el Imperio español (siglos XVI-XVIII)* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 2012), 84.

51 Cuaderno de cuentas de la misión de China y Cochinchina. AFIO 29/27.

parents. Spanish Franciscans simply trusted on them. However, that was the way they found to give that children what they considered a better life.

Works of mercy constitute a backbone for the Spanish Franciscans when evangelizing China during the Eighteenth Century. Baptizing dying children was an essential obligation allowing them to win souls for God, gladden their spirit and earn merits for salvation. Numbers of children baptized were important for the Order since it was a method to justify their work for those who financed it. As a result, figures could be inflated. Interpreting proves also difficult because of the many factors involved such as the number of religious, financial aid and economic, social and political situation. However, all of them were conditioned by similar constraints. Baptizing *in articulo mortis* during middle years of the Eighteenth Century was a continuous and persistent work by Spanish Franciscans and Christians who significantly helped. Figures are marked by sharply inter-annual variations that seems to evidence the individual character of this labour in difficult times for Christians. Another important charity activity was rescuing abandoned children to be raised in Christian families in Manila. Franciscans bought mostly little girls and provided them with the means to be lead out of bondage. It was also a continuous work from 1742 to 1781. Purchases were conditioned by the children market and available funds for this purpose. There was the possibility of shipwreck when sending children to Manila. Therefore, hazard also had its own play.

CONCLUSIONS

In early modern times, Macao, Manila and Canton were the scenes where different cultures came into contact with one another and gave answers to all their interests. At speaking on Catholic missions, there was not a mere translation of Christian ideas to native societies. On the contrary, interaction and culture exchange resulted in connected personal stories within complex situations and contexts. The example of baptisms and humanitarian assistance to children rescued by missionaries can help to weigh the argument of care for the salvation of new Christians that fit well into other more general values, particularly that of humanity. These so benevolent and charitable practises were extremely important to explain this phenomenon. However, there are great difficulties to quantify or to test not only the real and precise impact of those practices but also the intensity of these values which were underneath them. In the end, every case encapsulates a particularly unique history about the life trajectories of rescued neophytes. Going further this direction is a real challenge for future research.

The role of native converses at translating cultural values and helping the development of charity and humanitarian practices rooted on those ethical principles, was essential for cultural hybridation. Zhang Xingyao, Yan Mo, the catechist Xia Dachang or Liu Ning, among others, were Christian *literati* who spent their life studying the connection between Confucianism and Christianity. Zhang Dapeng and Wu Guosheng were two exceptional catechists. Andrew Li came from a Catholic family of Chenggu (Shaanxi) and became one of the best Latin scholars in China. Agatha Li was a virgin and martyr who consecrated her life to God and was the first to evangelize the Miao people. This is the result of an asymmetric cultural encounter in which Christianity gained centrality as a space for social and cultural interaction.

The analyzed historical sources suggest that the missionary-native interactions expressed through rescuing children can be also understood in terms of *humanity* and *empathy*. However, a deeper approach to those relationships give glimpses of the intimate connection of this social aid practices, which, in Catholic terms, offer a global exchange field to make easier the eternal salvation of both the donor and the receptor of charity. Missionaries assigned a connecting value to charity so men and women were united with God and each of them together under God's grace. In this light, release, fostering or adoption practises of children rescued by missionaries should be read in a complex way in which converge reciprocity, humanity and charity not only within the brotherhood formed by Catholic Christians of all the world but also projected to non-Catholics and non-Christians.

This research still gives some information on fields for further future historical investigation that should widen our scientific knowledge on these matters. Particularly, it is a real and stimulating challenge for going ahead researching on wider chronological frameworks and deepen the understanding about girls' fate in Manila after the arrivals conducted by the missionaries and their deposit in the atmosphere of Christian families. At the same time, should be explained how were the reactions of the social ties of those girls in their original environments in China during and after the transactions with the missionaries. Lastly, there is also a need to complete the picture with qualitative information provided by correspondence of those who sent their reports to the provincial commissioner. Archives and documents collected by the missionary orders, reports, letters and account registers should help future research on these important matters to evaluate cultural and social exchanges between Europeans and native societies in this part of the world. My still goes in these directions.

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