

# REGARDS MISSIONNAIRES: ENTRE IMAGE ET IMAGINAIRE

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## JOURNÉE D'ÉTUDES LE 30 AVRIL 2026

UNIVERSITÉ JEAN MONNET - CAMPUS TRÉFILIERIE  
33 RUE DU 11 NOVEMBRE, 42000, ST-ETIENNE  
UJM, BÂTIMENT M, SALLE M001



"le royaume de la Chine" carte élaborée par les Jésuites (c)BnF



## Programme

**Lieu :** Salle M001 – Bâtiment M – Campus Tréfilerie

**Date :** Jeudi 30 avril 2026 – 9h à 18h30

### **Déroulé de la journée :**

#### **Accueil**

9h00-9h30 : Accueil et café de bienvenue

9h30 : Mot d'accueil et présentation de la journée

### ***PANEL I : Comprendre l'ailleurs : médiations visuelles, linguistiques et culturelles dans les missions***

**9h45 – 11h00**

9h45 – 10h15 : « *D'Asie en Amérique, une approche sensible de l'altérité Regards croisés sur les missions franciscaines des XIIIe et XVIe siècles* », Raphaëlle Dumont (Université Jean Monnet Saint- Étienne)

10h15 - 10h45 : “*Matteo Ricci and Claudio Acquaviva: Missionary Letters and the Exchange of Chinese Moral Maxims (1592–1593)*”, Avarello Vito & Jin Cai (Université Jean Monnet Saint- Étienne)

10h45 – 11h15 : “*Hexagrams of Fear and Grace: Translating Christian Religious Emotions in the Yijing*”, Sophie Ling-chia Wei (Chinese University of Hong Kong)

**11h15 - 11h30 : Pause café**

### ***PANEL II : Frontières de la foi : circulations des connaissances et implantations missionnaires en Asie***

**11h30 – 12h30**

11h30 – 12h : “*Cross-cultural Encounters: Educational Documents and Religious Posters used by the Scottish Presbyterian Missions in Manchuria (1872-1949)*”, Anne Dalles Maréchal (Université Jean Monnet Saint Etienne)

12h – 12h30 : “*Visdelou, China and the “Mohammedan historians”*”, Matthieu Chochoy (Université Côte d’Azur)

**12h30 - 14h30 : pause déjeuner**

***PANEL III Orientalisme et idées de missions : savoirs missionnaires et représentations occidentales de la mission en Asie***

**14h30- 16h**

14h30 - 15h: “*Isabella Bird’s Asian Travel Accounts: A Traveller’s Take on Missions*”, Floriane Reviron Piegay (Université Jean Monnet Saint Etienne)

15h – 15h30: “*Inspiration through Reflection: An Orthodox Priest’s Diary as Missionary Text in Contemporary Hong Kong*”, Loretta Kim (University of Hong Kong)

15h30 – 16h : “*The Politics of Evangelization in Martin Scorsese’s Silence (2016)*”, Vincent Jaunas (Université Jean Monnet Saint Etienne)

16h – 16h15 : pause

16h15 : Projection du film *Silence* de Martin Scorsese

**19h : Fin de la journée.**

## Résumés des interventions

### **D'Asie en Amérique, une approche sensible de l'altérité Regards croisés sur les missions franciscaines des XIIIe et XVIe siècles**

**Raphaëlle Dumont (Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne) Raphaëlle Dumont (Université Jean Monnet)**

Nombreux furent les efforts déployés par les franciscains au cours des XIIIe et XIVe siècles pour diffuser le message chrétien en Orient. Dès cette époque, l'Ordre des frères mineurs semble se caractériser par un rapport singulier à l'altérité, une approche que nous retrouverons plus tard dans les missions américaines. L'observation minutieuse des croyances, des mœurs et des traditions des populations locales s'inscrit, certes, dans un contexte d'évangélisation mais elle témoigne également d'une dynamique d'ouverture à l'altérité qui imprégnait déjà les paroles et les actes du fondateur de l'Ordre. La connaissance de cet Autre à convaincre s'insère dans une démarche d'investigation de la culture locale dont les modalités s'apparentent à ce nous connaissons aujourd'hui sous le nom d'enquêtes ethnographiques. Cette immersion allait de pair avec une politique d'apprentissage et de diffusion des langues autochtones qui prit la forme d'un large corpus de grammaires, de vocabulaires et d'ouvrages traduits dans les langues locales dont nous retrouverons la trace en Amérique au XVIe siècle.

Loin de rejeter l'Autre dans une altérité qui exclut, les missionnaires cherchent également à bâtir des ponts entre l'ancienne et la nouvelle religion. Dans une démarche d'inculturation déjà éprouvée et qui sera mise en œuvre plus tard en Nouvelle Espagne, les religieux repèrent et valorisent certains aspects de la culture locale qui constituent pour eux le terreau fertile sur lequel pourra germer la nouvelle foi. Les missions asiatiques puis, plus proche de nous, la conversion des morisques de Grenade, furent, en ce sens, un laboratoire de l'expérience américaine. Au moment de s'embarquer pour le continent américain, les douze missionnaires franciscains sauront réutiliser les techniques déjà éprouvées sous d'autres latitudes. La politique linguistique adoptée par ces premiers évangélisateurs et la curiosité ethnographique dont ils firent preuve tout au long de leur apostolat, permirent, entre autres, le surgissement d'un théâtre missionnaire inédit qui s'inscrit dans la droite ligne de cette approche singulière de l'Autre.

## **Matteo Ricci and Claudio Acquaviva: Missionary Letters and the Exchange of Chinese Moral Maxims (1592–1593)**

**Avarello Vito & Jin Cai (Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne)**

This paper examines a key letter sent by Matteo Ricci from Shaoxing and Macao to Claudio Acquaviva between 1592 and 1593, offering insights into missionary correspondence and cultural mediation. Ricci's letter weaves together accounts of daily life, local events, religious observations, and the transmission of ethical texts, showing how Jesuits reported their experiences and the progress of the mission to European superiors. Special focus is placed on the four Chinese moral maxims (四箴, sì zhēn) included in the letter, never before fully translated into a Western language. Analysing these maxims illuminates the Jesuits' reception of Chinese ethical thought, their pedagogical and moral value, and their role in both the spiritual formation of missionaries and engagement with Chinese society. This study highlights the dynamics of cross-cultural exchange, demonstrating how Ricci's correspondence functioned not only as a report on missionary work but also as a vehicle for ethical reflection, cultural understanding, and dialogue between China and Europe.

## **Hexagrams of Fear and Grace: Translating Christian Religious Emotions in the *Yijing***

**Sophie Ling-chia Wei (Chinese University of Hong Kong)**

This paper examines how a cluster of Christian religious emotions was translated, refracted, and inscribed into the hexagrams of the *Book of Changes (Yijing)*, focusing on Jesuit Figurist readings that treat the Classic as a mystically veiled theology. Rather than taking the *Yijing* as a purely cosmological or divinatory text, the Figurists read selected hexagrams as affective “containers” in which religious emotions are re-coded across cultural and doctrinal boundaries. The study concentrates on eight interrelated emotions: fear and awe of God; trust in God; confidence grounded in divine reliability; humility and lowliness of heart; self-abasement before God; heartfelt sorrow for sin; penitence; and anxiety about final judgment.

By tracing how these emotions are mapped onto hexagrams associated with reverence, danger, submission, and darkness—such as *Qian* 乾, *Kun* 坤, *Kan* 坎, and *Mingyi* 明夷—I argue that Figurist exegesis reconfigures traditional Chinese affects into a Christian grammar of the soul and the reinterpretation of biblical stories. The paper combines close textual analysis of Figurist commentaries and translations with a translingual history of emotion, showing how Jesuit interpreters exploit semantic resonances between hexagram images and Christian devotional vocabulary. This “affective translation” allows the *Yijing* to function simultaneously as a Chinese classic and a

cryptic scriptural prefiguration, thereby generating a hybrid emotional regime in which Confucian, cosmological, and Christian affects co-exist and mutually transform one another.

### **Cross-cultural Encounters: Educational Documents and Religious Posters used by the Scottish Presbyterian Missions in Manchuria (1872-1949).**

**Anne Dalles Maréchal (Université Jean Monnet Saint Etienne)**

The Manchuria Mission was founded by the Scottish United Presbyterian Church in 1872 when its first missionary, John Ross, set foot in Northeast China for the first time. In line with its emphasis on individual salvation, the Scottish missionaries focused on the creation of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating local churches. Their missionary strategies heavily relied on the formation of a local clergy, ensured by the missionaries, on the establishment of Western infrastructures, like hospitals and medical colleges, and on the wide-spread diffusion of religious literature. This last item will be the focus of this presentation. Elaborated and printed thanks to the multiple protestant mission structures, such as the Scottish Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society or the Women's Foreign Missions of the Church of Scotland, these documents showcase a specific vision of religion and of the mission land. In this presentation, I will talk about the nature of these documents and what they tell us about cross-cultural understandings of faith. I will also focus on their usage by missionaries as tools for conversion. My aim is to understand how these visual documents shape the religious and missionary identities in Manchuria.

### **Visdelou, la Chine et les « historiens mahométans »**

**Matthieu Chochoy (Université Côte d'Azur)**

Claude de Visdelou (mort en 1737) fait partie des jésuites envoyés en Chine par Louis XIV. En 1709, les positions favorables à la papauté qu'il adopte lors de la querelle des rites l'obligent à quitter l'ordre jésuite et il rejoint le couvent des capucins de Pondichéry. Parmi ses nombreux manuscrits, nous nous intéresserons ici au texte connu sous le titre de *Supplément à la Bibliothèque orientale*, publié dans les années 1780 en complément d'une réédition du dictionnaire encyclopédique sur le monde musulman que Barthélémy d'Herbelot rédigea à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle en traduisant de nombreux historiens arabes et persans.

L'objet de cette présentation est de comprendre comment Visdelou mobilise ce qu'il nomme la « simplicité chinoise » pour corriger ce qu'il dénonce comme une « enflure mahométane » au sujet de l'écriture de l'histoire de la Tartarie. Ce travail de

comparaison met en lumière le rôle de ce missionnaire dans une circulation des savoirs qui s'inscrit dans une aire géographique comprise entre l'Orient musulman, la Chine, l'Inde et la France.

**Isabella Bird's Asian Travel Accounts: A Traveller's Take on Missions**  
**Floriane Reviron Piegay (Université Jean Monnet Saint Etienne)**

Isabella Bird (1832-1904) was no missionary *stricto sensu* but her numerous and variegated involvements with missions in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century England were paramount in the way she conceived, organized and wrote the travel accounts that made her one of the most famous female travel writers of her time. Her religious upbringing (she was the daughter of an Evangelical Reverend), interest in the revival of religion and in spreading the word of Christ in the countries she visited are conspicuous elements of the travels she undertook as well as of the narratives she wrote. This paper will look in particular at the way her interest in missions influenced her itineraries in Japan and in China and at the way this interest became in itself an incentive to travel. Among her last travel accounts, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (London, John Murray, 1880) *Among the Tibetans* (London, the Religious Tract Society, 1894) and *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (London, John Murray, 1899) are the accounts which best exemplify the interconnectedness between travelling and studying missions for Bird. Her accounts exhibit that mixture of references to her own faith, to ethnographical details, scientific observation and personal anecdote which are also the hallmark of missionary accounts. Bird's status is seen changing from that of observer to that of specialist, as her knowledge of the diverse missions she visited became more and more refined. If Bird's purpose was not to take part in the civilizing and proselytising actions of the missionaries, her observation and critique of missionary work (and of medical missions in particular) was part and parcel of her role as a traveller who felt it was her duty to bear witness to the interaction between missionaries and the indigenous peoples she met. Her texts are therefore very valuable documents affording both a glimpse of the missionaries' role and influence in Asia as they also document the customs of the natives. Her position as a knowledgeable outsider grants her a form of authority which she was eager to embrace as a woman constantly looking for means to prove her worth as an explorer, a travel writer and a photographer.

**Inspiration through Reflection: An Orthodox Priest's Diary as Missionary Text in Contemporary Hong Kong**

**Loretta Kim (University of Hong Kong)**

In the current world of social media as the most influential form of communication, the publication of a narrative written ostensibly for personal reflection in hard copy seems to be less than ideal as a means of spreading faith through example. This study explores and questions this assumption through the analysis of four diaries, arranged by season,

of Archpriest Denis (Dionisy) Pozdnyaev, head of the Orthodox parish of the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul (Moscow Patriarchate) [PASPP] in Hong Kong.

The diaries, spanning from Spring 2016 to early 2017, were published in both Russian and Chinese translation by the China Orthodox Press in 2017. The China Orthodox Press is an arm of the PASPP and supervised by Father Pozdnyaev as part of the mission in Hong Kong and by extension, the Greater Bay Area of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Father Pozdnyaev is thus subject and arbiter of the diary series, which describes his daily life and the proceedings of the parish.

This research concentrates on two main questions: 1) What are the crucial similarities and differences between the Russian original and Chinese translation versions of the diaries? and 2) What do the diaries reveal about the condition of the mission in 2016 and 2017? Both questions examine the significance of publications that may otherwise be considered insignificant, targeting a highly limited audience, through a close reading of the texts and a comparison of their Russian and Chinese language content. The investigation will furthermore consider whether Father Pozdnyaev is writing primarily as himself, a Russian person living and working in Hong Kong, or as a missionary; how his “Russian (language) voice” is mediated through the Chinese translation; and why there was no English-language translation of the diary series.

The anticipated broader significance of this research is to shed light on how missions of relatively small size and scope, to be contrasted with “minority missions” targeting primarily ethnic minority groups or led by persons of ethnic minority background, work in predominantly Chinese social contexts and how leaders of such missions perceive their roles and express their viewpoints through their observations about China.

## **The Politics of Evangelization in Martin Scorsese's *Silence* (2016)**

**Vincent Jaunas (Université Jean Monnet)**

Unsurprisingly, Martin Scorsese's two explicitly Christian films – *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) and *Silence* (2016) – have principally been analyzed through the prism of Religious Studies<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps more surprisingly, however, these two films are often, if not systematically, left aside from monographs focusing on the political and ideological dimensions of Scorsese's oeuvre<sup>2</sup>. And yet, these films obviously deal with secular as well as spiritual themes, and Scorsese's most recurrent political interrogations (such as the challenges relating to building and maintaining an enclosed community) are pivotal to both works.

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. Barnett B. Christopher and Elliston J. Clark (eds.), *Scorsese and Religion*, Brill, 2019

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Baker Aaron (ed.), *A Companion to Martin Scorsese*, Wiley Blackwell, 2021; Cullen Jim, *Martin Scorsese and the American Dream*, Rutgers University Press, 2021

I propose to examine the politics of evangelization in *Silence*. In this film focusing on Portuguese missionaries attempting to convert the Japanese in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, theological issues are indeed enmeshed with political issues as the Christian faith is alternatively depicted as synonymous with Western imperialism, with class struggle and with racist prejudice.

I will first focus on the film's exploration of eurocentrism and cultural hermeticism (also enabling Scorsese to reflexively dwell on American cinema's inherent eurocentrism), before interpreting *Silence*'s narrative as a journey of rediscovery of Christianity not as a hegemonic, imperialistic religion, but as an expression of cultural resistance from oppressed minorities, providing what Michael Ott, in his study of Adorno and Bloch's philosophies, defines as a "the utopic longing of the oppressed for liberation"<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Ott Michael R., "Something's Missing: A Study of the Dialectic of Utopia in the Theories of Theodor W. Adorno and Ernst Bloch", *Heathwood Journal of Critical Theory*, vol. 1, 2015: 11.