

# Archives françaises de la Compagnie de Jésus (Archives de la Province de France)

[Archives of the Province of France, Society of Jesus]

**Official Abbreviation:** AFSI (past acronym for a large part of this Archives was ASJP Archivum Societatis Jesu – Paris)

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## Historical Background

The Archives of the Province of France in Vanves today contain materials from the Archives of the four former provinces of the Assistancy of France, as well as those of the modern Province of France. The bulk of the collection on China comes from the Archives of the Jesuits of the Province of Paris (ASJP), until the late 1980s housed in the Domaine Les Fontaines in Chantilly, outside Paris. The ASJP originated with the documents collected by the librarian of the Parisian Collège “Louis-le-Grand,” Fr. Gabriel Brotier SJ (1723-1789). When over 80 French Jesuit colleges were suppressed by royal order in 1762, he obtained that a part of their papers be deposited with him. Moreover, he directly received in the Collège correspondence from missionaries. Eventually, the “Fonds Brotier” (presently 160 codices) returned in the hands of the Society of Jesus, and today they form the core of the Archives. With time, the Archives acquired more originals and copies of documents. Moreover, some French families donated papers belonging or related to the Society of Jesus, enriching the collection. However, researchers should be aware that most Jesuit documents in France are kept in state depositories, such as the National Library of France, the National Archives, the Archives of the Naval Ministry (especially for the missions), the Archives of the Observatory of Paris, departmental archives and municipal archives.

## **On-site and published catalogues / other search tools**

Dehergne, Joseph SJ. *Archives des Jésuites de la Province de Paris: Inventaire de la Mission de Chine aux XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Publie a l'occasion du Colloque sur l'influence de la China dans l'Europe des Lumieres, Chantilly, 20-22 September, 1974.* Chantilly: mimeographed, 1974.

## **Major Collections of the Archives on China (Manuscripts and Other Materials)**

The Archives contain documents on the Society in France, as well on the missions depending from the French Jesuits in Asia and America. The missionary territories of Asia represented in the collection are:

Mission of the Near East  
Mission of India and Ceylon  
Mission of Indochina  
Mission of the Philippines and the Marianas Islands  
Mission of Japan  
Mission of China

The collection on China contains many originals, as well as manuscript copies and modern photocopies of originals kept in other archives or libraries. Most materials date from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The AFSI also has a number of ancient books. Part of the China manuscripts and rare books comes from a donation of the personal collection of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century China-hand Henri Cordier. Dossiers formerly kept in the interprovincial library of Chantilly (such as the dossiers J. Brucker or H. Bernard-Maitre) are also preserved here. The China materials are divided in two sections:

- 1) **Jesuit missionaries:** letters and works regarding individual missionaries, arranged in alphabetical order. Some early originals can be seen in the Archives, such as an autograph of Fr. Alessandro Valignano written in Macao in 1589, or rare editions of works by Verbiest. Joseph Dehergne SJ has offered a short inventory of the letters contained in the three fonds Vivier, Rybeyrete and Brotier, many of them by China missionaries (see Dehergne, Joseph. "Les archives des jesuites de Paris et l'histoire des missions aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles." *Euntes Docete* 21 (1968), "Appendice," pp. 209-213.)
- 2) **Mission history:** general histories, both manuscript and printed; a collection of journals; some miscellaneous copies of documents in chronological order, partly coming from ARSI; dossiers on the Yuan Ming Yuan Summer Palace, and on the engravings "The Victories of Qianlong" made in France for the Qing court; writings and rare books on the Chinese rites and on the Jews of Kaifeng; some documents by China Figurist Jesuits; dossiers on institutions (catechisms, colleges, churches, hospitals, scientific observatories), regarding especially the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; studies on language and natural history; and a photographic collection arranged by topics.

## **Location**

Vanves is a *mairie* at the outskirts of Paris, connected by metro to the center of the capital (line 13, direction Chatillon Mountrouge; station Malakoff - Plateau de Vanves). A map with the location of Rue R. Marcheron in Vanves can be found at <http://www.ville-vanves.fr/plan/plan.htm>

## **Access and Restrictions**

The Archivist must be contacted in advance, preferably by letter, phone or fax. It is advisable to bring a letter of introduction.

## **Current Personnel, Facilities and Services**

The Archivist is Fr. Robert Bonfils SJ. It is advisable to consult Dehergne's *Inventaire* before going to the Archives. A new inventory is in preparation, and will be available only *in situ*. Photocopying service is available.

## **Schedule**

Monday to Friday, 9:00-12:00; 14:00 -17:00 (afternoon visits by appointment only).

## **Literature on the Archives**

Dehergne, Joseph. "Les archives des jesuites de Paris et l'histoire des missions aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles." *Euntes Docete* 21 (1968): 191-213; supplement in *China Mission Bulletin* 1 (1979), pp. 12-15.

Dehergne, Joseph SJ. *Archives des Jésuites de la Province de Paris: Inventaire de la Mission de Chine aux XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Publie a l'occasion du Colloque sur l'influence de la Chine dans l'Europe des Lumieres, Chantilly, 20-22 September, 1974.* Chantilly: mimeographed, 1974.

McCoog, Thomas. *A Guide to Jesuit Archives.* St. Louis (Mo.) - Rome: Institute of Jesuit Sources - Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 2001, "Provinciae Galliae," pp. 57-59.

Standaert, Nicolas, ed. *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume One: 635-1800.* Leiden: Brill, 2001, pp. 212-213 (entry by Noël Golvers).

## **Published Materials from the Archives (sample on China)**

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**Keywords:** France; Henri Cordier; Gabriel Brotier SJ (1723-1789); Collège "Louis-le-Grand"

**Subject Index:** Jesuits; France; Jesuit Province of Paris