

FEMALE CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES AT WAR IN HONG KONG AND THE CHINESE MAINLAND (1937–1945): THE CASE OF THE CANOSSIAN SISTERS AND MOTHER MARIA BIFFI

Federica Cicci^{*}

ABSTRACT The paper examines the leadership and agency of Catholic women missionaries in South China during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937–1945), focusing on the Canossian Daughters of Charity. While operating within a male-dominated ecclesiastical hierarchy, women religious played a central role in wartime education, healthcare, and humanitarian aid. Through a biographical study of Mother Maria Anselma Biffi (1884–1941) in Huizhou and an analysis of Canossian activities in occupied Hong Kong, this study explores how female religious authority was negotiated and exercised amid institutional constraints and wartime instability. Drawing on archival materials from the Canossian Archives in Rome, the Vatican Apostolic Archives, and the Historical Archives of Propaganda Fide—including mission reports, correspondence, and photographs—this article argues that women religious were not merely auxiliary actors within Catholic missions but key institutional leaders. Their activities highlight how female missionary leadership emerged at the intersection of Catholic spirituality, gendered expectations, colonial entanglements, and wartime humanitarian service.

KEYWORDS Catholic Women, Canossian Sisters, Mother Maria Biffi, Women's Missionary Agency, China Missions, War of Resistance against Japan

* Federica Cicci  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6647-4132>
Adjunct Professor of Alma Mater Studiorum–University of Bologna

戰爭時期（1937—1945）香港及中國內地的 天主教女傳教士：嘉諾撒仁愛修女會 與比菲修女的個案研究

齊菲^{*}

摘要 本文以嘉諾撒仁愛修女會（Canossian Daughters of Charity）為研究重點，審視抗日戰爭時期（1937–1945）華南地區天主教女性傳教士的領導力與主體性。儘管在男性主導的教會等級體制下運作，女性修會成員在戰時的教育、醫療保健及人道主義援助中發揮了至關重要的作用。通過對惠州的比菲修女（Mother Maria Anselma Biffi, 1884–1941）的傳記式研究，以及對日據時期香港嘉諾撒修會活動的分析，本研究探討女性宗教權威如何在制度限制與戰爭動盪中進行協商與實踐。文中利用羅馬嘉諾撒修會檔案館、梵蒂岡宗座檔案館及萬民福音傳播部歷史檔案館的檔案材料——包括教務報告、書信和照片，指出修女不僅僅扮演了天主教傳教事業的輔助性角色，而是核心的體制領導者。她們的活動突顯了女性傳教士的領導力如何在天主教靈性、性別化預期、殖民糾葛以及戰時人道主義服務的交織下形成。

關鍵詞 天主教女性 嘉諾撒修女 比菲修女 婦女差傳機構 中國教務 抗日戰爭

^{*} 齊菲  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6647-4132>
博洛尼亞大學兼職教授