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Catalogues of Houses and Personnel (Read-Me)

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Catalogues of Houses and Personnel, Read-me

The *Catalogue des maisons et du personnel de la Congrégation de la Mission* is one of the major sources for the history of the Congregation beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. Published first in French and later in Latin, the catalogue remains an official publication of the Congregation, under the leadership of its Secretary General.

History

The printed catalogues of the Congregation of the Mission began to be published in 1853. They were then published every two or three years (1855, 1857, 1860), and then regularly every two years (1862, 1864, 1866, 1868, 1870, 1872, 1874), and afterwards yearly, with a few exceptions.

The exceptions are: 1897 and 1898 were published together; 1904 and 1905 were published together; 1915 and 1919 were omitted because of the First World War; publication was suspended after 1940 and resumed only in 1947 because of the Second World War. (During the Second World War, some provinces published catalogues for local use.) The editions for 2006 and 2007 were also published together.

Other catalogues

Previous to the printed catalogues, others have been published for their historical value, although several gaps remain concerning individual members.

1) Pierre Coste, *Saint Vincent de Paul. Correspondance, Entretien, Documents*, (Paris, 1920-1925) has a list of houses and superiors for the time of Saint Vincent. See vol. 8, pp. 516-20 in the original publication or, in a revised and corrected version in English, vol. 8, pp. 604-19.

2) Pierre Coste had previously published *Catalogue du Personnel de la Congrégation de la Mission (Lazaristes) depuis l'origine jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1911. This pioneering listing of members of the Congregation from the beginning to 1800 has been many times corrected and updated by generations of archivists and historians. The *Via Sapientiae* site has the most recent version.

3) The catalogues of 1953-1955 printed a list of houses of the Congregation from 1625 to 1770.

4) The *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*, 78 (1913) 680-84, published a list for 1708 based on a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Mazarine in Paris.

5) The *Annales*, 121 (1956) 466-68, published a list of houses and members drawn up in 1710.

6) The *Annales*, 108-109 (1943) 311-17, offered a catalogue for 1785.

7) The catalogue of 1950, pp. 2-3, has a detailed analysis of the first published catalogue, 1853.

8) The catalogue of 1951, pp. 2-3, has a listing of the superiors general.

9) The catalogues of 1959-1963 have a listing of members of the Congregation who became bishops.

The *Via Sapientiae* site also has copies of manuscript catalogues drawn up before 1853, most of which have gaps. The same site also has the hand-written index cards of the collection prepared

at various periods in the archives of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris, covering the period up to 1800.

For Spain, Benito Paradelo published *Notas biográficas de los que han pertenecido a la Congregación de la Misión en España (1696-1835)*. Madrid, 1935. This was also published serially in the *Anales de la Congregación de la Misión*. Lists for some other provinces undoubtedly exist in archives, but they have not been published. Manuscript volumes listing the members of the Congregation exist in the Archives of the General Curia in Rome. They are arranged alphabetically within chronological periods. Some of the volumes also contain photographs of individuals.

Contents and Format

The contents of the catalogues developed over time. At the beginning, the listing was arranged by provinces and houses. The provinces were grouped by countries in a rough order of date of foundation, and then location (Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, explicitly beginning in 1894). The houses were given in order of their foundation, with the names of the priests (but not those of the brothers, students or novices) listed in the order of their entry into the Congregation (“vocational order”). The superiors were always listed first. Some indications were also given of the **offices** held by individuals, mainly the provincial superior (or visitor), and the superior. The principal **works** of each house were also listed, along with the date of the **foundation** of the house (beginning 1860). Also from 1860, the years of **birth and vows** of each priest were also listed. In the publication for 1921, a third date was added, the year of **placement** in a particular house. Beginning in 1874, **indices** were also provided. A list of those members who died in the previous year (the **necrology**) began to be printed in 1911. This listing was also carried in the *Annales*. Those members who were **absent** from the Congregation were listed in the alphabetical index, but noted only with “00” in place of a page number; this symbol was also used for those whose names were not sent in by the various provinces but whose membership was not in doubt.

Some houses newly-founded by the superior general, and not by individual provinces, were listed in different fashions. At times, they were placed under the continent but without being tied to any province (such as Chile, house of Lima, 1855). At other times, they were placed under the province of Paris, indicating that, for whatever reason, they were not independent (such as Portugal, house of Lisbon, 1870).

In subsequent years, other information was added, such as postal and telegraph **addresses**, **telephone** numbers, and the **Latin** names of certain places. In 1947, major change occurred: the listing of the complete birth date, entrance and priestly ordination of each member (day, month, year), or the date of vows for the brothers. In addition, each individual’s principal work was also described in one or two words. This enlarged the catalogue and opened it up to many errors, but it also increased its usefulness. Beginning gradually in 1949, the names of all the **brothers** were also listed, but after those of the priests in the same house.

Another major change took place in 1964. In this year, the catalogue began to be published in **Latin**, not French, and the listing of the provinces was arranged alphabetically by continent and then by name. Called the “new series,” this format led to some difficulties, since

members of the Congregation did not always know the Latin designation for certain countries (*Lusitana*, Portugal; *SAF Orientalis*, Eastern Province, United States.)

A new secretary general began in 1971 to publish the catalogues in two parts, one variable (provinces, houses, members), and one invariable (the alphabetical listing of members with their dates). Called the “third series,” this format was dropped in 1973 as unworkable, to be succeeded by the “fourth series,” a designation eliminated in 1994.

New secretaries general beginning in 1994 and following years issued more streamlined publications but containing more information, given the complexity of communications around the world.

Reliability

A problem with the catalogues has always been their reliability. The secretary general was able to publish only the information sent to him from the individual provinces. Although reliable in general, many times they were not, since either the information did not reach Paris in time for publication or there were notable errors and omissions, some of which persisted for decades. Nevertheless, the *Catalogue des maisons et du personnel/Catalogue Provinciarum, Domorum ac Personarum* is of the highest value in tracing the development of the Congregation of the Mission.