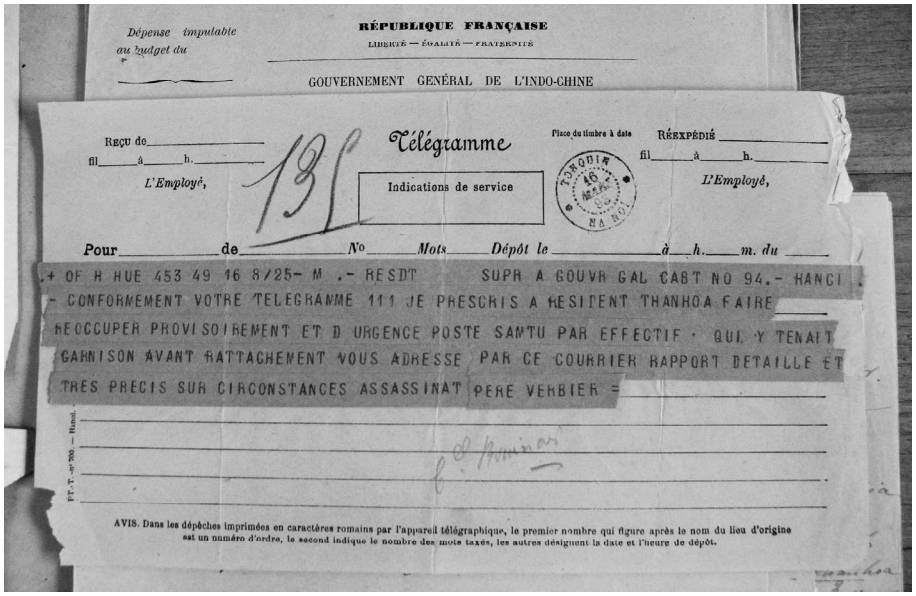
THE DEATH OF PÈRE VERBIER
A CASE FOR HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Oliver Tappe

Introduction

A couple of years ago, I did research on upland Laos in the French colonial archives. I came across a brief telegram, only a few words mentioning the assassination of a French missionary, Jules Verbier, near the town of Sam Tai which is located in NE Laos near the Vietnamese border. In the year 1895, only two years after France took control over the Lao territories east of the Mekong River, this tragic incident appeared to me symptomatic for the upheavals in the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands of this time: Vietnamese and Chinese resistance against the French colonial expansion, local interethnic violence, and chaotic internal migration movements across upland Laos. Père Verbier seemed to have been caught in the crossfire of all these competing political forces. However, his death cannot be just interpreted as collateral damage of (colonial) state expansion and its frictions.


Dépense imputable au budget du

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
LIBERTÉ — ÉGALITÉ — FRATERNITÉ

GOUVERNEMENT GÉNÉRAL DE L'INDO-CHINE

Reçu de ____ fil ____ à ____ h. ____
L'Employé,

Télégramme

Indications de service

Place du timbre à date

Réexpédié ____ fil ____ à ____ h. ____
L'Employé,

Pour ____ de ____ No ____ Mots ____ Dépôt le ____ à ____ h. ____ m. du ____

.+ OF H HUE 453 49 16 8/25- M .- RESDT SUPR A GOUVR GAL CABT NO 94.- HANCI .
- CONFORMEMENT VOTRE TELEGRAMME 111 JE PRESCRIS A RESIDENT THANHOA FAIRE
REOCCUPER PROVISOIREMENT ET D URGENCE POSTE SAMTU PAR EFFECTIF · QUI Y TENAIT
GARNISON AVANT RATTACHEMENT VOUS ADRESSE PAR CE COURRIER RAPPORT DETAILLE ET
TRES PRECIS SUR CIRCONSTANCES ASSASSINAT PERE VERBIER =

AVIS. Dans les dépêches imprimées en caractères romains par l'appareil télégraphique, le premier nombre qui figure après le nom du lieu d'origine est un numéro d'ordre, le second indique le nombre des mots taxés, les autres désignent la date et l'heure de dépôt.

Fig. 1: Telegram, 16 March 1895; Archives nationales d'outre-mer, ANOM GGI 20749 (Photo: Oliver Tappe)

What I found particularly puzzling was the fact that this missionary was killed by the very people that hosted him and even later constituted an important Catholic community in the uplands of Laos, namely the animist Tai Deng

('Red Tai') of Houaphan who at that time stood in fierce opposition against the Buddhist Lao (often called Tai Neua, 'northern Tai', in colonial sources). The case of Verbier, arguably, offers new perspectives to explore local sociopolitical configurations in upland Southeast Asia.

Before exploring the complex interplay of collaboration and resistance, competition and mutual appropriation in the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands, I will discuss some of the methodological challenges of a historically informed anthropology of upland Southeast Asia.

Ethnographies of the Past: Methodological Challenges

Investigating weakly documented micro-events in the past that also escape oral history approaches is a challenging task. I found no one in Houaphan who had any idea of Verbier, and even the history of the Catholic mission in general is a difficult and sensitive topic as the Christianized communities in the northern Lao-Vietnamese borderlands fled from the Vietminh and their Lao comrades in the decades after WWII. It is therefore not easy to examine past events related to the *Missions Étrangères* and the respective local sociocultural configurations in Laos.

Lacking the ability to time travel and talk to people in the past, historical ethnographers need to borrow from the historians' methodological toolkit. Exploring the history of upland societies in Southeast Asia requires a broad method mix, from research in colonial and missionary archives, to oral history interviews in upland villages today (see, e.g., Salemink 2003; Padwe 2020; Petit 2020). My research is informed by approaches of global micro history that in the Southeast Asian context help to connect European and Chinese imperialism in the region with sociopolitical dynamics on the ground – historical ethnographies of the remote in both space and time.

When attempting a historical anthropology of the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands, we can benefit from a wide range of potential sources, for example Lao, Siamese and Vietnamese chronicles, French colonial administrative reports and correspondence, and missionary accounts. Arguably, all these different sources provide only selective glimpses into the past, revealing only fragments and traces of past indigenous lifeworlds. Instead of attempting to reconstruct an imaginary historical whole, we should embrace the fragmentary nature of history and employ a Benjaminian approach to history, one that considers historical knowledge as fragmentary and contingent (Ladwig et al. 2012; Ladwig and Roque 2020).

Piecing together traces from different archives is indispensable in particular when oral history accounts are missing, not least when superimposed by traumatic decades of war and revolution as in the case of Laos and Vietnam. How-

ever, my oral history research on other topics in the region has proven epistemological value, not for any historical verification but to get a sense of sociopolitical dynamics and cultural contexts in the past and present Lao-Vietnamese borderlands.

A telegram from a remote colonial post in the highlands, a letter to the bishop from a missionary living in an upland village, a local myth reflecting traditional sociopolitical hierarchies, or a petition by a local leader: such sources provide disparate yet connected fragments and traces that inform our understanding on past lifeworlds in upland Southeast Asia. Following Paul Ricœur (1990, 116), the trace is the epistemological presupposition of the archive and it acts as a link between different spatio-temporal sites. Traces can function as devices for reassembling fragments of indigenous/local pasts that are dispersed within distinct field sites.

This research practice still requires a great deal of historical imagination. A sense of place and anthropological understanding – gained through previous field research – is, arguably, indispensable to reconstruct the (micro-)history of some remote upland valleys in the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands. Missionaries and colonial administrators, as well as local notables function as 'para-ethnographers' (Marcus 1995) whose notes help to reconstruct past indigenous lifeworlds. This combination of historical anthropology and microhistory benefits from other approaches such as the Extended Case Method. One key element of the ECM is a profound knowledge of the respective cultural context as precondition for the analysis of a specific case (see Burawoy 1998; Rössler 2008). The assassination of Père Verbier discussed here is a case in point. The epistemic value of ethnographic field research for making sense of historical events cannot be overestimated. Having discussed indigenous historicities with village elders, experienced ritual practices and the persistent fear of spirits, and investigated local sociopolitical dynamics in upland Tai and Lao communities, has offered me a set of lenses to explore past events that even escape local oral history. My diachronic perspective considers previous events as well as what happened afterwards. Therefore, the death of Père Verbier will be analyzed here in its broader sociopolitical and cultural dimensions, indicative of the social reality of Zomia at the turn of the 20th century.

Verbier and the French Catholic Mission in the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands

At a first glance, Verbier's assassination by an indigenous group appears as a simple story of colonizer/colonized antagonism or cultural incommensurability. However, digging into a variety of sources reveals a more complex story that points at the contingent sociopolitical dynamics which shaped the culturally heterogeneous uplands of Southeast Asia – with French administrators

and missionaries only another novel addition to the manifold set of actors and relations in the frontier context of upland Laos (Tappe 2015).

The death of Père Verbier is certainly embedded in the history of colonialism and mission in Southeast Asia. In the 19th century, the expansion of French colonial rule went along increasing activities of the *Missions Étrangères de Paris* (MEP). Following the footsteps of the Jesuits who had been active in SE Asia since the 17th century, French Catholic missionaries established numerous parishes in the coastal cities of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina (the future state of Vietnam; see Keith 2012). They also penetrated the mountainous hinterlands that divided the coastal region from the Lao territories in the Mekong basin. The mountainous hinterland of Thanh Hoa province in northern Annam and the adjacent Lao upland confederation of Houaphan became an important target of the MEP (Degeorge 1924).

The region was dominated by different Tai-speaking groups that formed small local principalities (*muang*) in upland Thanh Hoa and Houaphan. Besides, Austroasiatic groups such as the Khmu and Phong, and the recently immigrated Hmong completed the complex ethnolinguistic patchwork in the area. The missionaries dedicated their work to the animist Tai groups that at present constitute the category Tháy (or the subgroup Thanh) in Thanh Hoa, and the Tai Deng (Red Tai) in Houaphan/Laos. These groups held politically and economically dominant positions in the region, albeit contested by Lao claims in Houaphan and the emerging French-Vietnamese colonial administration in the uplands more generally.

The region where Verbier found his violent death in 1895, had witnessed two decades of warfare and upheaval, including invasions of Chinese warlords, local uprisings, and a massacre on French missionaries by Vietnamese rebels. When the French gradually gained administrative control of the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands, local memories of this disturbing episode remained.

By that time, Tai Deng had taken advantage of the chaos and had occupied the abandoned fields of the Lao who had fled to the lowlands. Tensions between Tai and Lao increased when the Siamese attempted to reinstate order – and local authority by their Lao vassals – in Houaphan by the late 1880s, only a few years before the French established themselves in the region (Boutin 1937). While the French policy in Laos aimed at fostering Lao Buddhist sovereignty in Houaphan, in order to secure the loyalty of the Lao king in Luang Prabang, the French administration in Thanh Hoa, rather, lobbied for the alleged 'Annamite rights' in the mountainous hinterland – to them an undifferentiated Tai realm which included Houaphan (Tappe 2015). Against the backdrop of this intracolonial dissent, the antagonism between Tai Deng and 'Lao/Tai Neua' gained momentum during the 1890s (Mironneau 1968).

When in 1893, Verbier and his companion Père Soubeyre resumed the mission in upland Thanh Hoa (Annam) and adjacent Houaphan (Laos), both areas constituting the (cross-border) vicariate of Chau-Laos, French presence and control was still fragile. A region of refuge for anti-French rebels such as the notorious Cam Ba Thuoc, the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands became key sites of the French military campaign of so-called pacification.

Verbier's dangerous mission

The missionaries encountered a disrupted society in motion, marked by unsolved conflicts and betrayed alliances. The *muang* of Sam Tai was contested between the king of Luang Prabang – loyal Lao ally of the French – and the French *résident* in Thanh Hoa who supported the interests of the non-Buddhist Tai, considering them more capable than the shaken Lao to guarantee political order locally. During 1894, just between the first and second/last stay of Verbier in the area, Sam Tai and other *muang* were delegated to Thanh Hoa/Annam, then back to Laos/Luang Prabang just a few weeks before his death – no coincidence as we will see.

The broader political dimensions of Verbier's assassination are indicated by a brief note of fellow missionary Mironneau (1935, 776) who mentions an attempted attack by the Tai Deng on the Lao stronghold in Sam Tai: '[…] pour cela, il leur fallait des fusils; le missionnaire en possédait, on le tua.' The conflict between Tai and Lao is indeed a factor, but just robbery would be too simple, not least because the missionaries were potential allies for the Tai Deng. Things are certainly more complex as an analysis of the sociopolitical configurations around Verbier reveal.

Jules-Marius Verbier (born 10 April 1864) entered the seminar of the *Missions Étrangères* in 1883 and became missionary in Tonkin in 1887. Five years later, he was transferred to the *vicariat* Chau-Laos. The vast upland areas of Thanh Hoa were controlled by the Tai leader Ba Tho who had been involved in previous attacks against the missionaries, and who was notorious for his repression against the scattered Christian communities of the region (see Degeorge 1924). When Ba Tho learned about the new missionary contacting those communities, he sent intimidating letters to them, promising severe punishment if they respond to Verbier's approaches. Anyone who wished to embrace Catholicism had to leave the *muang* and move westward into Lao territory. Thus, Verbier found many deserted villages where people avoided contact in fear of Ba Tho.[1] However, when news spread that a new missionary was preparing to re-establish the mission in Chau-Laos, some members of the scattered communities dared to approach Verbier and invited him to install

[1] Verbier, Notice Nécrologique, in *Compte-rendu des travaux de la Missions Étrangères de Paris*, 1895/29, 353-358.

himself in their home regions. They promised him that many previous refugees, mainly Christianized Tai, would return from remote mountain valleys in Houaphan if Verbier's mission provided a safe haven. In the only letter written by Verbier himself that I could find in the archives[2], Verbier described these encounters in detail. Having suffered violence and displacement after 1884, the local Catholics were desperate for protection and support. But also 'pagan' villages sent their emissaries, often even village headmen and high-ranking notables, to Muang Deng (Vietnamese name: Yen Khuong) in the Tai *muang* of Lang Chanh (Thanh Hoa), a Tai stronghold where Verbier resided, considering the foreigner as powerful ally in a chaotic time.

Verbier and local power struggles

Meanwhile, the Tai notables of Lang Chanh showed an ambivalent attitude towards the missionary activities. Both the Dao Muang (Lao: *chao muang*; head of the *muang*) and his right hand, the Ly Truong (a local administrative title in the Tai areas of Thanh Hoa borrowed from the Vietnamese), seemed to treat Verbier with respect and hospitality, perhaps distanced but not hostile. Verbier himself described the Ly Truong as a welcoming, cultivated personality in his letter in February 1894.[3]

And yet these two planned the fatal attack on the mission in 1895. Why and how this dramatic change? As already indicated, there were no hints at such an aggression from Verbier's hosts. Yet Verbier was aware that he was operating in a risky environment: Ba Tho was still in charge, many villages under the leadership of his relatives. We do not know if his kinship network included the Dao Muong or the Ly Truong but it is not unlikely. Moreover, the notorious rebel leader Cam Ba Tuoc and his mixed bag of Vietnamese, Chinese and indigenous troops were still hiding in the mountainous frontier area near the Lao *muang* of Sam Tai, still eager to resist any French encroachment. Verbier reports one occasion when rumours of bandits nearby caused the inhabitants to flee into the forest – a favourite strategy for 'Zomians' as we learn from James Scott (2009). The Ly Truong himself took Verbier to the hideout in the forest – perhaps to scare him so that he abandons his missionary project? In any case, when it turned out to be false alert, Verbier ridiculed the fearsome natives and highlighted his confidence in God when reporting to the *vicariat*.[4]

During the three months of his first stay in Chao-Laos, Verbier made considerable success, many baptisms and promising meetings with local notables

[2] Letter from 24 February 1894, Verbier to the *vicariat apostolique* in Hanoi. Archives des Missions Étrangères de Paris, Microfiche catalogue, Tonkin occidental, no. 705.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

(Degeorge 1924, 200). Arguably, those notables were either vying for a close relationship with the missionary – considered a powerful *mò* (priest/shaman/-healer) not least due to his medical skills – or fearing for their own authority when their allies and subordinates increasingly turned towards the missionary. Thus, Verbier must have been an ambivalent figure, a potential source of potency or peril.

When in late-1894, Verbier returned with Père Soubeyre to finally establish a permanent mission on the frontier, he was again well received by the notables of Lang Chanh – including the Dao Muang and Ly Truong. Again, we find no hints at direct local resentment, only latent rumours which a lightheaded Verbier relegated to a paranoid population disturbed by decades of violence.[5] French colonial authority had been more or less established in Laos, even though only gradually in the vast upland areas between the Mekong and the Vietnamese coast. Verbier certainly became an important actor within the sociopolitical entanglements on the frontier, making contact with old and new Christian communities, also interfering in local exchange networks with his wealth of medicine, guns and silver *piastres*, maybe becoming a potential competitor in the local prestige economy. Yet what happened in February 1895 caught the missionaries by surprise.

Verbier's assassination

In the evening of 12 February 1895, Verbier was reading the bible by the fire in the missionaries' house while Soubeyre had already retreated in his chamber. A group of armed men approached the house unnoticed - Verbier had killed his dog before because he was annoyed by his nightly barking (Degeorge 1924, 203). They crashed the door and immediately fired two shots at the surprised missionary. Holding him dead, the assassins chased Soubeyre who could escape through the window and into the woods. Verbier tried to reach a neighboring Christian house but collapsed after a third rifle shot. Soubeyrewas confronted in the forest at gunpoint by the Ly Truong yet could grab his rifle and finally escape his enemies. He arrived at the base of the local *garde indigène*) the next day and reported everything to Inspecteur Cuvelier.[6] A dedicated supporter of the Catholic mission – unlike other more secularist administrators who resented missionary activities as social disturbance – he sent his troops to Muang Deng, arrested the ringleaders, and reconquered Sam Tai that he had abandoned only a month earlier. Why did the Tai notables of

[5] Verbier, Notice Nécrologique, in *Compte-rendu des travaux de la Missions Étrangères de Paris*, 1895/29, 353-358.

[6] 'Détails sur l'attaque de la mission de Yên Khuong et sur la mort du Père Verbier', report not dated, Archives des Missions Étrangères de Paris, Dossier Jean André Soubeyre.

Muang Deng/Yen Khuong and other allied Tai leaders risk this harsh French retaliation, only for a few guns and *piastres*?

A letter of the *résident* in Thanh Hoa reports in December 1893, that 'old rebel groups' – most likely Cam Ba Thuoc's band – threatened the *phanya* (lord) of Sam Tai who had reclaimed authority only recently.[7] The retreat of French troops in January 1895 thus offered an opportunity of Tai 'freeriders', perhaps speculating on rebel support, to seize Sam Tai. Indeed, some of the ringleaders in Thanh Hoa, including the 'Judas' Ly Truong (Degeorge 1924, 203), originally hailed from Muang Soi and Sam Tai in Houaphan, both principalities the two *muang* disputed between Tai Deng and Lao (Mironneau 1968, 59; Petit 2020, 75-79). Verbier's death marked the last attempt of an alliance between the Tai and the remaining anti-French rebels – directed against the Lao here – that, however, stopped abruptly with the arrestment of the Tai ringleaders of Verbier's assassination, and the death of Cam Ba Thuoc and dispersal of the remaining rebels in May 1895.

It can be assumed that Verbier knew about the cultural specificities in the region which would explain his success in creating good relationships with many upland village communities. However, perhaps his skills in networking with both Tai and Lao (he himself highlighted the fact that even Lao notables approached him in 1893), making him an incalculable factor in the precarious socio-political configuration of the upland frontier. The Tai elite from Muang Deng could not be sure if Verbier's potency was finally tapped by their Lao enemies.

Further traces

A detailed account by the missionary Père Martin (1899) who was sent to Chau-Laos four years after the mission stalled with Verbier's death, offers some additional traces and perspectives. Like Verbier, Martin visited many scattered communities who were eager to return under the umbrella of the Christian mission. The massacres of 1884 still formed a crucial part of local collective memory, and the death of Verbier certainly contributed to the general climate of fear not only among the Christianized Tai.

Martin often mentions Ba Tho, the old adversary of the missionaries, who obviously still enjoyed local authority and continued to harass any village that had converted to Christianity or showed any interest to get in touch with the missionaries. For some reasons, the French authorities could not or did not want to take him and his entourage out of power. Perhaps Ba Tho's ability to

[7] Letter, 1 August 1895, Résidence Supérieur en Annam à Gouvernement Générale de l'Indochine. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, ANOM GGI 20883.

secure order in the uplands and channel valuable upland forest products towards the Vietnamese coast was considered advantageous for the colonial administration.

In a bold move – confident about French military protection – Martin confronted Ba Tho with all the allegations and even asked him to convert to Christianity in order to demonstrate his good intentions. Interestingly, Ba Tho gave only an evasive respond and claimed that if he converted, the spirits would get angry and cause harm to his people (Martin 1899, 465). His authority underpinned by the protection of the spirits – two decades of power were proof enough in this volatile socio-political context – this is an important statement. I would argue that Ba Tho epitomized an ambitious local leader whose precarious authority corresponds with his ability to experimenting with the new risks and opportunities that the expansion of lowland influences entailed, while careful not to abandon tried and tested local sources of potency (see Stolz and Tappe 2021 for a theorization of such 'upland pioneers'). Verbier – as a new super *mò* with his medicine and guns – constitutes a new, ambiguous power that challenged old sources of potency such as the local ancestor spirits. Ally with Verbier or kill him, had this been the choice?

It is very likely that Dao Muang and the Ly Thuong were suspicious about Verbier's activities in creating all these new relationships with villages eager to (re-)convert – not least as this entailed side-effects such as the channelling of food gifts towards the mission, interfering with local tributary flows and, thus, economic bases of wealth and prestige. Could this have been considered as a demonstration of the efficaciousness of Verbier's 'Holy Spirit' challenging the local ones? Another important aspect were the bad harvests of 1894 and 1895 that arguably undermined local authority since such misery is usually explained with the intervention of angry spirits, a disruption of local sociocosmological relations (cf. Århem and Sprenger 2016). Even if Verbier was considered an unsuspecting pawn within a local political struggle, his killing also involved a new dimension as emblematizing a battle between old and new spirits. In any case, the assassination was a strong and risky power statement by the Tai ringleaders.

Conclusion

The dispersed traces to solve the question of Verbier's assassination indicate a combination of local political dynamics, social and cosmological disruptions, and not least the broader context of colonial expansion. A complex 'frontier assemblage' (Cons and Eilenberg 2019), this historically contingent configuration means a shift away from the mere colonial encounter: not only French action and indigenous re-action, but rather different local actors competing or collaborating, carefully experimenting with precarious relationships

with external powers to their own advantage, as well as renegotiating or revoking those relations.

As already mentioned, the retreat of Cuvelier's *garde indigène* from Sam Tai in January 1895 – without adequate replacement from the French commissar in Houaphan – has arguably left local Lao authority precarious and vulnerable to Tai retribution. Arguably, this opened a window of opportunity for the notables of Muang Deng to attack Sam Tai (following the example of their Tai brethren who had already seized control of Muang Soi. A successful attack on the Lao neighbors would have meant an increase of the Tai 'big men's' authority through concentrating scattered Tai communities in the fertile river valleys of Sam Tai.

It still remains a puzzle why Verbier had to die. Part of the answer might be the fact that – unlike all of his successors in Chau-Laos – Verbier did not predominantly took sides with the animist Tai Deng. He also interacted with Buddhist Lao whom later missionaries declared lost for the mission. Therefore, when later observers such as Père Martin and Père Mironneau wondered by their Tai allies, of all things, turned out to be Verbier's killers, one reason was that Verbier's allegiance was not entirely clear to the local elite of Muang Deng.

Interestingly, some Tai conspirators' sons became devout Catholics and loyal allies of the French (including Ba Tho's offspring; see Mironneau 1968). Like decades later local Tai and Lao notables opportunistically chose to side with either the French or the Vietminh – which resulted in a fierce civil war throughout Laos – the missionaries had finally established themselves as new source of potency which could be tapped in the context of disrupted sociopolitical hierarchies and shifting allegiances.

Missionaries such as Père Mironneau established a flourishing Tai parish until the anticolonial and communist movements brought an end to this missionary success story (see Mironneau 1972).

The Catholic presence hardly left any traces in the borderlands today. Persecuted by the Vietminh as colonial collaborators, most communities fled to lowland Laos and Vietnam in the 1940s and 1950s, and many moved further into exile after the communist revolutions of 1975. As already mentioned, I have met no one in either Houaphan or Thanh Hoa who had any idea of Père Verbier, and the legacy of Catholicism in the region was hardly acknowledged – even if many families have relatives abroad who kept the faith. They had left their home following the French *mò* while the remaining communities turned back to their ancestor spirits.

References

Århem, K. and G. Sprenger (eds.). 2016. *Animism in Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge.

Boutin, A. 1937. Monographie de la province des Houa-Phan. *Bulletin des Amis de Laos* 1: 69-119.

Burawoy, M. 1998. The extended case method. *Sociological Theory* 16 (1), 4-33.

Cons, J. and M. Eilenberg (eds.). 2019. *Frontier assemblages: The emergent politics of resource frontiers in Asia.* Oxford: Wiley.

Degeorge, J.B. 1924. *A la conquête du Chau-Laos*. Hongkong: Imprimérie de la Société des Missions Étrangères.

Keith, C. 2012. *Catholic Vietnam: a church from empire to nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ladwig, P. and R. Roque (eds.). 2020. *States of imitation: Mimetic governmentality and colonial rule*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Ladwig, P., C. Bastos, C. Kohl, R. Roque, O. Tappe. 2012. Fieldwork between folders: fragments, traces, and the ruins of colonial archives. *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Working Paper Series* No. 141. http://www.eth.mpg.de/3331067/mpi-eth-working-paper-0141.pdf

Marcus, G.E. 1995. Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, 95–117.

Martin, J.-M. 1899. Voyage au Laos. *Les Missions Catholiques* 1582, 462-466, 477-480, 488-491, 497-501, 508-510.

Mironneau, J. 1935. Le district de Muong-Xôi, province des Hua Phan (Laos). *Bulletin de la Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris* 1935, 710-718, 767-776.

Mironneau, J. 1968. Souvenirs d'un missionnaire en Indochine: 1923-1953. Unpublished manuscript, Missions Étrangères de Paris.

Mironneau, J. 1972. *L'Indochine c'était çà: journal d'un missionnaire-aumônier de mars 1945 à février 1961*. Paris: Missions Étrangères.

Padwe, J. 2020. *Disturbed forests, fragmented memories: Jarai and other lives in the Cambodian highlands*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Petit, P. 2020. *History, memory, and territorial cults in the highlands of Laos: The past inside the present*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ricœur, P. 1990. *Time and narrative,* Vol. III. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rössler, M. 2008. Die Extended-Case-Methode. In: B. Beer (ed.). *Methoden ethnologischer Feldforschung,* 191-208. Berlin: Reimer.

Salemink, O. 2003. *The ethnography of Vietnam's central highlanders: A historical contextualization, 1850-1990*. London: Routledge.

Scott, J.C. 2009. *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Stolz, R., and O. Tappe. 2021. Upland pioneers: An introduction. *Social Anthropology* 29 (3), 635-650.

Tappe, O. 2015. A frontier in the frontier: Sociopolitical dynamics and colonial administration in the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 16 (4), 368-387.