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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

China's Old Churches

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The History, Architecture, and Legacy of Catholic Sacred Structures in Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei Province are the specific subject of the book by Alan Richard Sweeten.

The book has been recently published in the series: Studies in the History of Christianity in East Asia, Volume: 2, by Brill whose company's head office is in Leiden, (The Netherlands) with offices among others in Singapore (SG) and Beijing (CN).

Brill is a publishing house with a rich history and a strong international focus founded in 1683. China's Old Churches, by Alan Sweeten, examines the history of Catholicism in China (1600 to the present) as reflected by the location, style, and details of sacred structures in three crucial areas of northern China.

Meticulously examined are the most famous and important churches in the urban settings of Beijing and Tianjin, as well as lesser-known ones in rural Hebei Province.

Missionaries built Western-looking churches to make a broad religious statement important to themselves and Chinese worshippers.

Non-Catholics, however, tended to see churches as sociopolitically foreign and culturally invasive. The physical-visual impact of church buildings is noteworthy. Today, renovated old churches and new sacred structures are still mostly of Western style, but often include a sacred grotto dedicated to Our Lady of China, because there's a growing number of Catholics supporting Marian-centered activities.

The knowledge and the interest in the history of the missionary movement in China from Ming to modern times is more and more growing above all after the 22nd September 2018 agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China. The agreement was the result of contacts that have been underway for some time in order to discuss Church matters of common interest and to promote further understanding. The book is also a very valuable instrument for those who appreciate old churches' architectural, visual, and cultural representations.

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