

## Article

# The First Latin Translation of *Li* 礼 from the *Analects* of Confucius: Roman Virtues or Religious Acts?

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**Abstract:** This article centers around the early translation of the term *Li* 礼 in the *Analects* of Confucius (论语). This Latin translation shows that the interpretation of the Confucian term *Li* 礼 mostly did not include any religious meaning. This article also centers on the personal formation of the Jesuits of that time. Taking Michele Ruggieri as reference, this article details how studies based on the Latin Classics (especially Cicero) provided them with a reference to interpret this term as unrelated to religious worship. When the Jesuits arrived in China, at the end of the Ming dynasty, strong emphasis was given to the proper etiquette towards state officials. This in turn derived from the situation in the imperial court. In this historical environment, the Confucian rites (*Li* 礼) were interpreted as “good manners”. This article also presents briefly the question of whether for Christians, *Li* 礼 as a proper social behavior inspired by a particular cultural tradition has any connection with or can be a problem for the rituals of the Christian tradition instituted by Jesus as vehicles of divine grace.

**Keywords:** late Ming; rites; Ruggieri; Confucianism; Cicero; Jesuits



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## 1. Introduction

During the initial meeting between Western people and the teaching of Confucius, the early Jesuit sinologists had to deal not only with Chinese as a foreign language but also with some new concepts and ideas. One of these concepts is expressed by the Chinese word *Li* 礼.

Through the analysis of the first Latin translation of the *Analects* of Confucius by the Jesuit sinologist Michele Ruggieri,<sup>1</sup> I will offer some elements to understand the historical encounter between the early missionaries and the Confucian term *Li* 礼 at the end of the Ming dynasty.

In the first part, I analyze some texts by Ruggieri to understand his interpretation of the word *Li* 礼 and its meaning.

In the second part, I wish to frame the presentation within a twofold historical perspective. On one side is the formation the Jesuits received, reflected in the use of Ciceronian terms for translating *Li* 礼. On the other side is the end of the Ming dynasty, when strong emphasis was given to the proper etiquette towards state officials. This might have influenced some of the translations of *Li* 礼 as “good manners”. The “rites” of social behavior mentioned in Confucius’s *Analects* are not the same “rites” used to honor Confucius after his death, or the ancestors, or performed by the emperors in the Temple of Heaven. “The matter of Confucian rites was more delicate. [ ] It was the rites that defined and confirmed social status, those held to embody the Confucian code of right behavior” (Rule 1986, p. 64).

In the third part, I deal briefly with whether for Christians, a proper social behavior inspired by a particular cultural tradition, that is the main meaning of *Li* 礼 in the *Analects*, has any connection with or can be a problem for the rituals of the Christian tradition instituted by Jesus as vehicles of divine grace.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Ruggieri's Translation of Li

Ruggieri's translation of the word *Li* 礼 from Confucius's *Analects* (论语) shows that he understood this Chinese concept as being similar to the Ciceronian ideas of proper moral behavior applied to social life.

For example, he translates *Li* 礼 with the Latin words *ingenuitas* and *humanitas*.

*Ingenuitas* in Classical Latin indicates the condition of a free-born man or gentleman, a good birth (for example, in Cicero and in Suetonius). It is also the mode of thinking worthy of a freeman: noble-mindedness, frankness, ingenuousness, and a noble demeanor.

The word "*Humanitas*" clearly pertains to human nature, humanity, in a good sense, the best qualities, feelings, and inclinations of mankind. The Latin word expresses concepts such as *the human race, mankind, humanity, philanthropy, gentleness, kindness, politeness*. In some authors, it is used for *mental cultivation befitting a man, liberal education, good breeding, elegance of manners or language, refinement*. Students of Latin remember what Caesar says about the Belgians: they are the strongest of all Gauls because they are far away from the "*humanitas*" of the neighboring provinces (*De Bello Gallico, 1,1*).

There is nothing religious either in *ingenuitas* or in *humanitas*.

*Analects 1.12*: 有子曰‘礼之用、和为贵。先王之道、斯为美、小大由之。有所不行、知和而和、不以礼节之、亦不可行也’。

Ruggieri's translation: Yeusius. Noli ab **ingenuitate** amorem concordiamque dishabere talis enim erat priscorum regum benignitas, qua tum in maximis tum in minimis rebus ex animorum coniunctionem manabat. Qui id quod praestat debet, ingenui hominis officium deserit; humanitatem tantummodo retinet. Atqui **humanitas ab ingenuitati seiungenda non est.** (Ferrero 2019, p. 118)

In English: Yeusius' saying. Do not separate **nobility of character** from love and harmony. This was the kind of love of the ancient kings, so that both in great or small things this harmony flew out from the souls. Who abandons the duty that as an honorable man he should follow, keeps only empty good manners. But **good manners should not be separated from nobility of character.**

Let us compare this translation also with the one of Philippe Couplet, in his 1687 Latin edition of the Confucian books (Meynard 2015).

*Discipulus yeucu ait: Sicut toleranda non est juris officiique violatio, sic in officiorum usu, & dum jus aliquod exigitur, placabilitas, moderatio & longanimitas obtinent primum locum. Ex priscorum quidem Regum sententia atque institutio in hujusmodi moderatione atque humanitate constituebatur omnis decor atque venustas officiorum, & quascunque tractabant illi res minores majoresve, omnes inde procedebant: omnia omnino tam prudenti atque amabili suavitate condiebant ac temperabant, adeoque ad optatum quoque finem feliciter perducebant. Est hic tamen quod prudenter non facias, sive quod vitare te oporteat, velut extremum quoddam ab aurea mediocritatis regula aberrans: si videlicet perspectam habes regiam illam plenamque humanitatis & clementiae facilitate quot item quantasque utilitates afferre soleat, jamque adeo exarseris illius exercendae desiderio; verumtamen illam facilitatem non secundum regulas officiorum quae uniuscujusque sunt propria, moderaris, peccabis identidem; adeoque est hic quod utique non conveniat facere. Vult nos, dum comitatem beneficentiamque exercemus, cum iudicio, considerate constanterque exercere; non autem temeritate quadam, sine iudicio vel modo erga omnes, vel repentino quodam quasi vento, impetu animi concitatos.*

In English: The disciple, Youzi, said: "Just as the violation of rules and duties should not be tolerated, whenever a rule in practicing duties is searched for, a conciliatory disposition, moderation, and forbearance should come first. The whole charm and grace of the duties is founded on the opinion and teaching of the ancient kings about moderation and humaneness. How serious or unimportant was the matter at stake, everyone proceeded from there". They were seasoning and blending everything together with a prudent and amiable kindness, so that the affairs successfully reached the intended end. There is still one thing that you should sensibly avoid, like something extreme deviating from the golden mean.

You may clearly see at the court this harmony filled with humaneness and clemency, bringing so many benefits that you are kindled with the desire for practicing such harmony. But if you do not regulate this harmony according to the rule specific to each ritual, then you shall make mistakes again and again. This is not appropriate at all". This is to say, while exercising generosity and kindness, we should exercise them with judgment, carefully and consistently, and we should not be derailed by any rashness, by a judgment opposite to all, or by a hasty fury, like a gust of wind".

Thierry Meynard explains in the note of this text that "the Chinese word for rites (*li*) is translated as "rule" (*jus*) and "duty" (*officium*)". This opening statement is taken from Zhang's commentary. He also says: "The notion of *li* is translated today as "rituals", but this should not be understood in a very narrow sense, as meaning only formal rituals. Interestingly, the *Sinarum Philosophus* renders this important Confucian notion with the broader Ciceronian notion of duty (*officium*)" (Meynard 2011).

The Latin text of Couplet employs words that belong to the Classical idea of the proper gentleman, according to the Greek and Roman tradition: *aurea mediocritas*, *prudentia*, *humanitas*, *clementia*, *placabilitas*, *moderatio*, *longanimitas*, *decor*, *venustas*, and *suavitas*. A comparison with Cicero's *De Officiis* ("On Duties") shows that those words were commonly used to describe the perfect gentleman, "*vir bonus*". Also, Seneca and his Stoic tradition often use these terms.

Prospero Intorcetta, in his *Sinarum Scientia Politico-moralis*, offers the following Latin definitions of the Chinese "Li" (礼): (1) *ritus*; (2) *officium*; (3) *obsequium*; (4) *quod fas (et) aequum (est)*; and (5) *urbanitatis officia* (Luo 2014).

*Analects* 1.15 子贡曰'贫而无谄、富而无骄、何如。'子曰: '可也、未若贫而乐、富而好礼者也。 (Ferrero 2019, p. 120).

Ruggieri: qui ad inopiam levandam sese ad inhonesta facinora non abiicit; qui spiritus contra non sumit ex opibus quid Confucii quidem sententia preclare se gerit. Quamquam aliud si inops rerum egestatem, praeclarius aliud pecuniosus atque **ingenuitatem** gaudeat.

In English: Whoever does not fall into dishonest actions even to lessen his poverty; whoever does not exalt his spirit because of wealth, these behave honorably, according to the sentences of Confucius. Although it is different thing if a poor rejoices for his lack of things and a rich noble rejoices for his **nobility of spirit**.

The word *ingenuitas*—it is important to emphasize this point—has no religious connotation.

Another Latin translation used for *Li* 礼 is *moderata* (restrained) *veneratio* (respect). How could respect be "restrained"? Is there moderation in respect? It means no empty flattery, no shameful obsequiousness. Excessive respect can become flattery, a sign of falsity and not of proper relations. We can think of Seneca: "*ingratus superiorum cultus voluntaria servitute*"; "the voluntary slavery of serving ungrateful superiors [*De Brevitate Vitae* 1,2]. In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, the entire book 7 deals with the virtue of moderation, within which also resides a proper sense of justice. So *Li* 礼 is identified with a proper social behavior, proper good manners that are respectful without flattery.

*Analects* 1.13 有子曰: '信近于义、言可复也。恭近于礼、远耻辱也。因不失其亲、亦可宗也'。

Ruggieri's Latin: Iustis promissis, cuiusmodi esse debent viam facile stare potest. **Moderata veneratio** rubore non afficitur. Accomodandum tibi est ingenium ad boni amici mores. Haec te ipsum tibi statuere par est (Ferrero 2019, p. 118).

In English: It is easy to keep promises, no matter how they are. A **restrained respectfulness** will not blush. Imitate good friends. On these things you have to root yourself.

Many years later, this is James Legge's English translation: "When **respect is shown according to what is proper**, one keeps far from shame and disgrace" (Legge 1960).

Another Latin word used is "*benignitas*". *Benignitas* is the quality of being *benignus*, the good man, affable, kindly bearing to others. It expresses both inner feelings and external conduct: kindness, friendliness, courtesy, benevolence, and benignity. It can be translated in English as kindness, liberality, bounty, favor, lenity, mercy.

These are also the characteristics of a good ruler. We can think about Seneca's *De Clementia* addressed to the emperor Nero shortly after his accession to the throne in 54 CE.

*Analects* 2.3 子曰：‘道之以政、齐之以刑、民免而无耻、道之以德、齐之以礼、有耻且格。

Ruggieri's Latin: Qui populos legum imperio moderantur, contumaces parant. Propositione coerceant ex hoc enim fiet, ne admissis iam sceleribus, magno cum probro ac dedecore merita de nocentibus paena sumenda sit. Qui **virtute ac benignitate** cives gubernat; eos ita dirigit nihil ut committant quod pudeat; sed in virtutem studio totis viribus elaborent (Ferrero 2019, p. 120).

In English: Those who govern the people with the power of laws produce disobedient people. Instead, they should be controlled by reasonable explanations. In this way, even if the crimes are not confessed, the well-deserved punishment is inflicted on the criminals by means of feeling great shame and dishonor. Those who govern citizens with **virtue and goodness** guide them in such a way that they cannot commit what is shameful. On the contrary, they will exercise all their energies for a virtuous life.

In one case, Ruggieri for Li 礼 uses "liberaliter et ingenue educatus". Liberaliter is an adverb used for a freeman and means nobly, ingenuously, liberally, courteously, and graciously.

*Analects* 3.15 子入大庙、每事问。或曰‘孰谓鄴人之子知礼乎、入大庙、每事问’。子闻之、曰：‘是礼也’。

Ruggieri: Confucius templum ingressus maximum nihil omnino videbat, de quo curiose non quaereret. Nec defuit, qui diceret: quam ob rem igitur ex Teu loco hominis filius, quid ad hominem liberaliter educatum pertineat nosse dicitur, si cum in templo sit maximo, universa quae in eo visuntur crebra interrogatione pervestigat? Accidere ad Confusii aures hi susurri atque hoc, inquit, **liberaliter et ingenue educati** hominis officium est (Ferrero 2019, p. 136).

In English: After entering the temple, Confucius was asking curiously about everything that he was looking at. There was someone who said: why this man from Teu, who is said to know things about liberal human education, with continual questions investigates all, if he is in a great temple and can see all things in it? These whispers came to ears of Confucius and he said: this is the duty of a **man educated liberally and nobly**.

Li 礼 for Ruggieri also has a social implication. He translates "礼乐不兴" as "**ordines et concordia non erigentur**". Ordo translates 礼 and means "order".<sup>3</sup>

*Analects* 13.3 子路曰‘卫君待子而为政、子将奚先’ 子曰‘必也正名乎’ 子路曰‘有是哉、子之迂也、奚其正’ 子曰‘野哉、由也、君子于其所不知、盖阙如也。名不正、则言不顺、言不顺、则事不成、事不成、则礼乐不兴、礼乐不兴、则刑罚不中、刑罚不中、则民无所措手足。故君子名之必可言也、言之必可行也。君子于其言、无所苟而已矣’

Ruggieri: perfectus vir ea quae nescit, quasi dubius deponit, nescias enim quod nomine non recte imposito verbis tuis non obsequuntur, si verbis non exequentur, res negotiaque ad exitum produci nequeunt, si res negotiaque non proficiunt, **ordines et concordia** non erigentur; humanitatibus, ordines et amicitia non erecti, castigatione et paene non recte infligentur. Castigationibus et penis non recte inflictis, populus quidem locum non habebit, ubi tuto manus pedesque ponat. Quare perfecti viri nomen oportet dicere, dicto oportet hinc conformia agere perfectus vir, non exterius solum habere id quod vocatur" (Ferrero 2019, p. 220).

In English: A perfect man about things he does not know, behaves as uncertain; don't you know that if a name is not used correctly then your words will not be put into practice? And if the words are not put into practice, they cannot produce any results. If there are no results, there will be no order or harmony for the people. If there is no order or harmony for people, punishments and sanctions will not be imposed according to justice. If punishments and sanctions are not imposed according to justice, people will have nowhere

to live safely. Therefore it is necessary that the names used by the perfect man are used correctly, so that he can act in accordance with them, not only using the sound of things without proper meaning.

Another term is *bonitas*. In Latin, it indicates in general the good quality of a thing, goodness, excellence. It is frequently used for character: *good, honest, friendly conduct; goodness, virtue, integrity, blamelessness, kindness, friendliness, benevolence, benignity, and affability*. Sometimes even *parental love, tenderness*.

Ruggieri translates “上好礼” as *bonitates amaverit*.

*Analects* 13.4 樊迟出、子曰‘小人哉、樊须也、上好礼、则民莫敢不敬、上好义、则民莫敢不服、上好信、则民莫敢不用情。夫如是、则四方之民、襁负其子而至矣、焉用稼’

Ruggieri: Cum Fantius exisset, Confucius ait: “Homo parvorum spirituum est Fantius. Si superior vir **bonitates** amaverit, populus ei amorem non deferre non audebit, si rationabilia populus quidem se illi [...] non audebit, si fidelitatem in promissis observaverit, populus quippe fidelitate et veritate non uti non audebit. Undique populus humeris parvulos suos portantes at te accident, cur [...] agricultura?” (Ferrero 2019, p. 220).

In English: When Fan Chi left, Confucius said: Fan Chi is a man of limited vision. If a superior man loves **goodness**, the people will not dare not to love it; if reasonable things are chosen, the people will not dare not to accept them; if promises are kept, then people will not dare to be trustworthy and truthful. People will come to you from all over the world, carrying their children on their shoulders, why [talk about] agriculture?

But the clearest evidence that Ruggieri understood Li 礼 as “good manners” and not as a religious action is the frequency of the term *urbanitas*.

The word comes from *urbs* (city). Originally, it simply meant *city fashion, city manners*, both in a good and bad sense (for early Romans, city manners were not as pure as countryside hard-work and honesty). The meaning includes ideas such as *refinement, elegance of manner, politeness, courtesy, affability, urbanity: refinement, delicacy, or elegance of speech: wit, humor, pleasantry, raillery*. Originally, there was also a negative sense as *trickery, roguery, knavery*.

*Analects* 6.27 子曰：‘君子博学于文、约之以礼、亦可以弗畔矣夫’。

Ruggieri’s Latin: Vir bonus varias addiscens **scientias urbanitatis** norma utatur, convenit item non franget seu violat virtutis iter (Ferrero 2019, p. 170).

In English: For the good man, since he studies the various sciences and follows the rules of *courtesy*, it is proper that he would not break or violate the way of virtue.

*Analects* 7.18 子所雅言、诗、书、执礼、皆雅言也。

Ruggieri’s Latin: Confusique crebris vicibus aiebat; carmina, libros, **urbanitatem servare**; haec oram semper dicebat (Ferrero 2019, p. 174).

In English: Confucius many times talked about: poems, books, **good manners**, these things always mentioned.

*Analects* 7.31 陈司败问昭公知礼乎、孔子曰：‘知礼’。孔子退、揖巫马期而进之、曰：‘吾闻君子不党、君子亦党乎、君取于吴、为同姓、谓之吴孟子。君而知礼、孰不知礼’ 巫马期以告。子曰‘丘也幸、苟有过、人必知之’。

Ruggieri: Ex cino regno Sipaius gubernator rogat an Ciacumus rex **urbanitates** sciat. Confucius ait scit urbanitates, Confucio recedenti urbanitateque utenti cum illo iterum ingrediens ait intellegi optimum virum peccata abscondere non deberi. At Confucius optimus vir etiam scit peccata reticere. Rex enim ille vu qui est eiusdem cognominis et vocatur vumelio in coniugem accepit. Si rex urbanitates sciret, cum hanc **urbanitatem** ignoraret? Vumachus ad eum referens Confucius ait ego gaudeo ut si in me culpa et homines sciant ut me corrigam (Ferrero 2019, p. 178).

In English: One officer from the Chinese kingdom of Sibai asked whether Zhao Gong knew **propriety**. Confucius said he knew. As Confucius was withdrawing, one discussing

about propriety was walking with him and said: I understand that a good man should not hide his mistakes. But Confucius is a good man yet he knows that he hides mistake. In fact a king whose name was Wu married a person with the same name Wu. If the king knew **propriety** how did he ignore this rule of **propriety**? Wu Maqi reported to Confucius and he said: I am glad that people know if I have mistakes, so that I can correct myself”.

*Analects* 8.8 子曰：‘兴于诗。立于礼。成于乐。

Ruggieri’s Latin: Erigimus bonis carminibus; ad virtutis **urbanitatis** observantiam constituimus; pace ac concordia perficimus (Ferrero 2019, p. 182).

In English: We raise by means of good poems, we are established to the observance of the virtue of **good manners**, we are complete by peace and harmony.

*Analects* 11.1 子曰：‘先进于礼乐、野人也、后进于礼乐、君子也。如用之、则吾从先进’。

Ruggieri: Confucius ait: “Olim qui **urbanitatibus et armoniis** vacabant rustici vocabantur, postea vero vacantibus illis boni viri vocantur quia in exteriori magis se exercebant, ego inquit, si his intendam eos qui olim vocabantur imitabor. Confucius in qualitate antiqua gaudebat.

In English: Confucius said that in the past those who had no manners and knew no music were called rustics; after they have gone, now those who exercise themselves in exterior appearances are called good men. I will rather imitate those who were called rustics. Confucius rejoiced in old things.

Even in translating the name of the book commonly known in English as “the Book of Rites” Ruggieri does not use “ritus”.

*Analects*, 16.13 曰：“学礼乎”。对曰：“未也”。“不学礼、无以立”。鲤退而学礼。

Didicisti urbanitarum librum. Respondi: Nondum; ille subdit qui urbanitatum librum non didicit, ad virtutem se applicare nequit. Ego recedens urbanitatum librum didici (Ferrero 2019, p. 202).

In English: “did you study the Book of Good Manners? I replied: not yet. He said: who did not study the Book of Good Manners cannot apply himself to virtues. So I withdrew and studied the Book of Good Manners”.

By examining the variety of Latin terms, it appears that Li 礼 is mostly translated as the right way to behave in society.

*Analects* 9.3 子曰：‘麻冕、礼也。今也、纯俭、吾从众。拜下、礼也。今拜乎上、泰也、虽远众、吾从下。

Ruggieri: Confucius ait [...] lineus pileus olim **recte** vestiebatur nunc sericus est in usu, ego communitatem sequar. Olim visitando regem in inferiores domus loco genuflectendo intraverat; nunc superiori domus loco se proximiori genuflectunt. Arrogantia et inurbanitas est, in hoc iura plurimum frangam in inferiori loco visitantes ego sequar (Ferrero 2019, p. 186).

In English: Confucius said: before a cap of linen was worn **correctly**, but now a silk one. I will follow the majority. Before when someone was visiting a king he used to kneel in a lower place; now they kneel in a place nearer to the upper location. This is arrogance and lack of good manners, and in this I will break the customs of the majority and follow those who when they visit kneel in the lower place.

Here, we simply have *recte*, which means “according to the right way”.

*Analects* 12.1 颜渊问：‘仁’ 子曰：‘克己复礼、为仁。一日克己复礼、天下归仁焉。为仁由己、而由仁乎哉’ 颜渊曰‘请问其目’ 子曰：‘非礼勿视、非礼勿听、非礼勿言、非礼勿动’ 颜渊曰‘回虽不敏、请事斯语矣。

Ruggieri: Jenino roganti de pietatis virtute, Confucius ait: “Vincens semetipsum et innatam rationem revocans, pius est, si enim uno die te vincas et in te **innatam rationem** revocans, orbis terrarum te pium esse cognoscet. Pietas a nobismetipsis originem habet forsitan ab aliis originem habet? Ienino pietatis capita roganti, Confucius ait: “Quae non

decent, ne aspicias. Quae non decent, ne audias; quae non decent ne dicas, quae non decent ne facias". Ieninus ait: "discipulus ego licet rudis sim, assumo haec verba ut in illis me exerceam (Ferrero 2019, p. 210).

In English: Yanyuan asked about the virtue of piety. Confucius said: the one who subdues himself and returns to his **innate reason**, he is pious. If one day you subdue yourself and return to the innate reason, all the world will know that you are pious. This piety comes from ourselves or from others? Yanyuan was asking about the main points of piety. Confucius said: do not look at those things that are not right; do not listen at those things that are not right; do not talk about those things that are not right; do not do things that are not right. Yanyuan said: 'although I am a rough disciple, I take up these things so that I might practice them'.

Here, we have the following for "Li": *innatam rationem*, inner rationality.

In the *Analects*, there are, however, two passages where 礼—Li—clearly refers to some kind of religious action, and so Ruggieri translates it with "ritus".

2.5 子曰：‘生、事之以礼、死、葬之以礼、祭之以礼’。

Ait Confucius in vita manentibus mos est gerendus, mortuis **ritum** parentandum ac iusta solvenda (Ferrero 2019, p. 122).

In English: when parents are alive, proper conduct should be maintained; when they have passed away, ritual should be observed, and funeral ceremonies should be properly conducted.

12.5 司马牛忧曰：‘人皆有兄弟、我独亡’。子夏曰：‘商闻之矣“死生有命、富贵在天”；君子敬而无失、与人恭而有礼、四海之内、皆兄弟也。君子何患乎无兄弟也。

Simancus tristis existens ait: "Omnes homines fratres habent, solus ego non habeo. Zichianus ait: "Sciamus id est ego a poetibus accepi, mortem et vitam a fato pendent, divitias et honores a caelo. Perfectus vir in aliis reverendiis non peccans, in bonis [...] dis hominibus, **ritus** servans, orbis terrarium omnes homines sunt eius fratres; cur ergo perfectus vir, qui fratrem non habeat tristis erit?" (Ferrero 2019, p. 212).

In English: Simancus was feeling sad and said, "All men have brothers, only I do not have any". Zi Xia replied, "We know, that is to say, we read in the *Book of Poems*, that life and death depend on fate, wealth and honors depend on heaven. For the perfect man who does not sin against those to be respected and who observes the rites, are not all the people of the world his brothers? Therefore, why should a perfect man feel sad because he has no brothers?"

Overall, in most of the examples we examined, there is no religious meaning in the Latin translation of *Li* 礼. This was therefore Ruggieri's (and the readers of his translation) first understanding of this concept.

### 3. Between Cicero and the Etiquette of the Palace at the End of the Ming Dynasty

According to Pasquale D'Elia, Pompilio (later Michele) Ruggieri was born in Spinazzola, Diocese of Venosa (Puglia, Southern Italy) in 1543 (D'Elia 1942). His early studies were similar to those of young people of his age and social status (Ferrero 2023). He was entrusted to some private preceptors, usually clergymen, about whom we do not have information. The curriculum of the educational institutions of this period was still based around the medieval *trivium* (*Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric*) and *quadrivium* (*Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy*).

Humanists stressed the importance of Cicero for the education of youth. The European Renaissance had a fascination with Ciceronian rhetoric (Dellaneva 2015). For example, Diego de Ledesma (1519–1575) expressed it in his *De Ratione et Ordine Studiorum Collegii Romani* (1568) (Hinz et al. 2004)<sup>4</sup> or the Genovese Giulio Negrone in his *De imitatione et laudibus Ciceronis* (1582) where he called him a "prince of the human eloquence" (*humanae facundiae princeps*) (Farrell 1938, p. 179). "Nothing so marked the difference between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as the revival of classical rhetoric. Medieval scholars

had placed grammar and logic at the center of learning and expression. They had little interest in Latin rhetoric and ignored its cultural associations" (Grendler 1991, p. 205).

In the official Jesuit textbook *De Arte Rethorica* (1562), Cipriano Soárez quoted Cicero 410 times (Moss 1986). In his *Preface*, Soárez wrote the following: Cicero's books have such "solicitude, smoothness, grace, and learning" (Soárez 1955, p. 105). Erasmus once said "It is not great to speak like a Grammarian, but it is divine to speak like Cicero" (Scott 1991, p. 25). The class syllabi (*catalogi lectionum*) recommended in the second grammar class the *Epistulae ad familiares*, in the two-year humanities class *Laelius*, and the *Epistulae ad Atticum*, and some of his orations, such as *Pro Milone* or *Pro lege Manilia*.

The humanists gave primacy to Cicero because his writings were both elegant and filled with moral values (Grendler 1991, p. 221). In 1a passage from Cicero's *De Officiis* (book I, 37–38), the great Roman orator explains that one of the components of moral rectitude is that attitude which includes *temperantia*, (self-control), *sedatio perturbationum animi* (the calmness of the passions), *rerum modus* (moderation in everything), and which in Latin is called *decorum* and in Greek *prepon* (πρέπον). A few lines later, Cicero adds as a characteristic of moral goodness the *reverentia adversus homines*, respect for all. This *decorum* is a source of "harmony with Nature" (*ad convenientiam conservationemque naturae*).

The students trained by the Jesuits received both a humanistic and a Christian doctrinal formation. As far as language is concerned, the consensus was that the Latin of the Christian writers was not as refined as that of Cicero. This prejudice continued up to the middle of the twentieth century (Ferrero 2000).

Seneca's treatises were also studied in the 16th century. The most well known are as follows: *De ira* (On anger), about the control of passions; *De clementia* (On mercy), written to urge Nero to exercise authority with moderation; *De tranquillitate animi* (On the peace of heart); *De constantia sapientis* (On the firmness of the wise man); *De vita beata* (On a happy life); *De otio* (On the use of leisure); *De brevitate vitae* (On the brevity of life); and the Letters to Lucilius (*Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*).

In a letter written from China, Matteo Ricci, speaking of Confucius, compares him precisely to Seneca. "As far as Moral is concerned, Confucius is like Seneca or some of the others famous pagan authors" (D'Elia 1942, I, p. 5).

Ruggieri obtained a Degree in Law in Naples and began his career as a civil servant under King Philip II of Spain.<sup>5</sup> In 1572, he felt a calling to the religious life and joined the Jesuits, changing his name to "Michele". After one year of Noviciate, he studied two years of Philosophy and one year of Theology at the Roman College (Fois 1984).

The *Roman College* (later called the Gregorian University), founded by St. Ignatius in 1551, was the center of Jesuit formation. The faculty of philosophy and theology began its courses in 1553. In the academic year 1574–1575, there were 230 students of philosophy, 200 of theology, and about 600 of letters (Bortone 1965, p. 38). Religious fervor, along with new teaching methods (the so-called "Parisian style"), was the main reason for the school's fame (Villoslada 1954, p. 88).

In the *Ratio Studiorum*<sup>6</sup> (1570), Lucanus, Statius, and Seneca's tragedies were also mentioned. Later, the main focus was on Cicero (Villoslada 1954, p. 89). The goal of the rhetoric was a perfect use of Latin, of which Cicero was the recognized and irreplaceable model. The *Ratio Studiorum* also provided for the study of Aristotle (Bea 1942).

Ruggieri was ordained as a priest in 1577 and sailed from Lisbon to the Jesuit students' residence in Goa in November of the same year, together with Matteo Ricci (D'Elia 1942). From Goa, he arrived in Macao in 1579. Ricci stayed in Goa four more years, to study theology. According to Ignatius' explicit instructions, the foundations of theology were to be the New and Old Testaments and the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas (Amaladas 1988, p. 69). In 1580, Ricci was ordained a priest by the bishop of Cochín, Matteo De Medina (Bortone 1965, p. 82). Two years later, in 1582, he arrived in Macao.

Ruggieri was in China from 1579 to 1588 (Ricci 1953), during the reign of the Wanli Emperor who reigned between 1573 and 1620. Ruggieri gave a significant contribution to

the exchange between China and the West and is considered one of the first “sinologists”<sup>7</sup> (Mungello 1989).

After about seven years in China, Ruggieri, with the assistance of Ricci, began to read and translate the *Four Books* in Latin and brought back the manuscript to Italy (Gisondi 1999). This manuscript is held in the National Library *Vittorio Emanuele II* in Rome (Fondo Gesuitico n.1185/3314). It bears the head-title *A P. Michaele Rogerio collecta*, which means material collected by Father Michele Ruggieri. This manuscript was published only in 2019 (Ferrero 2019).

Later, thanks to the friendship of some prestigious Chinese officials (Xu Guangqi, Li Zhizao, Yang Tingyun, Li Yingshi), (Zhang 2006) the Jesuits continued and deepened the dialogue with Confucianism. The *Confucian Classics* in many respects seemed to them similar to that “enlightened paganism” of Cicero and Aristotle so admired in Europe (Gernet 1985; Jensen 1997).

The philosopher and historian Fung Yu-lan once asked if it is possible to understand what it means to “be Chinese” without knowing the Confucian tradition (Fung 1952). The classical Confucian system is centered on teaching how to become a sage, in every condition of life.<sup>8</sup> To achieve this goal, it is necessary to establish correct interpersonal relationships, according to the criterion inscribed by Heaven in Nature and communicated to men through the traditions of the ancient sages (Fung 1952, p. 59). Confucius argues that only a social life based on the virtue of “benevolence” (仁), which is the virtue of correct interpersonal relationships, allows the righteous man to lead a good life, finding in it the ultimate motivation for his behavior. The only way to restore and keep order and harmony in society is to lead a righteous life, following the traditions of the ancients, transmitted in the form of *rites* (“Li”, 礼).

According to these “rites”, the emperor must be the emperor, the minister the minister, the subject the subject, the parent the parent, and the child the child, each following the correct way of living their role. It is the so-called “rectification of names” (正名), one of the pillars of Confucianism (Fung 1952, p. 59). Only a society based on the respect of this principle can achieve harmony and therefore prosper, because it conforms to the “Dao” (道), the Law of Heaven (天), which is concretized in the *Rites* (礼) (Ivanhoe 1990). For Confucius, punishments or rewards are not motivation for a good moral life. Breaking social harmony in itself leads the individual to a deep sense of shame, which is stronger than any external pressure. It can be said that the focus on “shame”, which translates in popular language as “face” and “respect”, is one of the most visible characteristics of Chinese society to date (Fung 1952, p. 99).

The concept of *rite* must be considered within this teaching of Confucius and its main characteristic: the attainment of full humanity through social life. Society is, in fact, an extension of the family, and filial respect must be transferred to the authorities through the observance of the *rites*. These are the embodiment of good social values passed down from generation to generation. They are the instrument that allows man to know how to live, and for this reason, they have an irreplaceable moral value (Yu 1998). “For three things the wise man is full of admiration: the commands of Heaven, the great men, the words of the wise” (Confucius, *Analects XVI,8*, my translation).

Thus, for Confucius, a “rite” indicates a tradition of proper behavior in interpersonal relationships. It has a meaning similar to the Ciceronian idea of “property” (*decorum*). For Confucius, moral perfection can only be achieved by learning to live in society, and this is the result of a good education. “The craftsman who wants to do a good job must have good tools. If you live in society, observe and learn from the worthiest of officers, and make friends with the most virtuous of the learned” (Confucius, *Analects XV, 9*, my translation) The observance of rites is the acceptance of the wisdom of the ancients as it is transmitted to us by the various “father” figures of society and the family (parents, teachers, authorities). The supreme virtue, the benevolence mentioned above, comes from Heaven: the rites, which are its historical and social incarnation, come from the community.

Confucius's successors expanded and commented on his fundamental teaching but did not alter its premises. Mencius (372BC–289BC), the greatest of them, stressed the theory that human nature is good and that the human mind and nature are intimately connected with Heaven also by means of ritual propriety.

He also shifted the emphasis to the political aspect of his master's teaching, seeking to transform Confucianism into a practical doctrine of good governance (Fung 1952, p. 280). His application of Confucius's teaching to politics was one of the main reasons for the revival of Confucianism. The tradition of ceremonies and state administration, the study of proper interpersonal relations, and even a certain tendency to take for granted the moral perfection of the established authority were the ideal basis for supporting the expansion of Confucianism during the Han dynasty, when China reached the geographical extent that it has basically preserved to this day. Confucian philosophy has always eliminated rivals by their absorption, so that everything good and useful from other doctrines can be incorporated into the great cauldron that is Chinese culture.

With the advent of the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), Confucianism flourished, entering a new stage of development until it became the Chinese school of thought *par excellence*. When Ruggieri arrived in China, the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) was going through a period of deep crisis. The first Ming emperors had been directly involved in the government of the state: they followed military campaigns, revised the texts of laws, and intervened in the allocation of the most important posts in the administration. As time passed, however, the emperors focused mainly on court life. Local officials did not mind that the emperor was an increasingly abstract personification of unity and wisdom, revered by the people but far away and unreachable. His word was supreme law, but it was filtered through the real holders of power: the local authorities. The power of court officials over decision making grew proportionally to its failure to reach every province (Twitchett and Fairbank 1988).

Emperor Wan Li struggled to exercise royal power over all the vast territory of the empire. He ended up focusing on the political machinations of the court and safeguarding the ideology that attributed imperial power to direct intervention from Heaven (Twitchett and Fairbank 1988). One of the peculiarities of his reign was therefore the great influence exercised by the court officials and the eunuchs (Gernet 1983, p. 406). As a result, starting from the sixteenth century, the Ming dynasty was unable to solve three problems, which would later cause its downfall: the insufficiency of tax revenues to maintain the increasingly expensive administration; the continuous attacks of the Mongols from the northwest; and the growing inability of eunuchs and the court to solve practical social problems (Twitchett and Fairbank 1988).

"Rites" have always been connected with formalities in court. As Roger Ames says, "Prescribed rites and rituals were performed at stipulated times to reinforce the political and religious status of the royal participants [...]. For that group of officials "ritual propriety" (礼) meant quite literally knowing one's place in the formalities and thus knowing where to stand" (Ames 2021, p. 90).

At the end of the Ming dynasty, this emphasis on external ritualism and mannerism grew to the point that the imperial power identified good government with palace etiquette and protocol (Ivanhoe 1990). This environment and the personal formation of Ricci and Ruggieri led them to the particular understanding and translation of *Rites* "Li 礼" that I showed above.

#### 4. Conclusion: "Good Manners" as a Partial Understanding

Both Ruggieri and the first Jesuits in China hoped to be able to use Confucius as Saint Augustine and the medieval theologians had used Aristotle or Plato<sup>9</sup>: to preserve the elements of natural truth and to use them to present the supernatural truth contained in Christian revelation (Canaris 2021).

In the mind of Ruggieri, the Confucian term Li 礼 in the *Analects* corresponds to the ancient Roman idea, especially the one of Stoic derivation transmitted by Cicero, of self-control and correct interpersonal relationships in conformity with natural law.

The word *Li* 礼 was therefore translated by Ruggieri basically with Latin words meaning “proper social behavior”, “good manners”, and “temperance in relationship”.

According to this first translation, for him, the Confucian “rites” were surely a complex reality but not so different from the ancient Western tradition and mentality. More importantly, they did not seem an obstacle to the acceptance of the Gospel but an expression of the search for a good moral life, which is common to all mankind.

Since their arrival, both Ruggieri and the other missionaries had to learn how to express proper respect to various Chinese authorities. This was their first understanding of the word *Li* 礼: not worshipping acts of a pagan religion but good manners and virtuous behaviors not so different from the Roman ones.

In his *History of the Introduction of Christianity in China*, written toward the end of his life, Ricci also insists on the following: “In his sayings and his good life Confucius is not any less than our ancient philosophers, and even better than some of them”<sup>10</sup>.

In the *Analects*, *Li* 礼 indicates the correctness in interpersonal relationships that gives meaning to life. In the juridical and civil tradition, it indicated the etiquette of the protocol, the outward behavior. The Confucian intellectuals themselves, once converted, knew the difference between the moral and social Confucian *rites*, to be preserved, and those “rites” of a more religious or superstitious nature, unacceptable to a Christian<sup>11</sup>.

James L. Hevia, an expert on the Western approach to Chinese culture, explains how in China, every public gathering, even at the lowest level, is regulated by a series of bodily expressions that manifest the hierarchy and relationships between the participants (Hevia 1995). In China, the distinction between form and substance is different than in the Western tradition. Ceremonies are not only a sign of the role in the hierarchy, but they are the hierarchy itself in action. The rigorous precision with which China’s national authorities enter the public arena is not just an external sign of power. It is power in action. *Rituals* are the way of accepting, or questioning, the social order represented by the hierarchy.

An example is the famous MacCartney embassy, which happened two hundred years after Ruggieri. The British envoy refused to follow the “rites” of the court, negotiations broke down, and the premises for a pretext for the future Opium War between China and England were laid (Hevia 1995, p. 73).

However, there is more in the concept of *Li* 礼, something that was not fully recognized during the first encounter, something that one hundred years later, led to heated debates and painful consequences.

The more the Jesuits and other missionaries understood the complexity and variety of “Confucianism”, the more this tradition became not so easy to reconcile with the Christian faith.

“Anyone familiar with either the Confucian rites or the Shinto rites of Japan knows how difficult, if not impossible, is to describe them as “purely secular”. “In contrast to the earlier insistence right up to 1939 on the distinction between secular and religious rites, we have a clear acknowledgment that “other religions to be found everywhere strive variously to answer the restless searching of the human heart”.

The American philosopher Herbert Fingarette in his *The Secular as Sacred* (Fingarette 1972), says that rituals (“Li-礼”) play a central role in Confucius’s thinking not only because of their social significance but also because of their religious or spiritual significance. According to Fingarette, Confucius believed that the characteristics of humans which make us different from animals have an almost magical quality. This quality is most pronounced as it relates to *Li* 礼, which is a term similar to holy ritual or sacred ceremony. *Li* 礼 involves the respect of others and sublime patterns of behavior for mourning, marrying, fighting, and being a prince, a father, a son, and so on. Professor Fingarette describes *Li* 礼 as something that captures the essence of what makes us human and the deep response that provokes.

He emphasizes that the starting point of the moral reflection of Confucianism is not the centrality of the individual but of society (Fingarette 1972, p. 71). The dignity of the

individual does not come to him, as in the Judeo-Christian tradition, from being created by God, but from being part of this great incarnation of the *Dao* which are the *Rites Li* 礼 (Fingarette 1972, p. 76). Man is transformed by participation in the collective ceremonies that make up his daily life. Until he conforms to them, he is not really a full man but something different, like a newborn child, a wolf-boy grown up in the forest, or a barbarian (Fingarette 1972, p. 77). In a world without a Creator, Confucian *Rites* are indeed a religious expression, a divinization of society.

For Roger Ames, *Li* 礼 expresses this movement towards “achieving ritual property in one’s own role and relations that works in complex ways to promote order and elegance in the communal living of irreducibly relational persons” (Ames 2021).<sup>12</sup> Confucian Rites, even in their religious meaning, are not a connection between the human and divine, as a bridge between two dimensions (Hall and Ames 1987). “The holistic, process cosmology that gives these Confucian texts their interpretative context is an inside without an outside” (Ames 2021, p. 86).

For Ruggieri, the Confucian Rites *Li* 礼 as they appear in the *Analects* are proper social behaviors, good manners. He never saw them as ways to reach God. They were either traditional virtues or, in some case, pagan religious acts of worshipping the ancestors. In both instances, they could be easily either accepted or rejected.

Ruggieri’s early Latin translations did not emphasize any controversial topics. His understanding of *Li* 礼 was partial and limited. They were nothing more than a Chinese version of the Roman classical virtues, perhaps with a taste of court etiquette and good manners.

The problems arose later. Why?

As long as “rites” were seen mostly as “good manners” and “moral virtues”—as in Ruggieri’s translation of the *Analects*—they were not a matter of contention.

The problem is that the “Confucian Rites” are more than good manners. This fact became visible during the “Rites Controversy”. Erik Zürcher says the following: “The main issue of the Rites Controversy [...] is the way in which Sinicized marginal religions of foreign origin adapted themselves to the central ideology of Confucianism” (Mungello 1989, p. 63).

Mungello says “On its most general level, the *Rites Controversy*, posed the question of whether it is necessary to change a culture in order to adopt a foreign religion. Specifically, it asked whether the Chinese who adopted Christianity also has to adopt Western culture” (Mungello 1994).

“In general terms this controversy hinged on the interpretation of the name of God and the rituals in honor of Confucius and the ancestors”.

The emphasis of contemporary scholars is on how Christianity tried to become “Chinese” (Standaert 2012). The envoys from Rome or some missionaries are sometimes described as “arrogant” because of their ignorance of Chinese traditions. As Collani wrote, “Maigrot’s influence was devastating in China. Until his time, the *Rites Controversy* had been a matter only between missionaries in China or some theologians in Rome. But with Tournon’s and Maigrot’s appearance at the Chinese court, the Kangxi emperor changed his favorable attitude towards the missionaries and became suspicious about the authorities in Rome” (Mungello 1994, p. 182). For Collani, Maigrot “clearly belonged to those fundamentalists in the Church who claimed that truth could be found only in Christianity and nowhere else” (Mungello 1994, p. 179). (This has never been the official position of the Catholic Church)<sup>13</sup>.

If Confucian Rites are simply not good manners, moral virtues, or court etiquette but claim to be a “way to Heaven”, this for Christians represents a problem.

The sinologists who study the meeting between Chinese traditions and the West sometimes do not take into account the fact that from a Christian point of view, the rituals (e.g., the Sacraments) are a tool by which God touches human life with His transforming grace. In the Catholic Christian faith, the form of the rite is both an instrument of grace and the sign of its visible presence. Thus, the Church handles the Sacraments with enormous rev-

erence. Who would dare to approach them without trembling? Who has the authority to change them—even slightly? Which Christian would dare to say with certainty which form of a ritual has the power or not to transmit God’s grace? Some “rites” had been instituted by Jesus himself to communicate grace to men.

Since the 1960s, scholars have recognized that in Chinese tradition, there is no absolute dualism of the transcendent and mundane. For some people, different rites might be different ways to reach the same God or different gods. For some, they are ancient religious expressions’ fruit of a human psyche refusing to accept that there is no God. For some, they are just unique magnificent cultural traditions. For some, they are the proper ways of living in a society.

But Ruggieri lived at the end of the 16th century. For him, the Chinese expression later often translated with the English word “rites” had no relation with the one and only true God. The “rites” were either “good manners”, simply human acts, or pagan rites addressed to false gods.

Only later, with a deeper understanding of the complexity of the issue, the Christian missionaries faced the tough challenge—and source of certain controversy—of discerning whether God might work or manifest Himself through rituals different than those established by Christ.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For the Latin text, I refer to (Ferrero 2019). Since that manuscript bears the head-title *A P. Michaele Rogerio collecta*, which means “material collected by Father Michele Ruggieri”, I do not deal here with the issue of Matteo Ricci’s involvement in the translation. Ruggieri, because of his studies of Law, had better Latin than Ricci, who, though of course knew it well, preferred to write in Italian (for example, his *Diaries* was written in Italian and translated in Latin by Trigault). Most evidence points to the missionaries working together. My opinion is that the understanding of the meaning of the Chinese texts comes from both missionaries and their Chinese teachers, but the Latin text comes from Ruggieri. So, for the background of the Latin terminology, it is correct to focus on Ruggieri’s formation. See (Ferrero 2019, p. 9), esp. Note 10. See also (Meynard 2019).
- <sup>2</sup> “Sacramental gestures make God’s salvific action present in human history”, *Gestis Verbisque*, Introduction, (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith 2 February 2024).
- <sup>3</sup> It is interesting to notice that the Latin word “ritus”, which Ruggieri does not use here, actually comes from a Sanskrit sound meaning “order” (see Oxford English Dictionary). In the Catholic Church, the ritual of the Mass is called “Ordo Missae”.
- <sup>4</sup> “Whatever is dictated by the teacher ought to be directed as much as possible to the imitation of Cicero About the Jesuits’ *Ratio Studiorum* see also (Hinz et al. 2004).
- <sup>5</sup> From 1502 to 1647, the Kingdom of Napoli was part of the Spanish kingdom under a Spanish “viceroy”.
- <sup>6</sup> The “*ratio studiorum*” is a collection of various prescriptive texts concerning the organization of the colleges that the Society of Jesus opened in the middle years of the sixteenth century. It began with different local editions around 1550 and was finally unified in 1591. For a detailed history of the “ratio” see M. ZANARDI, La «Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu»: tappe e vicende della sua progressiva formazione (1541–1616), in *Annali di storia dell’educazione*, 1998, 5, pp. 135–64.
- <sup>7</sup> See also the book review by M. CATTO, in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 89 (2020) 178/2, 641–42. See also D’ARELLI Francesco, “Il codice Fondo Gesuitico (3314) 1185 della Biblioteca Nazionale V. Emanuele II di Roma e la critica storica”, in: *Studi in onore di Lionello Lanciotti*, vol. I, Napoli 1996, pp. 477 s.; IDEM, “Michele Ruggieri S.I., l’apprendimento della lingua cinese e la traduzione latina dei Si shu (Quattro Libri): in: *Annali dell’Università degli studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”*. Rivista del Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici e del Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi, 1994 (54/4). pp. 479–87. IDEM,

“Matteo Ricci S.I. e la traduzione latina dei ‘Quattro libri’ (Si shu): Dalla tradizione storiografica alle nuove ricerche,” in Francesco D’Arelli (ed.), *Le Marche e l’Oriente: Una tradizione ininterrotta da Matteo Ricci a Giuseppe Tucci* Roma, Istituto italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, 1998, pp. 163–75.

<sup>8</sup> One clear and brief presentation of Confucianism can be found in YAO, Hsin-Zhong, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000. See also (Fung 1952; Filippini 1964).

<sup>9</sup> See for example BORTONE, F., *P. Matteo Ricci Il saggio d’Occidente, op. cit.*, p. 420; H. BERNARD, *Sagesse Chinoise et Philosophie Chrétienne. Essai sur leurs relations historiques*. Hautes Etudes, Tientsin, 1935, esp. p. 107; L. SHERLEY-PRICE, *Confucius and Christ. A Christian Estimate of Confucius*. The Philosophical Library, New York, 1951; J. CHING, *Confucianism and Christianity. A Comparative Study*. Kodausha International, Tokyo, 1977; K.T. Paul SIH, *From Confucius to Christ*, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1952; N. STANDAERT, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China. His Life and Thought*, E.T. Brill, Leiden, 1988. For a different perspective see also (Chin 1981).

<sup>10</sup> “[Confucius] in quello che disse e nel suo buon modo di vivere conforme alla natura, non è inferiore ai nostri antichi filosofi, eccedendo a molti” FR I, 55.

<sup>11</sup> The 1939 Vatican Decree *Plane compertum* recognizes that Confucian rites are civil ceremonies, but it is very limited insofar as it addresses only the particular rituals in schools towards Confucius’s images or ancestors, without touching its deeper philosophical implications.

<sup>12</sup> Ames, Roger T. 2021. *A Conceptual Lexicon for Classical Confucian Philosophy*. Beijing: The Commercial Press, p. 86. “Hall and Ames’s view of Confucian ritual practice may be likened to the improvisation of jazz musicians. [it is not] a mechanistic rule-following” VAN NORDER B. (ed.), *Confucius and the Analects. New essays*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> “Whatever is true, by whoever is said, comes from God” (*Omne verum, a quocumque dicatur, a Spiritu Sancto est*) Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 8.

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