



## **The Jesuit Reading of Confucius**

*The First Complete Translation of the  
Lunyu (1687) Published in the West*

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## Acknowledgments

From 1999 to 2003, while still a young Jesuit in training, I studied Chinese philosophy at Peking University. One day, I received an unexpected request from an academic research center: to translate some Latin texts edited by Leibniz into Chinese. Later on, I was even more surprised to find out that these texts had been written in China by the Jesuits more than three hundred years ago. While these kinds of texts are important for the history of the transmission and influence of Chinese thought in the West, most of them are only available in Latin. In 2003, I started to read the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, in particular, the Latin version of the *Daxue*. First at Fordham University, New York, and then at Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, I prepared a trilingual edition of the *Daxue* and commentaries in Chinese, Latin, and English. I also translated the preface of *Sinarum Philosophus*, which provides the first systematic account for a Western audience of the different schools of Chinese philosophy. This was published in 2011 as *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687): The First Translation of the Confucian Classics*, by the Institutum historicum Societatis Iesu in Rome.

From 2009, I began to study the Latin version of the *Lunyu*, a much longer text than the *Daxue*. Two students in Latin from Poznań University visited Sun Yat-sen University and helped me with the translation of some parts of the Latin text: Maria Karnowska worked on chapters 13 and 14, and Otylia Stefańska on chapters 8, 15, and 19. For a couple of years, I offered Latin classes for students at Sun Yat-sen University based on the Latin version of the *Lunyu*, and I benefited a great deal from these class discussions. Wang Ge 王格, a doctoral student at Sun Yat-sen University, read my entire translation and notes, and made very useful comments on how the Jesuit translation of the *Lunyu* fitted with the traditional interpretation of the text in China and also how it brought some new perspectives to the text.

In February 2010, at the invitation of Professor Anne Cheng, I gave a lecture at College de France, entitled “The First Translation of the *Lunyu* (La première traduction des *Entretiens*).” I subsequently published two papers derived from this lecture, one in 2010 in English and Chinese in *Chinese Cross-Currents*, Macao, and another published in 2011 in *Etudes Chinoises*, Paris. Marye Moran and Alexandra Hawkins helped in polishing the English text.

I obtained a digital document of an early version of the translation of the *Lunyu* from Giuseppe Portogallo, Fondazione Intorcetta, which I was able to compare with the text of *Sinarum Philosophus*. On the basis of my English translation of the “Life of Confucius,” which has already been published in my