Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and the many Jesuit priests who followed Matteo Ricci’s lead pursued a policy of cooperation with the scholar-officials, the educated Confucians, of China. Ricci did not cooperate merely on a political level; on the contrary, he attempted to harmonize the Confucian intellectual and cultural heritage of China with the religious claims of European Christianity. In the process he played a key role in introducing not only Western European Catholic Civilization to China, but also Chinese Confucian civilization to Western Europe. His ‘pre-evangelical dialogue’ Tianzhushiyi and many other books introduced various aspects of European culture in addition to its religion, including the philosophies of Aristotle and Epictetus and European science and geographical knowledge. Equally important, the Latin translation of his journals, Storia dell’Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina,\(^2\) provided some of the first solid information concerning China that Europeans had yet received.\(^3\) This new information concerning China and Confucius introduced into Europe by the Jesuits was to play a significant cultural role in the Enlightenment, attracting the interest of such anti-clerical intellectuals as Hume and Voltaire.\(^4\) Unfortunately, the Latin translation of the Storia, De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas Suscepta ab Societate Jesu (Henceforth to be referred to as De Christiana) by another Jesuit, Nicholas Trigault (1577-1628), did not follow Ricci’s original very closely at all. On the contrary, Trigault changed a fair number of details to attract European support for the Jesuit mission in China and their accommodationist method. This is especially noticeable in his translation of the descriptions of the Confucian scholar-officials, or literati, in which he idealizes the literati and emphasizes the positive elements of their characters.

The influence new knowledge concerning China had on Western literature is well known. Through the writings on China by the Jesuits, writers and thinkers of the Enlightenment gained knowledge, and often
respect, for Confucius and Confucianism. For instance, Voltaire saw in Confucius an example of a thinker who “established a religion which consists of being just.” He claimed that Confucius was “not by any means a prophet, he by no means spoke through inspiration, he knew of no inspiration other than continual attention to overcoming his desires” (Song 154). He classed Confucius with Epicurus, Socrates and Cicero (Song 171). He disputed the claim, made by many, that Confucius was an atheist, and, in fact, associated Confucius’s religious ideas with his own — that is, he saw in the Tian or ‘Heaven’ of Confucius “the eternal judge” of his own deistic ideas. He understood the Chinese religion to be free of “superstitions, absurd legends, and those dogmas which insult reason and nature” (Song 173). Hume, also, in his Essays, was to describe the literati of China as “the only regular body of deists in the universe.” (Part I, Essay X. page 78 in Miller’s edition) Concerning Chinese government, the English author Robert Burton used the example of the meritocratic Confucian literati to satirize the hereditary nobility of Europe and especially England: unlike the elite of England, the literati of China were actually required to work and be qualified for their positions of respect (Fan 74).

To what extent did this vision of a peaceable kingdom of deists develop on account of Ricci? Of course, Ricci has an important place in the history of publication of books on China and Confucianism. His Storia was a document of immense value. It was written by Ricci near the end of his life (Foss 3), after he had spent many years in Chinese society. As Ricci says of himself:

... già trenta anni viviamo in questo regno, discorrissimo per le sue più nobili e principali provincie, trattiamo continuamente in ambedue le Corti i più principali e grandi magistrati e letterati del regno, parliamo la loro lingua, e imparassimo molto di proposito i loro riti e costumi, e finalmente, quello che più importa, di giorno e di notte, habbiamo nelle mani i loro libri. (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. I, N. 3)

[... we have lived more than thirty years in this kingdom, have traveled through its most honorable and important provinces, have dealt, continuously, in the two courts [Beijing and Nanjing], with the most important magistrates and intellectuals of the kingdom, we speak their language, have learned very earnestly their rites and customs, and finally, what is most important, have their books in our hands day and night.]

However, the Storia itself was not read until Tacchi Venturi published them at the beginning of the 20th Century (D’Elia CXLIII). The version
to be propagated in Europe was not the Italian one written by Ricci, but the Latin translation by the Belgian priest Nicolas Trigault.

While for the most part Trigault simply translated Ricci’s Italian text into Latin, he significantly changed a large number of details, in the process increasing the praise of Confucius and the Confucian literati. He undertook this task despite the fact that, having only been in China for two years, he was not very knowledgeable (Foss 8). Trigault’s motivation was not that of a scholar so much as that of a propagandist. As Lamalle points out, Trigault, following the commands of his superior Nicolò Longobardo (1565-1655), spent the period between 1615 and 1617 traveling through Europe trying to gain financial support, acquire books and presents for the emperor, recruit new missionaries and negotiate greater autonomy (Lamalle 50, 65, 71, 73). He was, moreover, extremely successful as a propagandist, gaining a great deal of practical support as a result of his tour of Europe (Lamalle 50). Trigault’s translation of the *Storia* should be seen from this perspective. According to Foss, Trigault’s reworking of the text was never intended “as a simple translation of a work on China; it was to be a carefully wrought propaganda piece which was to serve as an example of and plea for the Christian mission in China”(13). Especially, he aimed to create a book which was “sympathetic to the Chinese, laudatory of the Jesuits and full of direct and indirect appeals for help” (Foss 13). A detailed analysis of the text reveals many such propagandist elements. As Foss points out, Trigault omits Ricci’s descriptions of concubinage, prostitution, and pederasty as found in China (Foss 15, *Storia* Lib. I, Cap. IX, NN. 154-156). Foss suggests that the reason for this omission was Trigault’s desire not to slur the reputation of Chinese society “the reputation of which he was trying to build”(15). Thus, Europeans received their first accurate picture of China and of the Chinese literati, not directly from Ricci, a man who had been in China for thirty years, but filtered and altered by Trigault.

The literati of Trigault and Ricci were, of course, the Confucian scholar-officials of China. Ricci called, in fact, Confucianism the ‘Sect of the Literati’. (*Legge de Letterati*, *Storia* Lib. I, Cap. X, NN. 175) In this he was, one might argue, providing a better translation of the Chinese *Rajjiao* than the term ‘Confucianism’ used by modern scholars. As Ching says, the Chinese themselves generally refer to Confucianism as *Rajja* or *Rajjiao*, “the school or teachings of the scholars” (Küng and Ching, 65). The Chinese had their own examples of idealized literati, not only Confucius (552-479 BCE), but many others as well, including the Yin dynasty (1711?-1066? BCE) literatus Boyi, who preferred death to serving under the new Zhou dynasty.
The reason for Ricci’s great interest in, and regard for, these Chinese literati was not a desire to establish an example of a dogma-free society and ideology for the anti-clerical philosophers of the 18th century. While presumably he sincerely believed that Confucianism and Christianity were compatible, his interest must also have been spurred by the practical need of a missionary to accommodate the religious ideas of Europe with the social system of China, and, especially, to insure that the new mission remained on good terms with the scholar-officials of China. As Ching says, “It was a calculated move, made for reasons of expediency as well as convictions” (13).

He and the Jesuits after him were able to accommodate Confucianism because of their belief in natural theology. Natural theology, “or the knowledge that man can have of the existence of the nature of God by means of reason” had gained new importance with the age of discovery, becoming “a real issue in trying to present Catholicism to millions of people outside of Europe” (Witek 311). The Jesuits, who at times referred to such pagan European philosophers as Seneca and Epictetus as saints, and to Socrates as a martyr (Spalatin 72), had an especially strong orientation towards natural theology. So it is was with Ricci who, although he was very critical of Neo-Confucianism, argued that the Confucians of ancient China had, through the light of reason, come closer to the truth than any other pagan nation. Thus, in the first chapter of the Storia, Ricci says:

Di Tutte le gentilità venute a notizia della nostra Europa non so di nessuna che avesse manco errori intorno alle cose della religione di quello che ebbe la Cina nella sua prima antichità. ... Di dove si può sperare dalla immensa bontà del Signore, che molti di quegli antichi si salvassero nella legge naturale, con quello agiuto particolare che suole Iddio porgere, a quegli che di sua parte fanno quanto possono per riceverlo. (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. X, N. 170)

[Of all the peoples to have come into contact with Europe, none have committed as few errors in religious matters as the Chinese ... From which we must hope that, through the immense goodness of the Lord, many of the ancients found salvation through natural law, which special aid God provides to those who do what they can to receive it.]

Indeed, Ricci, working from the position that Confucius had successfully used the light of reason to arrive at the truth, was able to use the authority of Confucius to criticize Buddhists, Taoists and Neo-Confucianists. Thus, in the Tianzhushiyi, Ricci often refers to the authority of
Confucius. For instance, as a reason for rejecting the concept of *Taijì*, he uses the fact that Confucius did not mention it (II: 77). He also quotes a large number of Confucian classics that do mention a being who to Ricci seems similar to the personal God of the Christians (II: 105).

The pagan philosopher whom the Jesuits were more accustomed to quoting was, of course, Aristotle, especially as reworked by Thomas Aquinas. The Jesuits had received from Thomas Aquinas, by way of Ignatius Loyola, a devotion to natural theology (Simmons 523) and the belief that “grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it” (Witek 311). Ricci, in fact, was very critical of the Chinese ignorance of logic, yet he attempted to introduce, where he could, the logical method of Aristotle to refute the errors which, in his opinion, had crept into Neo-Confucian thought. Thus, in the *Tianzhushiyi*, he does not rely on the authority of the Bible but on the logical arguments of Aristotle and Aquinas (for instance, I: 45). This devotion is also evident in his debate with the minister of the idols as recounted in the *Storia*. There, in response to the Buddhist philosopher Sanhoai (Huang Sanhuai, 1545-1608), who had quoted Buddhist scripture to refute Ricci’s theories on human nature, Ricci says that, since they do not share the same scriptures, any argument which they have must be based on reason and not on authority.

In fact, although Ricci is critical of Neo-Confucianism he is generally quite positive about the literati. Especially, he compares the Confucians to the West’s own pagan philosophers. Matteo Ricci had, during his time in China, identified Confucians with various philosophical schools of classical Europe, including the Epicureans and the Stoics (Spalatin 52). His identification of Confucianism with the pagan philosophers of classical antiquity begins with his understanding of Confucius himself. Confucius, he claims, was at least the equal of, if not superior to, the great classical philosophers. Thus he says:

Il magiore filosofo che ha tra loro è il Confutio, che nacque cinquecento e cinquantadue anni inanzi alla venuta del Signore al mondo, e visse più di settanta anni asai buona vita, insegnando con parole, opre, e scritti, questa nazione. Laonde da tutti è tenuto e venerato per il più *santo* huomo che mai fusse nel mondo. E nel vero, in quello che disse e nel suo buon modo di vivere conforme alla natura, non è inferiore ai nostri antichi filosofi, escedendo a molti. (*Storia*, Lib. I, Cap. V, N. 55)

[The greatest philosopher among them is Confucius, who was born five hundred and fifty-one before the coming of the Lord to the
Earth, and lived for more than 70 years a very good life, teaching, in word, deed and writings, this nation. For this reason he is considered by all to be the most holy person ever to have existed in the world. And in truth, what he says concerning the good way of life conforms to nature, and is not inferior to our ancient philosophers, and is better than many of them.]

Later, he also says of Confucius that, “ne’ ragionamenti e dispute che [Ricci] soventemente faceva, tutto era impugnar le due sette degli idoli, non toccando, anzi lodando la setta de’ letterati et il suo autore Confuzo, il quale, non sapendo delle cose dell’altra vita,9 solo aveva dato dottrina del modo del ben vivere in questa presente, e governare e conservare in pace il regno e la repubblica” (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. VII, N. 555). [In the discussions and disputes which he [Ricci] often had, the two idolatrous sects [Buddhism and Taoism] were attacked. However, he did not attack, in fact, he praised the sect of the literati and their founder Confucius who, not knowing about the next life, only provided doctrines concerning the means to lead a good life, and to govern peacefully a kingdom or a state, in this life.]

Ricci implies the same high moral standard in his discussions of the Confucian magistrates of China. Thus he praises the “subordination which a low-ranked magistrate shows to a high ranked magistrate;”10 His praise of the Chinese government can sometimes seem overblown to the modern ear. Thus he praises foot-binding, a custom later to horrify westerners, as an institution “presumably discovered by some wise man.”11

Infact, he describes China as nation ruled by philosophers:

Prima di dire del governo della Cina è necessario che dichiarmi qualche cosa delle sue lettere e gradi che in esse si danno, per essere la parte più principale del suo governo, et un modo in che sono diversissimi di tutte le altre nationi del mondo. E se di questo regno non si può dire che i filosofi sono re, almeno con verità si dirà che i re sono governati da’ filosofi. (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. V. N. 50)

[“Before speaking of the government of China it is necessary to say something concerning the their literary culture, and of the academic degrees which they confer. For this is the most important part of their government and is handled in a way completely different from all other nations in the world. And if one may not say, concerning this kingdom, that the philosophers are kings, at least one may say with truth that the kings are governed by the philosophers.”]

Thus Ricci connects the philosopher kings, imagined by Plato as the rulers of his ideal republic, with the actual ruling class of the Chinese government.
It is here that significant differences with Trigault become apparent. This high praise for the literati, and this comparison of the literati with the Greek and Roman philosophers, becomes even more pronounced in Trigault’s translation. Especially to be noted is Trigault’s use of the word ‘philosopher’ to describe Chinese scholar-officials, even where Ricci writes ‘literati’. He, of course, maintains the use of philosopher in Ricci’s comment that the philosophers govern the kings of China. However, he adds the word in a number of other places. This can be seen in their discussions of the famous precept that a chaste woman does not marry two husbands and a loyal official does not serve two kings. Ricci says:

Et è detto de’ letterati che dice: “la buona donna non è moglie di doi mariti, et il buon vassallo non serve a doi Signori.” (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. VI, N. 79)

[There is a saying of the literati that “a good woman does not become the wife of two husbands, and the good vassal does not serve two lords.”]

Trigault translates this as:

Etenim apud Sinenses Philosophos celebre dictu: Matrona casta duos nescit Maritos; nec fidelis cliens duos Dominos. (44)

[For there is a famous saying among the Chinese philosophers: “A chaste woman does not know two husbands, nor a loyal vassal two lords.”]

This translating of Ricci’s letterati with philosophi occurs repeatedly in the text. Thus in his description of the government of China, Ricci says:

Tutto il regno si governa per letterati, come di sopra ho detto, et in essi sta il vero e misto imperio … E da qui viene che nessuno huomo di animo virile si dà alle armi, e più tosto vuolo essere piccolo mandarino di lettere che di arme. (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. VI, N. 111)

[The whole kingdom is governed by the literati, as I said above, and with them lies true and comprehensive authority. … As a result of this no man of virile spirit devotes himself to arms, but would much rather be a minor literary mandarin than a military one.]

This passage Trigault renders as:

Alterum quoque notatu dignissimum, universum regnum, ut supra dixi, a suis Philosophis administrari, & in ijs merum mistumque imperium reperiri. … Hinc fit, ut ex ijs qui altos spiritus alunt, nemo ad res bellicas animum adjungat, & ad infimas potius Philosophici

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senatus dignitates aspiret, quam ad maximos in re bellica Magistratus. (De Christiana 59)

[Another point that is very much worthy of note is that the entire kingdom, as was said above, is administered by the philosophers, and with them lies pure and comprehensive rule. ... As a result, no [Chinese man] of ambition devotes himself to the arts of war, but would rather be the lowest of the Philosophical senate than the most important military magistrate.]

Considerable overlap can be assumed in the meaning of the two words. The education of Europe at that time was tilted more towards philosophy than it is at present. Certainly this is true of Jesuit education (Simmons 522). Nevertheless, by emphasizing the role of philosophers as the rulers of the Chinese, Trigault creates the impression of China as the utopian republic described by Plato. Ricci is not innocent in this matter either. As quoted above, he did speak of the philosophers of China governing its kings. Nevertheless, by preferring the less charged word letterati to filosofi he creates a less idealistic image of Chinese society than does Trigault.

This image of the literati appears again in Ricci's description of the conflicts between Buddhists and Christians, in which Christians are generally shown to be on the side of the Confucians. Thus Ricci, in his description of his famous debate with Sanhoai, describes a high official criticizing a distinguished proponent of Buddhism:

Questo ... si adirò avanti a tutti molto grandemente, gritando che era una vergogna, essendo loro tutti Cinesi et allevati nella scuola del letterati e del Confuzo, che avessero poi ardire di confutare il Confuzo e seguir la dottrina degli idoli, che sono forastieri. Del che aveva udito che stava stupito il grande letterato forastiero, il Signor Sithai (chè così chiamano al P. Matteo per nome grande) Ricci, il quale ingrandiva la dottrina del Confuzo, e diceva pubblicamente esser falsa la dottrina degli idoli, e che nelle parti di ponente erano assai puochi, e gente vile, quei che seguivano quella setta. (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. VII. N. 557)

[He [the high official] advanced in front of all very grandly, complaining that it was a great shame, with everyone there Chinese and educated in the school of the literati and Confucius, that he [the Buddhist] should dare to refute Confucius and to follow the doctrine of the idolaters, who were [originally] foreigners. He had heard that the great foreign literatus, Mr. Sithai (the courtesy-name of Matteo Ricci) Ricci, was greatly astonished by this, in as much as Ricci greatly encouraged the doctrine of Confucius, and openly}
claimed that the doctrine of the idols was false, and said that in the West there were a very small number of worthless people who were believers of that sect.]

Trigault follows Ricci in this description of the conflict between the Buddhists and the literati. However, he changes the emphasis considerably. In his version the high official says that Matteo Ricci is much to be admired since people say that he himself proclaims the doctrine of Confucius and fights against the delirium of the idol worshipers which those foreigners had already completely obliterated from their kingdom.\footnote{While the general meaning is similar, here Trigault adds more explicitly the sense of admiration by the high official for Ricci and increases the negative opinion concerning Buddhism by calling it "the delirium of the idolaters."}\footnote{This contrast in their approach can also be seen in their descriptions of the suicide of the Buddhist philosopher Liciou (Li Zhuowu, 1527-1602). Ricci and Trigault both recount the story of an early encounter of Ricci with Liciou (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. X). There Ricci describes the good treatment he received from this man, who was a friend of a magistrate of great standing, and the hopes Ricci had of converting him to Christianity. Finally he describes Liciou’s suicide, which frustrated those hopes:}

Percioché, avendo un mandarino dato contro lui e sue opere un memoriale al Re molto acre, il Re lo mandò a pigliare et abbrusciare tutte le sue opere; e lui, vedendosi preso e fatto scherno da’ suoi adversarij, non volendo morire per mano della guistitia o, quello che lo mosse più, volendo mostrare a’ suoi discepoli, adversarij et a tutto il mondo, che egli non aveva paura della morte, si amazzò di questo modo e diede fine alla pretensione degli adversarij. (N. 580)

[For, because a mandarin harshly memorialized to the King against him [Liciou] and his works, the King demanded that his writings be all seized and destroyed. He [Liciou], seeing himself caught and shamed by his enemies, and not wanting to die at the command of the courts, or, what stirred him more, desiring to show to his students, enemies and to the whole world that he had no fear of death, killed himself and put an end to the aims of his enemies.]

Later, in Ricci’s discussion of the persecution of the idolaters, Liciou is mentioned once more, this time campaigning on behalf of the idolaters (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. XVI, N. 635). His suicide is also described, though somewhat more negatively:
Venne quest'uomo preso a Pachino e molto pauroso. E vedendosi così disprezzato nella sua vecchiezza, per esser di più di settanta anni, nella stessa prigione, inanzi al ricevere nessun castigo, con un coltello egli stesso si scannò e morìtte, togliendosi delle mani de' suoi inimici così miseramente.

[This man came to Beijing full of fear. And seeing himself so despised in his old age, (for he was more than 70 years old) he, rather than receive any punishment, cut his own throat in his prison cell. Thus he miserably escaped from the hands of his enemies.]

While the first description puts emphasis on the courage of Liciou in the face of death and the second describes the event as a sad death of an old man, the two passages do not actually give contradictory accounts. This is not true of Trigault’s translations of the two passages. In the first of them Trigault puts a positive slant on the suicide, but in the second a negative one. Thus, in the first passage he describes the suicide much as does Ricci, but adds that Liciou had wanted to show his disciples “a rare example among the Chinese.” In the second passage, he is much more negative:

Venit igitur non timide solum, sed & ignominiose: cuius sensum augebat annorum supra septuaginta gravis actas. Ergo in ipsis vinculis se ipsum cultello iugulavit, doctram infamem infami morte claudens.

[He came then, not only frightened, but also in disgrace. This sense was increased by his great age of more than 70 years. Thus he slit his own throat while in chains, bringing and end to his infamous teachings with an infamous death, which he said was a noble way to die]

Trigault statement that Liciou had wanted to show a rare example among the Chinese is nonsense, for, as was mentioned earlier in the book in both Trigault’s and Ricci’s versions, suicide was not rare at all (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. IX, N. 158). In the second passage Trigault claims that “he brought an end to his infamous teachings with an infamous death.” Thus, the first passage, where Liciou is described as a potential convert and a friend of magistrates, Trigault gives an almost classical tinge to the suicide, reminding the reader of the death of Socrates or Thrasea Paeta. In the second passage, where Liciou’s religious views are more clearly presented, the suicide has become an infamous death, and Liciou is no longer an example to be imitated – rather, we are reminded of the generally hostile attitude of the Christian church at that time to suicide. One suspects that Trigault
was not aware that he was describing the same suicide, so different are his descriptions.

Ricci, in his description of conflicts with eunuchs, similarly emphasizes the unity between the Christians and the literati, and vilifies the corruption and violence of the eunuchs. Thus, in his account of the suffering he experienced at the hands of the eunuch Mathan (Matan), he describes the magistrate accompanying Mathan as being generally sympathetic to Ricci, even, at one stage, intervening on Ricci's behalf to prevent Mathan from stealing the communion chalice which Ricci had with him (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. XI, N.588). Ricci elsewhere describes in great detail the corrupt way in which the eunuchs collected the extra tax imposed after the war in Korea, and the principled opposition of the literati who, despite the danger of imprisonment and loss of position, bravely opposed the exactions of the eunuchs. Trigault keeps the references to the eunuchs, but once more exaggerates somewhat Ricci's original description. Thus, in his translation of Ricci's depiction in the introductory first book, he says: "Almost the whole administration of the kingdom is in the hands of these semimen." Ricci, though also providing an unflattering description of the eunuchs, does not use the insulting term 'semi-men'. Trigault, in his translation of the exactions of the eunuchs after the war in Korea, says that the tax "would have been tolerable, if the King had delegated the collecting of taxes to the magistrates, but he preferred to put his trust in the eunuchs. He delegated each province to two or three of the most powerful. ... The great eunuchs were kept on a loose leash, and were free from the magistrates, who always maintain moderation in such issues." Ricci's original makes no reference to the moderation of the magistrates.

A similar pattern can be seen when we compare Ricci's descriptions of the conflicts that did in fact occur between the literati and the Christians with Trigault's transformations. The two major conflicts mentioned in the Storia are the persecution of the Christians in Nanchino (Nanchang) instigated by the 'bachelors' and the attack on the city and priesthood of Macao by the Chinese magistrates. In the former, it is noteworthy that Trigault uses the diminutive to describe the literati (letteratuli) who began the campaign against the Catholics. Ricci does not use such a diminutive in his description of the attack against the Christian community, although he does emphasize the general support he received from the higher magistrates against the 'baccalaureates' (Storia, Lib. V, Cap. XIV). By the same token, although Ricci does mention in his description of the attack on Macao, that the magistrate in charge was a 'Saracen' or Muslim, he does not emphasize the fact. However, this point is considerably emphasized
by Trigault, who says of this instance that "of these magistrates was one who was by origin and by faith a Saracen. Many Tartars remained in China, who, after four generations were considered natives, and were not prevented from gaining literary degrees or holding public office. This man was an fomenter of evil, and he damaged the picture out of hatred of Christianity." 25 Here Trigault attempts to disassociate the literati and magistrates who oppose the Christians from the literati in general. The one group is described diminutively as 'minor literati', 'juvenile literati', that is to say, literati who have not achieved excellence in their creed and are reliably overruled by the higher magistrates. The magistrate who attacks the church in Macao is described, in great detail, as a 'Saracen', and it is suggested that it is primarily religious hatred of a Muslim for Christians that caused the uprising. The followers of the Confucian tradition, at least in so far as it is best represented, are not considered to be at fault. Ricci, although he does suggest a somewhat similar picture, does not paint the distinction nearly as clearly as does Trigault.

Ricci, of course, also greatly admired the Confucian literati of China. Although he did pursue this policy of accommodation for pragmatic reasons, it is also true that he had a respect for the literati and for Confucianism that originated from his humanistic, classical education. This admiration, however, did not include blindness to the faults of the literati. Trigault, as a propagandist, was very much concerned to raise the prestige of the Chinese ruling class. Thus "the literati" of Ricci become "the philosophers" of Trigault, "the magistrates who always administer the law with moderation." Thus, conflicts between the fledgling Christian community of China and the Confucian officials become, in Trigault, conflicts, not so much with the literati themselves, but with imperfect literati. Ricci's account of the Chinese scholar-officials is also fairly idealized – perhaps it too could have propagated in Europe the image of the literati that became popular in Europe during the enlightenment, had it been available. Yet, had they been able to read Ricci's Sthia in the original, and not Trigault's translation in De Christiana, Europeans would at least have received a significantly more balanced first account of Confucianism.

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NOTES

1 So is the book described by Douglas Lancashire & Peter Hu Kuochen in their introduction to The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (15).
2 The text used is that found in the Fonti Ricciani of Pasquale M. D'Elia. It will henceforth be referred to as Storia.

3 Ricciardolo points out that, after the early period of Marco Polo and the Franciscan chroniclers of Cathay, but before Ricci, there were a number of accounts of China by Iberian authors (26-27). Time did not permit me to consider these earlier accounts in any detail.

4 For instance, see Hsia, The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, and Pinot, La Chine et la Formation de l'Esprit Philosophique en France (1640-1740).

5 The term ru of Rujiao can, of course, be interpreted in different ways. See Jensen 53, 153-264.

6 “La scientia di che hebbero più notizia fu della morale; ma conciosiascosaché non sappino nessuna dialectica, tutto dicono e scrivono, non in modo scientifico, ma confuso, per varie sententie e discorsi, seguendo quanto col lume naturale potettero intendere” (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. V, N. 55).

7 “Il Padre disse che egli non credeva quella sua dottrina, e che egli ben potrebbe allegare altre autorità della dottrina e lege del suo Dio, e che non allegava per esser quel giorno la disputa fondata in ragione e non in autorità” (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. VII, N. 559).

8 Gallagher, translating Trigault, renders the two previous sentences as “His self-mastery and abstemious way of life have led his countrymen to assert that he surpassed in holiness all those who in times past, in the various parts of the world, were considered to have excelled in virtue” (30). This differs considerably from Ricci’s version, of course, and the comments “self-mastery and abstemious way of life” are absent from the edition of Trigault to which I had access. Trigault renders this sentence as “ex qua vivendi ratione consectus est apud Sinas, ut mortales omnes quotquot ubique terrarum virtute praestiterunt, vitae sanctimonia excessisse credatur” (29). Whether this is a result of Gallagher using a different edition of Trigault’s text, or whether it is, in fact, a result of mistranslation by Gallagher, I do not know.

9 Presumably based on Anales 11 (Xianjin): 12. “Jilu asked about serving spirits. The master said: ‘You cannot yet serve people. How can you serve spirits?’ ‘May I ask about death?’ ‘You do not yet know life, how can you know death?’”

10 “La grande subordinazione che un magistrato inferiore tiene al suo superiore, e quelli fuori della Corte ai curiali, et tutti insieme al loro Re” (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. V, N. 111). Here Trigault differs significantly, in that he weakens somewhat the sense of hierarchy by translating subordinationem through symmetria. (De Christiana 60: “Non minos admiranda est Magistratum inter se ipse superiorum ac inferiorum symmetria; sive Provincialium cum Curialibus, & horum cum ipse Rege.”)

11 “Le donne sono tutte piccole e la maggior parte della loro leggiadria pongono nei piedi piccoli. Per questa causa dalla loro fanciullezza gli infasciano strettamente i piedi e non gli lasciano crescere, e così sono tutte stroppiate si può dire
de' piedi, andano sino alla morte con quelle fascie, e non possono ben camminare se non come zoppicando; e pare fu inventione de qualche savio huomo per non lasciarle andare per le strade e starsene in casa, come alle donne più conviene” (Storia, Lib. I, Cap. VIII, N. 137).

12 “Ac tamen huic regno Philosophi non imperent, dici tamen debit Reges ipsos à Philosophis gubernari” (De Christiana, 25).

13 “externus ille litteratus Matthaeus Riccius admirari ferebatur quem etiam aiebant Confutii doctrinam praedicare, & idolorum deliria impugnare quae iam dudum ipsi advenae e suorum regno exterminassent” (De Christiana 372).

14 To this it may be added that Trigault considerably altered the last line of the above passage. Perhaps he misunderstood Ricci’s reference to “pari di ponente,” and imagined that the west meant “Europe” and that thus Ricci’s comment that in the West “a few vile people followed” Buddhism was incorrect. “Parti di ponente” refers, as d’Elia points out, to India (74 note 4), which was, in fact, referred to in Chinese as being in the xijun or ‘region of the west.’

15 “Il giorno seguente fu il P. Matteo a visitarlo più formalmente di quello che aveva fatto la prima volta, portandogli un presente di cose di nostra terrra, che egli mai aveva visto. Per questo restò assai contento, e lo tenne là, con suoi figliuoli e il Liciou, tutto il giorno con tanta amorevolezza, che parve al Padre non stare nel fine del mondo e nel mezzo della gentilità, ma in Europa tra christiani molto amici e devoti” (N. 578).

16 “Speravano i Padri pagare dipoi a questo Vicerè et al Liciou questa buona accoglienza e volontà con procurar dipoi, con qualche buona occasione, di instituirli nelle cose della nostra Sante Fede” (N.580).

17 “Aut quod professus erat discipulis suis raro apud Sinenses exemplo ostendere voluit, se nullo mortis menu perturbari: atque ita adversarios suos de ignominiosa morte sollicitos ca cura liberavit.” (394).

18 “Non mancorno i mandarini d ambe le Corti di dar memoriali al Re, avisandolo primo di tutto quello che nel regno accascava et il pericolo evidente di qualche grande tumulto, come già vi era in alcune parti. E, vedendo che il Re non faceva caso di questo, lo reprendevano molto liberamente. E fuora delle Corti alcuni de’magistrati cominciarono a resistere alle ingiustitez degli eunuchi. Ma il Re, avendo già cominciato a ostare di tante migliaia di scuti che gli entrava a ogni passo nel palazzo, si messe a proseguire questo negotio, castigando acerbamente quei che lo reprendevano e resistevano agli eunuchi. Con il che persero molti i loro offiti, et altri furon fatti venir prigioni a Pacchino, dove stettero parecchi anni assai incommodamente” (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. VIII, N. 560).

19 “Quin imo tota fere Regni administrando in horum semivirorum manibus versatur” (98). See Gallagher. 87.

20 “Tutti i servitori ... si può dire governano questo regno, sono eunuchi” (Storia Lib. I, Cap. IX, N. 160).

21 “Id tolerabile fuisse, si Rex ad hoc tributum exigendum Magistratus
adhibuisset, sed maluit Eunuchis fidere, è quibus duos tresve primarios in singulas Provincias admantavit, quos alij comitati sunt auctoritate magis, quam cupiditate inferiores, Eunuchis maioribus laxatae habenae, & e Magistratuum manibus, qui eas moderabantur, crepae” (De Christiana 377).

22 "Percio, inviando a tutte le provincie doi o tre eunuchi grandi in ciascheduna, oltre altri di manco autorità per suoi compagni, gli diede grande autorità e potere di poter fare questo absolutamente, senza dipendere da nessuno de' mandarini del governo” (Storia, Lib. IV, Cap. VIII, N. 560).


24 “Stava là un nostro Fratello, che impeditte certi Giapponi di nostri casa che veggiavano l'isola; se non, avrebbono facilmente amazzati i Cinesi et anco il loro Capitanio saraceno” (Storia, Lib. V, Cap. X, N. 779).

25 “Ex ijs Magistratibus erat unus origine ac professione Saracenus: nam ex Tartorum reliquis mult in eo regno remanserunt, qui post quartum generationem pro indignis habiti, ne a litterariis quidem gradibus publicisque munis prohibentur. Is malorum incenor erat, & imaginis et Christianae legis odio lacerator” (De Christiana, p. 527). Translation is partly based on Gallagher, 483

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