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The Overlooked Connection between Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* and Valignano's *Catechismus Japonensis*

It is well known that the *Tianzhu shiyi* (first published 1603) is the development of a previous catechism published some twenty years before, which Matteo Ricci completely remodeled according to his discussions with Chinese intellectuals. This article shows that Ricci's mentor, Alessandro Valignano, and particularly his *Catechismus japonensis*, written in Japan from 1579 to 1582, shaped Ricci's methods and ideas. This overlooked connection between the two works enables us to understand better Ricci's debt toward his predecessor and his breakthrough in terms of engagement with indigenous culture.

KEYWORDS: Matteo Ricci—Alessandro Valignano—*Tianzhu shiyi*—catechism

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THE FOUR HUNDREDTH anniversary of the death of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in 2010 saw many publications on the famous Italian missionary and his works. Yet this new research has overlooked an important dimension of the relationship between the *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義 (The true meaning of the Lord of Heaven; RICCI 1607) and Valignano’s *Catechismus japonensis* (hereafter abbreviated as CJ). While both are deeply rooted in the scholastic tradition, Valignano was not completely satisfied with a purely philosophical method and instructed Ricci to complement it with an approach based on the Chinese classics. As we can see from Ricci’s treatment of the questions of the existence of God and of the immortality of the soul, *Tianzhu shiyi* uses a combination of scholastic and hermeneutical approaches. This adoption of a hermeneutical approach based on the Chinese classics helps contextualize the scholastic approach into the Chinese intellectual tradition, and *Tianzhu shiyi*’s emphasis on the commonalities between Confucianism and Christianity opens a dialog between the Western and Eastern traditions.

Valignano’s Scholastic Approach and its Influence on the Tianzhu shiyi

From the time of Francis Xavier (1506–1552), Jesuit missionaries in Asia wrote catechisms that presented Christianity through rational arguments and historical events narrated in the Bible and the Gospels. This reflected the Christian theological tradition that truth is not purely reducible to philosophy but rather inscribed within human reason and divinely presented in historical revelation. While the findings of reason prepare and support this history it is impossible to deduce through reason the truth contained in revelation and salvation. The catechisms of Melchior Nunes Barreto (c.1519–1571) and Luís Fróis (1532–1597) in Japan (BORDON 1993, 610–28), and Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) in China (RUGGIERI 2002), all display the same intertwining philosophical arguments of the Christian history of creation, the fall of humankind, and the redemption in Christ.

However, the idea of historical revelation was often difficult for non-Westerners to accept because of legitimate reservations about the authority of the Bible and the Gospels; there was a need for a distinction between works intended for catechumens and those intended for non-Christians. Valignano approached this in two steps. First, he presented a natural revelation using only arguments based on reason, followed next by the positive revelation.¹

1. As Gianni Criveller mentioned in “Matteo Ricci’s ascent to Beijing,” this distinction was traditional in Europe, at least theoretically: “Natural revelation was dealt with under the theme

In 1579–1582, Valignano collaborated with other Jesuits and Japanese converts to write a new catechism using this more efficient approach. This catechism was first published in Latin in 1586, in Lisbon, and it is commonly referred to as the *Catechismus japonensis*.² The book has two distinct sections: the first presents a philosophical argument for the existence of God and for the immortality of the soul as well as a philosophical argument against the Japanese sects, which at the time were understood as pantheistic or idolatrous; the second presents the history of salvation and the dogma of the Christian faith.

Some scholars have mentioned Valignano's important role in the writing of the *Tianzhu shiyi*. For example, in the introduction to their English edition of the work, LANCASHIRE and HU KUO-CHEN (1985) show that in 1593 Valignano instructed Ricci to write a new catechism to replace the *Tianzhu shilu* 天主實錄 (The true records of the Lord of Heaven; RUGGIERI 2002) originally published by Ruggieri in 1584. Valignano also participated in the revision of the book and gave his approval.³ However, there is no mention of the connection between Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* and Valignano's own *Catechismus*.

In his recent biography of Ricci, Ronnie Hsia spends one chapter analyzing the *Tianzhu shiyi*. He does an excellent job of showing how the work reflects the scholarly debates that Ricci had with the Chinese literati and how Ricci drew his arguments from both Western philosophy and Chinese classics (HSIA 2010, 224–39). However, Hsia does not offer any explanation of the relationship between Western philosophy and Chinese classics: why would Western philosophy need to be proven using the Classics in the first place? And why Chinese classics and not Western ones? Again, he misses the link with the *Catechismus* and so it is difficult to grasp the articulation between philosophical reason and the hermeneutics of Chinese classics.

Among the many scholars who have studied the *Tianzhu shiyi*, only two have suggested a connection with the *Catechismus*. Nicolas Standaert first pointed

of *demonstratio Christiana* (Christian apologetics); positive revelation was treated under the topic of *Verbum incarnatum* (Incarnation of the Word) and *Christus redemptor* (Christ the Redeemer)" (CRIVELLER 2010, 54–55).

2. See CJ in the references; for another edition, see "Qui est de ratione procurandae salutis Iaponicorum & aliorum Orientalium gentium," in Antonio Possevino, *Bibliotheca selecta qua agitur de ratione studiorum in historia, in disciplinis, in salute omnium procuranda* (Romae, 1593), tomus 1, liber x (nine chapters in total), 459–504; and liber xi (seven chapters in total), 505–29. The 1586 edition is very rare, since only four known copies exist, and Possevino's volume is also quite rare. This may explain why there has not been much research on the *Catechismus*. For more information, see SCHÜTTE 1980, 2: 67–89.

3. See MALATESTA 1985, 14–15. The reference to the original document can be found in Matteo Ricci, "Letter to Claudio Acquaviva S.I., Preposito Generale, Roma, Shaozhou," 10 December 1593; in RICCI 2001, 185.

<i>TIANZHU SHIYI</i>	<i>CATECHISMUS JAPONENSIS</i>
Preface	
Chapter 1: <u>rational method [23–25]</u> , <u>proofs of God [29, 31, 40]</u>	Preface (1–2): <u>rational method</u> Conference 1 (2v–12): <u>rational method,</u> <u>proof of God</u>
Chapter 2: conceptual mistakes of bud- dhist kong, daoist wu, neoconfucean taiji	Conference 2 (12v–23v): conceptual mis- takes of the first principle of the Japanese sects
Chapter 3: <u>immateriality of the soul [138,</u> <u>141–150]</u> , <u>its immortality [152–157, 161]</u>	Conference 3 (24–34): <u>human soul as im-</u> <u>material and immortal</u>
Chapter 4: supernatural spirits; <u>three</u> <u>forms of pantheism [222–237]</u>	Conference 2 (18–20v): <u>three forms of</u> <u>pantheism</u>
Chapter 5: refutation of transmigration; interdiction to kill and fast	Conference 4 (34–44): refutation of popu- lar Buddhism and of transmigration
Chapter 6: intention; last judgment; necessity of paradise and hell	Part 2—Conference 4 (20v–24v): para- disiac glory and punishments in hell
Chapter 7: human natural goodness, refu- tation of idolatry, Christian practice	Conference 5 (44v–50): esoteric and exoteric doctrines; idolatry
Chapter 8: customs of the West, celibacy, incarnation of Christ, baptism	Conference 6 (50v–57): authority of the Christian faith Conference 7 (57–67): creation of the world, original sin Conference 8 (67–76v): incarnation of Christ Part 2—Conference 1 (2–8): ten com- mandments Part 2—Conference 2 (8v–14): seven sacraments Part 2—Conference 3 (15–20): resurrec- tion of the dead and last judgment

TABLE 1. Similarities in structure between *Tianzhu shiyi* and *Catechismus japonensis*, with similar passages being underlined.

out the similarity between the structure of the *Tianzhu shiyi* and of the *Catechismus japonensis*, stating that the “*Tianzhu shiyi* resembles very much Alessandro Valignano’s catechetical method as reflected in his *Catechismus Christianae Fidei*” (STANDAERT 2001, 613). Recently, Standaert said this more explicitly:

There are several similarities between Valignano’s *Catechismus* and Ricci’s *Tianzhu shiyi*: both have eight chapters; both have the same structure and methodology (rational-scholastic approach: first God is discussed, then human being, while Jesus Christ is only mentioned in the final chapter).

(STANDAERT 2009, 62)

Seemingly unaware of Standaert's findings, Urs App has very recently repeated the same stance. App also remarks quite accurately that Ricci "applied Valignano's 1586 critique of Buddhism to Daoist and Neo-Confucian conceptions of the first principle" (APP 2012, 94–95). He briefly explains some similarities but does not go further in a textual comparison between the *Tianzhu shiyi* and the *Catechismus*.

Following the lead of Standaert and App, I will show here the connection between the two texts.⁴ There is indeed a structural similarity between the two works. Ricci not only adopted the same structure, but we can also find some forty parallel passages. The chart to the left indicates (see the underlined text) these parallel passages, forming one-fifteenth of the *Tianzhu shiyi*. Please note that the numbers between square brackets refer to the section numbers in LANCASHIRE and HU KUO-CHEN (1985).

The *Catechismus japonensis* includes a total of twelve conferences (talks) or *conciones* (eight in the first part and four in the second part) while the *Tianzhu shiyi* has eight chapters. The structure is almost identical. The first section of both books expounds the philosophical approach; the first seven chapters of the *Tianzhu shiyi* correspond to the first five conferences of the *Catechismus*. Following the philosophical section, the *Catechismus* presents the history of salvation in the last three conferences of the first part and in the four conferences of the second part. Ricci purposefully limited his dealing with revelation to the last chapter of his *Tianzhu shiyi*, mentioning briefly Christ's incarnation.⁵ He gives the complete dogmatic treatise for the use of the Chinese converts in a separate book, the *Tianzhu jiaoyao* 天主教要 (Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven; 1605).⁶

Not only are there structural parallels between the *Catechismus* and the *Tianzhu shiyi*, but also many arguments and ideas of the *Tianzhu shiyi* can be found in the *Catechismus*. At the beginning of the first chapter of the *Tianzhu shiyi*, Ricci exposes the rational method he wants to follow:

4. For the Chinese text of the *Tianzhu shiyi*, I follow the edition made in Hangzhou in 1607 and reproduced in LI 1965. For the English translation, excerpts are taken from MALATESTA 1985.

5. In TABLE 1, I have not used underlining in this case since there is no literary connection.

6. See D'ELIA 1942, vol. 2, section 708, 289. For more on the *Tianzhu jiaoyao*, see CRIVELLER 2010, 56. The 1605 edition was seen and described by Pasquale D'Elia, but the copy has now disappeared. We know how the text must have looked like thanks to D'Elia's description. In 1615 Alfonso Vagnone published a revised edition of the text with the title *Jiaoyao jielüe* 教要解略; see CHAN 2002, 101–3. Some topics can be addressed through natural reason or dogma. For example, Valignano mentioned the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment in the dogmatic section, but Ricci had it in his sixth chapter, considering the existence of paradise and hell as a necessity of reason and morality. However, we have to admit that Ricci went beyond reason in describing the pains of hell and the pleasures of heaven.

凡人之所以異於禽獸，無大乎靈才也。靈才者，能辯是非，別真偽，而難欺之以理之所無。禽獸之愚，雖有知覺運動，差同于人，而不能明達先後內外之理。(LI 1965)

Of all things which mark off all men as being different from animals, none is greater than the intellect. The intellect can distinguish between right and wrong and between that which is true and that which is false, and it is difficult to deceive it with anything which lacks rationality. (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 23)

If we look now at the text of Valignano, this matches almost perfectly:

The difference by which man is the best separated from other living beings, is that all the other living beings are endowed with life and senses, by which they draw all the necessities for their life and by which they protect and preserve themselves. They lack reason, mind and intelligence by which they could discern what is true or false in the things, what is honest and good, and should therefore be pursued, what is nasty and evil, and should therefore be avoided. (CJ, 2)

Closely following Valignano's text, Ricci mentions that the intellect allows human beings to observe the principles of things, to know their origins (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 24).⁷ He also uses the metaphor of the intellect as a light and that "everything reason shows to be false I must acknowledge as false" (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 25).⁸

The scholastic method set up in the *Catechismus* and pursued in the *Tianzhu shiyi* presents a rational method to seek the truth and to discard errors. Traditionally, reason could be misled into two errors, superstition and atheism. Indeed, from the time of the *Sumario de los errores* (Summary of errors, 1556) by Baltasar Gago (1515–1583), the Jesuits in Japan understood that all the sects fall either into the error of idolatry or atheism. In the beginning of the *Catechismus* (CJ, 4v–5v), Valignano sets this same distinction: his method in the whole book consists precisely in teaching a Christian philosophy that avoids the two errors of the Japanese sects. We shall see below how Ricci applied this scholastic method to the Chinese sects of Buddhism, Daoism, and Neo-Confucianism.

The Refutation of the Three Forms of Pantheism

The second chapter of the *Tianzhu shiyi* consists of a refutation of the three schools of China but the argument is quite different from the *Catechismus japonensis*. However, Ricci did inherit from Japan the theoretical framework to understand and refute the Chinese schools. For Valignano, the first principle (*rerum primum principium*) of the Japanese school lacks transcendence because

7. This roughly follows Valignano's text; see CJ, 2v.

8. This sentence is also found in Valignano's text: "What reason shows as false, the intellect cannot judge it true"; see CJ, 2v.

it is not an efficient and transcendental cause and is only a principle immanent to things themselves. The rational extension is that the Japanese schools are pantheistic, though Valignano refrains from using the term. In his second chapter, Ricci adopts this framework of understanding to refute the *wu* 無 of Daoism, the *kong* 空 of Buddhism, and the *taiji* 太極 of Neo-Confucianism.

In the second half of the fourth chapter (MALATESTA 1985, sections 223–37), Ricci refutes the Chinese idea that “the phenomena of the world form an organic unity” (*tianxia wanwu yiti* 天下萬物一體). He distinguishes three different forms of this idea:

夫曰天主與物同：或謂天主即是其物，而外無他物；或謂其在物，而為內分之一；或謂物為天主所使用，如械器為匠之所使用。 (LI 1965)

To assert that the Lord of Heaven and all things are the same means that the Lord of Heaven is all things, and that apart from Him there is nothing; or that He is within all things, as an internal constituent; or that all things are there for Him to use, as instruments and tools are there for craftsmen to use.

(MALATESTA 1985, sec. 222)

In describing three different kinds of pantheism, Ricci follows exactly the same framework the Jesuits in Japan used to understand and refute the Buddhist sects, as stated in the *Catechismus* (CJ, 18–20v).⁹ The first kind of pantheism functions at the level of the totality. Ricci provides a first argument against it:

其云天主即是各物，則宇宙之間雖有萬物，當無二性；既無二性，是無萬物，豈不混雜物理？ (LI 1965)

If you say that the Lord of Heaven is each and every thing, then, although there are many kinds of things in the universe, there ought only to be one nature; but if there were only one nature, there could be no variety of things. Have you not created confusion among the principles of things?

(MALATESTA 1985, sec. 223)¹⁰

Ricci continues by showing two other wrong consequences of this theory: it cannot explain why things destroy each other, and it makes God similar to matter, like wood or stone.¹¹ Ricci also presents a fourth argument not found in the *Catechismus*: this form of pantheism makes humanity worship itself.

9. For more on the Jesuit understanding of Buddhism as pantheism, see MEYNARD 2011a.

10. We can find a parallel passage in the *Catechismus*; CJ, 18: “For, if everything is one and the same with the first and supreme principle, or that is to say, if the first principle of things is the whole substance, claiming for itself all the different names of things, according to their various properties and qualities, it indeed results in many absurdities. The first is that, all things being one and the same thing and not many, there is only one substance and nature of all things.”

11. Valignano makes exactly the same points, but instead of wood and stone, he has horse and stone; CJ, 18v.

Ricci presents objections to the second form of pantheism which functions at the level of each individual thing. The first is a logical contradiction: “the Lord of Heaven must be regarded as smaller than things, but the whole should be greater than its parts” (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 225, page 217).¹² Ricci’s second objection consists of stating that, if God is present in every single thing, God is also present in every human being, and therefore “there ought not to be a single evil-doer in the world” (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 226).¹³

The third form of pantheism does not start from a metaphysical premise, as in the case of the two first forms, but starts from a general determinism of one single will, being applied to all, from top to bottom. Ricci objects that this theory confuses things and their efficient cause, because “a stone mason is not the chisel he uses” (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 228).¹⁴ In his second point, Ricci points out that this theory makes God the universal agent of everything: “It is not the fire which burns, it is not the water which flows, it is not the birds that sing, it is not the beasts that walk, it is not men who ride horses and travel in carriages; in all these instances it is the one and only Lord of Heaven doing all these things” (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 229).¹⁵ Both Valignano and Ricci further show that this determinism ruins human responsibility.

Ricci continues the refutation of pantheism by showing that things are never destroyed but return to perfection: “When they die and are destroyed, they will return to the Lord of Heaven; they ought not, therefore, to be spoken as dead but as things which have obtained perfect life” (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 230). The *Catechimus* raises this argument in the same sequence (CJ, 20v). Ricci develops this further when he argues that if this were not the case the Chinese custom of preserving the corpse of the dead would make no sense at all (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 230). Up to the end of this fourth chapter, Ricci explains the correct understanding of God as the efficient and universal cause of the world, paralleling the text of Valignano (CJ, 22v–23v). Ricci describes four different ways the Lord of Heaven relates to things:

第其在物，且非一端：或在物如在其所，若人在家、在庭焉；或在物為其分，若手足在身，陰陽在人焉；或倚賴之在自立者，如白在馬為白馬，寒在冰為寒冰焉；或在物如所以然之在其已然，若日光之在其所照水晶焉，火在其所燒紅鐵焉 (LI 1965)

(1) He can be said to be in things in the sense that He resides in them in the way that a man resides in his home. (2) He can be said to be part of things, just

12. This corresponds to the first point of Valignano (CJ, 19)

13. This corresponds to Valignano’s third point (CJ, 19v).

14. This matches Valignano’s first point, distinguishing the artisan and his production; CJ, 19v.

15. This is exactly the argument made by Valignano, who takes the same examples of the fire and of the horse; CJ, 20.

as a hand or foot is part of the body or the *Yin* and *Yang* principles are part of a person. (3) He can be said to stand in relation to a thing as an accident stands in relation to a substance. This is like the whiteness in a horse, which makes that horse a white horse, or coldness in ice, which makes it cold ice. (4) He can be said to be in things, as a cause resides in its effects, or as the light of the sun is found within the crystal on which it shines, or as fire resides in iron red with burning. (MALATESTA 1985, sections 235–37).¹⁶

This refutation of pantheism poses important questions to Asian philosophy. As Valignano used the four scholastic causes to understand the Japanese Buddhist sects, Ricci used them to understand Neo-Confucianism. Both reached the same conclusion about the lack of a clear notion of a transcendental and efficient cause and about the nihilistic nature of philosophy in Asia. Only by correcting their misconceptions could the Japanese and the Chinese accept the existence of God and ultimately Christianity.

Following the method used in Japan, Matteo Ricci used the scheme of idolatry and superstition to interpret Buddhism, Daoism, and Neo-Confucianism; many generations of Jesuit missionaries would continue to apply the same scheme of idolatry and superstition (MEYNARD 2011b). However, when dealing with the Confucian tradition, Ricci sets a different overarching principle; it is no longer a philosophical principle *per se*, but a hermeneutical one, which allows him to distinguish between the ancient and genuine meaning of the Chinese classics and their modern and corrupted meaning. While Valignano inspired this hermeneutical approach, Ricci should be given the credit for realizing it within a text.

Valignano's Inspiration toward a Hermeneutical Approach

Valignano was not entirely satisfied with the method at work in the *Catechismus*; his understanding of Chinese culture made him envision another approach. Indeed, the first Jesuits in Japan had for interlocutors the Buddhist sects, Shintoism, the popular religions, and (only accessorially) Confucianism. While the Jesuits were accepted more easily in Japan because of its diverse and dispersed intellectual and religious scene, the lack of a clear orthodoxy probably prevented the Jesuits from engaging in deeper dialog with any one of the individual schools.

16. The first way mentioned by Ricci corresponds to the first one by Valignano (*aliquid est in alio, sicut in loco, & ita dicimus, nos esse in hoc cubilo, in hac aula*; CJ, 22v–23); Ricci's second way, to Valignano's second way (*sicut pars est in toto, & materia, & forma sunt in re naturali, quia res naturalis ex illis componitur*). The third way mentioned by Ricci is not present in the *Catechismus*. Finally, Ricci's fourth way matches Valignano's third way (*sicut causa in effectis*). Concerning this fourth way, the most appropriate way to describe the relationship between God and things, Valignano gives exactly the same examples as Ricci: the sun communicates light to inferior bodies, and iron communicates heat to metal; CJ, 22v–23.

In China, the situation was quite different.¹⁷ From reading Ruggieri's and Ricci's reports and letters, Valignano understood the prominent role of Confucianism in Chinese society and especially the central role of the Confucian classics in Chinese culture and society.

When Valignano instructed Ricci to write a new catechism he probably had in mind something similar to the *Catechismus*. However, he also envisioned the need to incorporate arguments drawn from the Confucian classics in the new Chinese catechism and he instructed Ricci to first engage himself in translating the Confucian classics into Latin. Ricci mentioned this in a letter sent to the superior general of the Jesuits in Rome:

Father Visitor [Valignano] has asked me to translate into Latin those texts [Confucian classics] in order to help prepare a new catechism in Chinese, which is much needed, since the other that we did in the beginning [the *Tian-zhu shilu*] did not turn out to be as good as it should have been.

(RICCI 2001, 185)

In other words, by securing a meaning of the Confucian classics compatible with Christianity, Ricci would be able to use these resources in his own dialog with the Chinese literati. Ricci gained valuable historical perspective when he read the Chinese classics of Confucianism and their various historical interpretations. In this way Valignano allowed Ricci to take a step away from the idolatry-atheism framework, which was completely foreign to Asians, and set up a new interpretative key for understanding the Chinese traditions from within their own perspective.

In the mind of Valignano, this hermeneutical approach would not replace but rather complement the scholastic approach. By doing this, the scholastic approach would also become more contextualized into Chinese culture and society. We shall see below how Ricci developed the scholastic approach of the *Catechismus* and illustrated it with the authority of the Chinese classics. For this examination I have chosen two traditional arguments of scholasticism: the proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.

The Proof of the Existence of God

In his first chapter on the six proofs of God, Ricci uses a pedagogical progression and divides the general argument into two steps: first, the idea of God as master of the human spirit and of the universe; and second, the idea of God as creator, an idea more difficult to accept in Asia. Traditionally, catechisms in the West

17. The contrast between Japan's lack of orthodoxy and China's Confucian orthodoxy and the differences this led to has already been argued by PARAMORE 2008.

start with God as creator. Ricci's first proof is about the universality of the idea of God:

吾不待學之能，為良能也。今天下萬國，各有自然之誠情，莫相告諭，而皆敬一上尊。被難者籲哀望救，如望慈父母焉；為惡者捫心驚懼，如懼一敵國焉。（LI 1965）

Now men of all nations under heaven possess, each of them, a natural capacity by which, without communication between them, all venerate One who is regarded as worthy of supreme honor. Those in distress call upon Him for pity and look to Him for salvation as to a compassionate father and mother. Those who do evil are gripped by fear as if afraid of a hostile nation.

(MALATESTA 1985, sec. 29)

When comparing the two texts, it can be seen that Ricci's argument matches exactly with Valignano's first proof (CJ, 9). This idea of a natural religion can be found in many ancient writings like Cicero's *De natura deorum*, Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum*, or Saint Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. The idea reappeared during the Renaissance. The traditional arguments present God as master of the physical universe. However, in Valignano's proof of God he first introduces the presence of a universal moral law in the human mind. In the *Tianzhu shiyi* Ricci enhances the argument's moral dimension when he connects it with the Mencian concept of the "innate virtue to do good" (*liangneng* 良能).

The second and third proofs in the *Tianzhu shiyi* correspond to the teleological argument, or the Fifth Way of Aquinas, which posits that an external intelligence guides all things to accomplish their functions. More specifically, the second proof argues that inanimate objects, like minerals and stars, do not have a principle of motion in themselves but are guided by an external intelligence. Ricci gives the following example: when we see a boat avoiding danger and return safely to harbor, we do not doubt that there is a pilot in it, and similarly, we cannot doubt there is a supreme master ruling the universe. Valignano's text also uses the invisible captain metaphor.¹⁸

The third proof is an application of the teleological argument to animate objects, such as animals, as they know how to take care of themselves. Ricci makes an analogy: when thousands of arrows fly there must be an archer. Similarly we cannot doubt that an invisible master rules animate objects and makes them accomplish their function. This again matches up with Valignano's sixth proof, which also uses the reference to the archer (CJ, 11).

Ricci then moves to the second series of proofs about God as creator. The first is the necessity of God as designer or artisan to make the world exist. Ricci gives

18. We note that Ruggieri uses the same metaphor (RUGGIERI 2002, 12); CJ, 10; MALATESTA 1985, 73.

two examples: the first example of the architect is quite common. However, the second example is quite specific to the activities of the Jesuit missionaries in Asia:

譬如銅鑄小球，日月、星宿、山海萬物備焉，非巧工鑄之，銅能自成乎？ (LI 1965)

Let us take as an example a small globe cast in bronze. Sun, moon, stars, planets, mountains, and seas all appear complete on it. Now if a skilled craftsman had not cast it, would the bronze have been able to take on all the features by itself?

(MALATESTA 1985, sec.34)

We can find this same peculiar example and the same expression in the seventh proof of Valignano (CJ, 11). Both Valignano and Ricci drew the analogy of God as artisan of the world from the example of a clever craftsman able to cast a celestial globe. Jesuits in Asia often impressed their interlocutors by displaying astronomical instruments like celestial globes; we are told that Manoel Akimasa and Leão Shimizu converted to Christianity in this manner (BOURDON 1993, 606).

As a second proof that God is the creator, Ricci argues that God is the one responsible for the ordinance of the world. This is usually called the argument of God's providence. As above, Ricci first presents an analogy:

如觀宮室，前有門以通出入，後有園以種花果，庭在中間以接賓客，室在左右以便寢臥，楹柱居下以負棟樑，茅茨置上以蔽風雨。如此乎處置協宜，而後主人安居之以為快。則宮室必由巧匠營作，而後能成也。 (LI 1965)

If we look at a mansion we find that it is provided with doors in front to facilitate exit and entry. Behind are gardens in which are planted flowers and trees. A hall is built centrally for the reception of guests, and rooms are placed to the left and to the right to serve as sleeping quarters. Columns are implanted below to support the beams in the roof, and thatch is placed above to keep out wind and rain. When all these things have been ordered harmoniously the master of the house can dwell securely within it. But if such a building is to be brought to completion, it must be built by a skilled artisan.

(MALATESTA 1985, sec. 35)

When we look at Ricci's text, we may think that Ricci composed this passage based purely on his knowledge of Chinese architecture. However, Valignano has a similar depiction.¹⁹ As we can see, Ricci's text was not a pure creation but an adaptation of a traditional argument of scholastic philosophy, an argument that can also be found in Valignano's *Catechimus*. In this same argument about God's

19. See CJ, 10: "When we enter a house and we see everything neatly arranged, carpets laid on the ground, painted tapestries, well disposed beds, nicely designed gardens, arms kept at their place, and all other utensils placed elegantly, separately and orderly, then we understand that there is someone who has, wisely and elaborately, disposed everything."

providence, Ricci brings a unique elaboration, with the moral order expressed in terms of the Five Basic Virtues of Confucianism.²⁰

The third proof of God as creator consists in affirming the necessity of a first genitor, or ancestor. Valignano makes this point in his fifth proof and Ruggieri in his second proof.

In brief, the first chapter of the *Tianzhu shiyi* is heavily dependent on previous works, especially the *Catechismus*. However, Ricci rearranges the traditional order of the scholastic argument, proceeding in a more pedagogical way in two steps: first, God as master of the human mind and of the universe; and second, God as creator. He also enhances the Confucian dimension of his argument, for example, he presents God as responsible for the Confucian moral order.

In the second chapter, Ricci discusses the Chinese conceptions of God; after rejecting the misconceptions of the Buddhists, Taoists, and Neo-Confucians, he uses a completely different method to discuss the conception of God in Ancient China. The method is not based on reason alone but also on the authorities of the Chinese classics. Ricci has eleven quotes from the *Shijing* [Book of Odes], the *Liji* [Book of Rites], the *Shangshu* [The Book of Documents] and the *Zhongyong* [The Mean] to prove that the ancient Chinese venerated Shangdi (MALATESTA 1985, sections 104–108).

In this dialog, the Chinese scholar confronts the Western scholar, alias Ricci, about various interpretations of these texts, pointing out that Neo-Confucians like Zhu Xi recognize only the principle of reason. Ricci replies: if the ancient Chinese had only believed in the principle of reason, why did they establish the worship of a divinity? In other words, the existence of ancient worship indicates that the ancient Chinese believed in a divinity who they called Shangdi and the Westerners call God. Clearly worship does not deductively lead to proof of the existence of God. However, since it can be shown through reason that God really exists, the ancient Chinese worship of God indicates that their belief was correct. Ricci concludes that the Neo-Confucians are misled in their interpretation of the Chinese classics because they cannot give a rational account why the ancient Chinese would worship Shangdi unless they suggest this ancient worship was wrong. Ricci calls upon the Chinese to return to their ancient worship when, in his account of Chinese history, he explains that the external influence of Buddhism led to the decline of the veneration of Shangdi and thus also of true faith in God. As we can see, Ricci builds on the *Catechismus*' scholastic method with a new and innovative hermeneutical approach, based on the Chinese texts, that gives a new strength to the argument.

20. See for example MALATESTA 1985, 79. Jesuits in Japan such as João Rodriguès in his *Historia* had already paid attention to the Five Basic Virtues, called *gojō* 五常 (BÉSINEAU 2003, 77–78).

The Argument on the Immortality of the Soul

The whole of chapter 3 of the *Tianzhu shiyi* discusses the question of the soul, with a chapter title identical to RUGGIERI's (2002) chapter 6: "The human soul is not extinguished and is greatly different from the souls of birds and beasts" (論人魂不滅大異禽獸). It begins with a long statement on human misery by the Chinese scholar (MALATESTA 1985, sections 117–124) and with Ricci's own answer: human suffering is real but plays a positive role, preparing for the afterlife (MALATESTA 1985, sections 125–128). As seen in the *Jiren shipian* (Ten chapters of an extraordinary man; RICCI 1608), this whole section is adapted from a discussion held in Beijing in 1601 with the Minister of Rites (*libu shangshu* 禮部尚書) Feng Qi 馮琦 (1558–1603).²¹ The following sections (MALATESTA 1985, sections 133–137) describe the three parts of the soul according to Aristotle: vegetative, animal, and intellectual. Ricci has drawn this section, almost verbatim, from Ruggieri's *Tianzhu shilu* (RUGGIERI 2002, 39).

While Ruggieri listed only four instances of proof for the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, Ricci uses a more elaborate argument similar to the *Catechismus*. In that work, Valignano first provides a general argument that the human soul is spiritual. He says all material bodies—with the exception of celestial bodies—are made of four elements that oppose each other until one of them prevails and causes death. The human soul is stable because it is not made out of the four elements and therefore contains no opposition within itself. The *Tianzhu shiyi* (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 138) parallels Valignano's text, including the reference to the celestial bodies (CJ, 25v–26v).

In Ricci's text, the Chinese scholar admits that the human soul is spiritual but asks why animals would not also have a spiritual soul (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 139). Ricci uses the argument that parallels the *Catechismus* when it addresses this important question of the difference between human and animal souls. It says that the human soul is immortal because it is a spiritual form and substance and structures this argument into three modes (*modi*). The first is based on an analysis of human desires, "from the diversity of the natural desires and inclinations which show that our soul is a spiritual substance" (CJ, 26v). The second mode is based on the analysis of knowledge, "from the way of knowing and understanding things that the author of nature has impressed into the human mind" (CJ, 28). The third mode draws "from the special providence of the one God in the High" (CJ, 26v). Ricci combines the first and the second mode together, but he keeps the third mode separate in order to stress the soul's immortality.

Let us now examine in detail how each mode of argument proceeds logically in the *Tianzhu shiyi* and how it does or does not parallel the *Catechismus*. Con-

21. For a modern Chinese edition see ZHU 2001, 445–48.

cerning the first mode based on human aspirations, we can find in the *Tianzhu shiyi* three of the five proofs of the *Catechismus*: the first proof (human spirit as master of his movements and affects, unlike animals (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 141; CJ, 26v–27); the second proof (the conflict in human beings between contrary desires, unlike animals (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 142; CJ, 27); and the fourth proof (the desire of human beings for spiritual things (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 143; CJ, 27v).

Concerning the second mode based on the analysis of cognition, Valignano has four instances of proof in total. Ricci states Valignano's second proof, which ranks fourth on Ricci's list. Accordingly, in the cognitive process, the human spirit abstracts form from material things. The same analogy is found: "water poured into a round vessel becomes round, and water poured into as square vessel becomes square" (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 144; CJ, 29).

It seems that Ricci's example of the cow is his own creation, perhaps inspired by the *Ten ox herding pictures and verses* (*Shiniu tusong* 十牛圖頌) of Chan Buddhism. The next proof, ranked fifth, corresponds to Valignano's first proof in the second mode: the human spirit can grasp spiritual realities, like truth and goodness (MALATESTA 1985, sections 146–147; CJ, 28–28v). At this point in the discussion, Ricci inserts an objection from his hypothetical Chinese scholar that denies the existence of spiritual realities. Ricci rejects this outright materialism as logically unfounded. He then gives the sixth and last proof, which corresponds to Valignano's third proof in the second mode: the human spirit is boundless and thus able to attain the highest truths (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 150). Here again, the two texts draw the same analogy: the spirit is "like the sparrow which, having severed the thread which bound it, is able to fly high in the sky, unable to be hindered by anyone" (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 150; CJ, 29v).

While it is clear that Ricci's second series corresponds to Valignano's third mode, Ricci shows his independence from the *Catechismus* when he changes the perspective of these three proofs from an argument that proceeds from God to one that proceeds from human beings. In his first proof, Ricci argues that there is a universal human desire to be remembered after death and because the intellectual soul survives humans can continue to enjoy their good reputation in the afterlife. Ricci illustrates this point with the example of Chinese rituals where the ancestors actually see the offerings and hear the supplications addressed to them (MALATESTA 1985, sections 152–154).²²

22. Valignano briefly mentions the argument, but Ricci seems to elaborate independently. *Catechismus*; CJ 28: "Ita pro viribus studet perpetuam sui memoriam in hominibus relinquere." Ancestor worship was practiced and understood in China in many different ways, but Ricci selects here the interpretation fitting his own argument. Unlike Ricci, most of the literati of his time would have probably understood ancestor worship as a practice aiming essentially at fostering the moral character of the worshipper.

The second proof proceeds from a universal human desire for immortality; a desire that even encourages some to discard the materialism of the world (MALATESTA 1985, sections 155–156).²³ Many Chinese were very impressed with the commitment to their spiritual mission that led Ricci and other missionaries to leave their land and their families; Ricci develops this personal and compelling argument in the last chapter of the *Tianzhu shiyi*.

The third proof argues that the human spirit cannot be satisfied with the offerings of the world (MALATESTA 1985, sections 157–159). The fourth proof is not very philosophical, arguing that people naturally fear corpses because the soul of the dead is still present in the corpse (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 160). Perhaps Ricci based this on his own observation of popular fears in China. The fifth and last proof of the second series is the necessity of retribution after life according to one's deeds (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 161). While Valignano does mention this proof (*Catechismus*; CJ 32v), in this case Ricci instead copies directly from Ruggieri's text. Even with this direct borrowing from other sources, Ricci in the third mode of proofs is quite independent because he makes a real effort to ground his arguments in Chinese culture. They all aim at answering the psychological and moral needs of many literati who were concerned about the question of the afterlife, especially in the unsettled times of the late Ming dynasty.

In the last section of the chapter, in what is likely his own elaboration, Ricci refutes the Chinese opinion that souls of the good people survive and the souls of the wicked perish (MALATESTA 1985, sec. 162). Ricci finds this unacceptable because he maintains that the souls of both the good and evil people have to survive in order to receive their due retribution, either eternal reward or eternal punishment (MALATESTA 1985, sections 163–167). To Ricci's satisfaction, the Chinese scholar admits that the intellectual soul is immortal (MALATESTA 1985, sections 168–169).

As we can see, chapter 3 of the *Tianzhu shiyi* is very composite in terms of its redaction: it starts with a speech based on an actual conversation with Feng Qi that Ricci has obviously adapted; continues with the presentation of the Aristotelian division of the soul copied from Ruggieri; then presents scholastics arguments, similar to the *Catechismus*, in order to prove the immateriality of the human soul. In the last section about the immortality of the soul Ricci is more independent and develops proof that is more contextualized to Chinese culture and society.

As we have seen above, when Ricci writes on the question of God he relies heavily on the scholastic method of rational argument, which he follows in the next chapter with a hermeneutical approach based on the Chinese classics. Similarly, after the scholastic discussion on the soul in chapter 3, Ricci opens chapter 4

23. Here we can find one sentence very similar to the third proof of RUGGIERI (2002): 且普世之人, 亦有棄其事業, 家產而往山修行, 若魂與身俱滅, 人何須修行哉?

with a series of six quotes to prove that the ancient Chinese, unlike most of their contemporaries, believed in the survival of the soul after death (MALATESTA 1985, sections 171–187).

Again, in this section of the text, Ricci engages in dialog with the Chinese scholar who points out that Neo-Confucians only consider the *guishen* 鬼神 as anonymous forces in the cosmos. The Chinese scholar also mentions that some stories in the Chinese classics, such as the story of the revenants in *Spring and Autumn* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), should not be believed.²⁴ Ricci acknowledges the authority of the Chinese classics but he also states that there is a need to rely on reason to settle conflicting interpretations of the texts. He adopts a philosophical method to show that the Neo-Confucians' epistemology is very crude because they only recognize tangible realities apprehensible by the senses. Instead Ricci establishes an epistemology that gives preeminence to reason over the senses. This allows him to justify belief in the immortality of the soul. In the case of the revenant stories in the Chinese classics, Ricci does not affirm that these events in the stories really happened, but instead uses the existence of the stories as an authoritative argument to prove that the ancient Chinese believed in life after death. Ricci is not ready to accept anything in the Chinese classics unless it agrees with reason. In other words, we can see Ricci moving from rational arguments to textual authorities and back again.

Conclusion: The Breakthrough of the Tianzhu shiyi

Ricci both follows Valignano's expert guidance and builds upon his intellectual foundation; he adopts the structure and the scholastic method of the *Catechismus* and uses a new hermeneutical approach that incorporates dialog with the Chinese classical texts to contextualize *Tianzhu shiyi* into the Chinese cultural and academic environment. Valignano also gave Ricci a completely new approach that helped this new catechism propose a Christian, or at least theological, reading of Chinese classics to the literati. This combination of a rational approach and a hermeneutical approach gave the *Tianzhu shiyi* great persuasive force. Ricci refined the arguments of the *Catechismus* and incorporated many positive elements drawn from Chinese culture, especially Confucianism. While the *Catechismus* uses reason to critique the beliefs of all the sects of Japan, judging that these fall toward the categories of atheism or idolatry, the *Tianzhu shiyi* offers something much more positive.

The *Tianzhu shiyi* did not completely abandon the Western interpretative key of idolatry-atheism found in the *Catechismus*, but also proposed a hermeneutical

24. MALATESTA 1985, section 185, refers to a story concerning a man called Boyou 伯有 found in the "Zhaogong qinian" 昭公七年 in the *Zuozhuan*.

key based on the Chinese texts themselves. This new key allowed Ricci to step back from the framework of errors (idolatry-atheism) *versus* true philosophy and instead work within the framework of the hermeneutical tradition of China; opposing ancient texts and their ancient interpretations *versus* the modern interpretations of Neo-Confucianism. Ricci started this intellectual shift in Shaozhou in 1593, but it took a couple more years and a move to a new residence in Jiangxi province before he discarded the Buddhist garb he had worn for a decade and adopted the dress of a Chinese scholar.

This turn to ancient Chinese literature was a very effective strategy that allowed Ricci to explore new issues in a way that his Jesuit colleagues in Japan had failed to do. The topic of moral philosophy in particular is well developed in the *Tianzhu shiyi* and conspicuously absent in the *Catechismus*. Instead of entering into dialog with the existing Japanese traditions, Valignano and the Jesuits in Japan condemned the moral system and practices and attempted to substitute them with the normative morality of Christianity (the Ten Commandments and the like). On the contrary, in chapters 6 and 7 of the *Tianzhu shiyi*, Ricci presented Christian moral philosophy in relation to Confucianism. He discussed the notions of intention and interest in human actions; he took his stance on the Confucian debate on human nature and proposed human will as the foundation for self-cultivation. In this whole section, Ricci developed his argument through his own personal study of Chinese philosophy and through his debates with Chinese scholars.

In conclusion, while the *Catechismus* is a dry scholastic treatise written for the use of missionaries to refute the Japanese sects and to expound the correctness of Christianity, in the *Tianzhu shiyi* Ricci developed a more contextualized form of argument that showed his great appreciation for Asian culture, something which is missing in the *Catechismus*. This is indeed an impressive achievement, especially if we keep in mind that the Catholic mission started in Japan some fifty years before Ricci's arrival in China and had not yet produced a work with the same level of depth and positive approach to Asian culture. Only in 1605 did Fukansai Habian ハビアン不幹齋・巴鼻庵 (c. 1565–1621) produce the *Myōtei mondō* 妙貞問答 (1605).²⁵ However, it certainly would have been impossible for Ricci to articulate an argument based both on the scholastic discussions and on the Chinese ancient texts without the intellectual groundwork laid by Jesuits in Japan, particularly the *Catechismus*, and without Valignano's instruction to translate the Confucian classics. With the *Tianzhu shiyi*, Ricci surely raised the debate between Asian and Western thought to a new level.²⁶

25. For more on this work, see PARAMORE 2008. Paramore holds that Habian's work was probably not inspired by the *Tianzhu shiyi*. However, Qi Jinping believes that Habian had read the *Tianzhu shiyi* and was influenced by it. See QI 2003, 342–89.

26. For the current debates on the interpretation of the *Tianzhu shiyi*, see MEYNARD 2010.

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ABBREVIATION

- CJ Alessandro Valignano, *Catechismus christianae fidei, in quo veritas nostrae religionis ostenditur, et sectae japonenses confutantur* [*Catechismus japonensis*], Olyssiponae [Lisbon]: Antonius Riberius, 1586; Reprint: Tennessee: Kessinger La Vergne, 2009.

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