Concerning this Edition

After publishing the trilingual edition of the *Daxue*, I became interested in doing the same for the *Lunyu*. For each verse of the *Lunyu*, the reader will find first the Chinese text. Couplet initially intended to print the Chinese characters, but this was not carried out since Chinese fonts were not available at that time in Europe. Also, because the first two chapters include superscript numbers associated with Latin words, I have inserted the corresponding numbers that would have been next to the Chinese characters. This allows for the exact correspondence between Chinese characters and Latin words. When Couplet realized that the Chinese text could not be printed, he completely eliminated the superscript numbers in the Latin text for the other eighteen chapters. Therefore, I have left the Chinese and Latin texts as they are in those parts, without superscript numbers.

Following the Chinese text, the Latin text of the *Sinarum Philosophus* has been inserted, comprising the translations of the *Lunyu* and of its commentaries, plus the additional notes in italics written by the Jesuits. Some minor typing mistakes here and there in the 1687 edition have been corrected. The Latin translation of the verses of the *Lunyu* is preceded by the reference to the *folio* (fol.), *pagina* (p.), and *paragraphus* (§), corresponding to the late Ming edition of Zhu's *Sishu jizhu*, as mentioned above. For example, the first *juan* of the *Lunyu*, that is, the first two chapters, corresponds to the thirteen fols., each of them divided into two pages (p. 1. and p. 2). Each page is itself divided into two to five paragraphs. Moreover, I have inserted in the Latin text the shift to a new page in the *Sinarum Philosophus*, placing the page number in brackets [].

The English translation is from the Latin. Because Latin is a highly inflected language, allowing for great freedom in positioning words in a sentence, the Latin text neatly follows the order of the Chinese words. However, it was impossible to keep the same order in the English language. I have changed many passive forms into active ones, since this is more colloquial in English. Also, there are many useless repetitions in the Latin text that I have eliminated for sake of fluidity. I did not use the Jesuit transliteration of Chinese names, but changed them into modern pinyin since it is the most recognized form. The commentary is interwoven with the classical text, and I have therefore added in the English translation some quotation marks for passages directly related to the classical text, and I have left the main commentary outside of the quotation marks. The reader should be aware about the difference in nature of the three languages involved. Any translation in Western language “fixes” the original Chinese by restricting its “open” nature. In the Chinese language, many
words can function either as verb, noun, or adjective, but the Latin and English read specifically a Chinese character as a noun, a verb, or an adjective. Furthermore, Western languages impose tense to verbs and number to nouns, with the Latin imposing also gender to nouns. In translating from Latin into English, I have also kept in mind the original Chinese, so I could choose from a range of possibilities the most appropriate.

My notes provide an analysis of the Latin translation. They often indicate the source of the comment, mostly from Zhang and Zhu’s commentaries, or from other historical sources. These notes also make some comparisons, suggesting in what way the Latin translation bends the Chinese text toward new meanings. I was able to consult the manuscript on which Couplet worked in 1686, which is still preserved in the Section of Latin Manuscripts at the BNF.¹ The manuscript often provides transliterations of a quote, sometimes with Chinese characters. This was quite useful in identifying the origins of the quotes, and I make mention of this in the notes.

The evolution of the translation work is also very revealing. I have looked at the initial translation of the *Lunyu* in *Sapientia Sinica* (identified in my notes as Zi-ka-wei), which deals only with the first half of the *Lunyu*, as mentioned above. This literal translation is more concise and usually does not incorporate the translation of the Chinese commentaries. Yet, they allow us to see the initial choices made by the Jesuits, and how the *Sinarum Philosophus* made changes, in order to get a better accuracy with the original text, or to make a point in the context of the growing controversy among missionaries. My notes mention some differences between the two versions, but I want to mention two of them here. First, the term *philosophus* does not appear in the 1662 version, and the term *junzi* is usually translated as *vir perfectus*. However, in the 1687 version, *junzi* is often translated as *philosophus* when referring to Confucius. Second, the expression “to make sacrificial rituals to deceased parents” (*sacrificare parentes*), found a few times in the 1662 version, was replaced in the 1687 version with the expression “to pay respect to deceased parents.” This evolution between the two versions reflects the wish of the Jesuits to accentuate the philosophical nature of Confucianism, and to interpret some Confucian rituals not in religious terms, but in civil terms.

Finally, I have added the Latin biography of Confucius, mostly inspired by Sima Qian’s, at the end of this volume, and provided an English translation of it. As previously stated, this Latin biography was written by Da Costa and first published in the *Sapientia Sinica* in 1662. Later, Intorcetta made some corrections and additions, and published the revised version in 1667–69 as an

¹ BNF Latin 6277, vol. 1 in 369 fols., and vol. 2 in 281 fols.