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*Epitteto nella Città Proibita: stoicismo, cristianesimo e filosofia confuciana nel “Libro dei 25 Paragrafi” di Matteo Ricci*

In this paper I wish to provide an examination of Matteo Ricci's 二十五言, or Twenty-five Sentences, a short treatise on moral virtue which contains a free translation and adaptation of the Encheiridion, attributed to the former slave and Stoic philosopher Epictetus of Hierapolis, but actually collected by his pupil Arrian in the second century AD.

The original Encheiridion enjoyed a considerable fortune during the centuries, being the object of three late antique and early Byzantine Christian paraphrases or being largely translated in most of the vernacular European languages, thanks to a concise and aphoristic style and to contents that could be easily accommodated to Christian ethics. Together with Seneca, Epictetus had been largely in favour among Neo-Stoic philosophers during the sixteenth century.

Ricci's interest for Epictetus (and, more in general for Greek and Latin authors, who are often hinted at in his Chinese works) witnesses to his being a true son of his age, that is deeply rooted in humanistic (and Jesuit) culture. At the same time, it seems particularly worth investigating the "Chinese" side of this work, such as the circumstances of the publication and the assimilation between Stoicism and Confucianism.

Finally, I will discuss some passages in the text, showing in particular those passages that are modified, abridged or reworked compared to the original text. The most relevant examples are to be found in the suppression of some Greco-Roman figures, events or consuetudes that would sound unfamiliar or strange to a foreign audience, which were superseded by examples derived from Chinese culture; similarly, some notions that did not conform to Christian teachings were tacitly expurgated. This a way of dealing comes very close to the early Christian idea of *chresis* or *iustus usus* theorized by authors like Jerome or Basil of Caesarea and can allow us to cast a glance on Ricci's great cultural project.