

rigorosamente le unità aristoteliche. Traspare l'uso del patetico, così come l'importanza di peripezie e agnizione, ma sembra mancare, ad onta dell'emergere in Idomeneo di "un desiderio di pace e di riposo che dovrebbe costituire [...] il contrasto umano ed esistenziale all'atteggiamento ed al ruolo regale" (p. 64), nonché del delinearsi di "un contrasto tra il ruolo degli affetti e la logica del potere" (p. 65), un vero scontro tragico. Il lettore non può evitare a questo punto di porsi una domanda su Simone Maria Poggi tragediografo gesuita: egli sceglie per la propria tragedia un soggetto storico, lo stesso scelto dal francese Crébillon, abbiamo visto, ma c'è da parte sua una reinterpretazione in chiave cristiana di quel soggetto? In altre parole, l'*Idomeneo* è soltanto una tragedia storica tra le altre, oppure è una tappa, non importa quanto significativa, in quel cammino della cosiddetta "tragedia del martire" del quale Bernardino Stefonio, raccogliendo e perfezionando l'eredità di altri autori drammatici della Compagnia di Gesù, segnò con il *Crispo* il punto di snodo?

Roma

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*Xing Shen zhi jian: zao qi xiyang yixue ru Hua shi gao* [Between Form and Spirit: A Draft History of the Early Introduction of Western Medicine into China]. By Dong Shaoxin. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2008. Pp. 497. Illustrations. RMP 58.00. Paperback. ISBN 978-7-5325-5014-2.)

The author, a researcher at the Institute of History and the Humanities at Fudan University in Shanghai, has written a valuable contribution to a topic neglected in the history of Sino-western cultural encounter in the early modern period. His book describes the introduction and reception of western medicine in China between the late 16th and early 19th centuries, and represents the most comprehensive scholarly account, based on the author's command of Chinese and European language sources. After a long Introduction, in which Dong discusses the historiography, recounts the history of Portuguese maritime expansion, the place of medical education in the Society of Jesus, and the first major work of Eurasian pharmaceutical encounter, García da Orta's *Drogas da India* (1569), he divides the book into two parts. The three chapters of Part One address the following topics: Chapter One reconstructs the history of medicine and medical institutions in Macau between the mid-sixteenth and the late eighteenth centuries; Chapter Two analyzes the use of medicine in the missionary work of Jesuits and Franciscans in Ming-Qing China; and Chapter Three focuses on the role of Jesuit physicians and western medicine in the imperial court of the Qing emperors. Part Two comprises four chapters: Chapter Four compares western philosophy and Confu-

cianism in regards to natural philosophy and ideas about the body; Chapter Five compares Chinese and western medical knowledge, and traces the reception of translated western medical texts in China from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries; Chapters Six and Seven, both shorter chapters, address the question of translation of medical terms and the representation of western anatomical figures in Chinese print. For readers of this journal, chapters one to four would be of the greatest interest; and the following are among some of his major findings. The Jesuits in Macau were pioneers in the introduction of western medicine to China and experimented early on with the use of Chinese herbal medicine. Although the *Constitutions* of the Society discouraged the professional practice of medicine, and the subject was not included in the *Ratio Studiorum*, there were many missionaries who joined the overseas missions, who had been practicing physicians. Moreover, Jesuit residences in Asia required medical attention, especially in epidemiologically unfamiliar milieu. Moreover, healing and evangelization went hand-in-hand. Using reports from the “Jesuítas na Asia” collection in the Ajuda Library in Portugal, Dong has documented numerous examples of the combined use of western medicine and religious healing in gaining converts. This casts light on the question of medicine and conversion, as Jesuit records mentioned many Chinese Christian physicians. In the person of Wang Hungan, a famous Confucian scholar and physician in the late seventeenth century, most probably a convert, Dong demonstrates the reception of western ideas of medicine and natural philosophy, as represented by the work of Giulio Aleni, the most important Jesuit transmitter of Thomist theology and Aristotelian philosophy to seventeenth century China. Still another important topic is the role of Jesuits in introducing western medicine to the Kangxi emperor. From his careful and thorough work in European archives and Chinese sources, Dong has reconstructed the most complete picture of the work of western missionaries – Jesuits and Franciscans – both at the imperial court in Beijing, as well as in Guangzhou and Macau. This is an important book in the history of medicine and in the history of the Catholic Mission in Ming-Qing China.

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